

Dhyana

An introductory study of the *jhānas* and spiritual liberation

Essay and translations by Piya Tan ©2004

1 Introduction

Dhyana is as old as Buddhism itself. The Pali form of the term is *jhāna*, but as the Sanskrit *dhyāna*, it has found its way into Chinese as *chan*, into Korean as *seon* (*sōn*), into Japanese as *zen*, and in to Vietnamese as *th'ien* [3]. The word *dhyāna/jhāna* probably, at least in pre-Buddhist and early Buddhist times, means “meditation,” that is, a sustained mental discipline in keeping the mind focused. In early Buddhism, however, it developed into a progressive four-stage suprasensory experience of consciousness, and became uniquely Buddhist. The importance of dhyana in early Buddhism is attested in such statements as this admonition by the Buddha, where we also witness the word *jhāna* used in both its two basic Buddhist senses (the general sense of “meditation” and as “dhyana” or “mental absorption”):

If a monk cultivates the first dhyana for even the duration of a mere finger-snap then, monks, he is called a monk who dwells as one whose meditation is not in vain: a doer of the Teacher's Teaching, a follower of his advice, he does not eat the country's alms in vain [for nothing].¹
(**Eka,dhamma Accharā,saṅghata Sutta**, A 1.20/1:38)

Ajahn Brahmavamso opens his insightful experiential paper on “The Jhānas” (2003) with this important declaration:

In the original Buddhist scriptures, there is only one word for any level of meditation. *Jhāna* designates meditation proper, where the meditator's mind is stilled from all thought, secluded from all five-sense activity and is radiant with other-worldly bliss. Put bluntly, if it isn't *Jhāna* then it isn't true Buddhist meditation! Perhaps this is why the culminating factor of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path,² the one that deals with right meditation [ie *sammā,samādhi* or right concentration], is nothing less than the *Jhānas*. (Brahmavamso 2003:5)³

The four dhyanas (*jhāna*) (and the four formless attainments, *ārūpa*) as mundane states of deep calm, even in the preliminary stage in the path to awakening, help to provide the basis for wisdom to arise. The four dhyanas, however, emerge again in a later stage in the cultivation of the path, arising in direct connection with wisdom, when they are regarded as supramundane (*lok'uttara*) dhyanas. These supramundane dhyanas are the levels of concentration pertaining to the four levels of awakening called “the supramundane path” (*lokuttara,magga*) and the stages of deliverance resulting from them, the four spiritual fruits (*fruits*).

Even after awakening (*bodhi*) is achieved, the mundane dhyanas are still useful to the liberated person as a part of his daily meditation experience. Even for the Buddha, throughout his life, he constantly abides in his “divine dwelling” (*dibba,vihāra*), living happily here and now (D 3:220; DA 3:1006).

The Buddha constantly encourages his followers to cultivate dhyana. As evident from such texts as **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta**,⁴ **the Cūḷa Hatthi,padopama Sutta**⁵ and **the Mahā Assa,pura Sutta**,⁶ the

¹ *Accharā,saṅghāta,mattam pi ce bhikkhave bhikkhu paṭhamam jhānam bhāveti ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu arita-j.jhāno viharati satthu sāsana,karo ovāda,paṭikaro amogham raṭṭha,piṇḍam bhujjati*. This passage is actually the first of a series 191 formulas, each substituting the reading “cultivates the first dhyana,” ie incl the other 3 dhyanas, the 4 *brahma,vihāra*, the 4 satipatthanas, etc. For the full list, see A 1.20; see also Gethin 2003:269.

² Right concentration is the one-pointedness of the mind through the four absorptions. A full def is given in terms of dhyana description and factors in **Sacca,vibhaṅga S** (M 141.31/3:252).

³ My essay, “The Layman and Dhyana” (SD 8.5), shows Bhikkhu Bodhi's view does not exactly concur with Brahmavamso's view highlighted here in bold print, and yet there are important areas where they concur.

⁴ D 2.67-98/1:71-86.

four dhyanas form an important part of the complete spiritual training of the follower. The reason for this is clear. Dhyana entails a profound state of mental concentration, which in turn forms the basis for wisdom. As such, the Buddha exhorts his followers in following texts, all called **Samādhi Sutta**:⁷

Cultivate mental concentration, monks. A monk who has mental concentration understands things as they really are.⁸ (S 22.5/3:13 f; 35.99/4:80; 56.1/5:414; cf A 5.27/3:24)

The Samādhi Sutta 1 (S 22.5) explains the expression “understands things as they really are” (*yathā, bhūtaṃ pajānāti*) as referring to the stock passage regarding the five aggregates, “Such is form...feeling... perception...formations...consciousness; such is its passing away.”⁹

2 The Buddha discovered dhyana

The Suttas often speak of four dhyanas (*jhānā*), or more specifically, the four form dhyanas (*rūpa-j, -jhāna*).¹⁰ These states of alertness and lucidity are attained through full meditative concentration (*appanā samādhi*), during which there is a complete, though temporary, suspension of the fivefold sense-activity and the five mental hindrances [4]. The first dhyana is historically important because, as recorded in **the Mahā Saccaka Sutta** (M 36), the child Siddhattha attained it by watching the breath at the tender age of 7, meditating under the rose-apple tree during the first-ploughing,¹¹ and this experience would later point the way toward the Bodhisattva’s awakening.

I thought thus, ‘I recall that (during the first-ploughing) when my father the Sakya was occupied, while I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered upon and dwelt in the first dhyana that is accompanied by initial application and sustained application, zest and happiness born of seclusion. Could that be the path to awakening?’

Then following on that memory,¹² I realized, ‘That is the path to awakening!’ (M 36.31/1:246)

The Buddha-to-be discovered dhyana. This remarkable event is alluded to in two places in the Nikāyas—both called **Pañcala, caṇḍa Sutta**—in a stanza spoken by the devaputra Pañcala, caṇḍa:

In the midst of confines, the sage
Of vast wisdom has found the opening—
The Buddha who has awakened to [discovered] dhyana,
The lone lordly bull, the sage.¹³ (A 9.42.1/4:449)

⁵ M 27.17-26/1:181-184.

⁶ M 389.12-29/1:274-280.

⁷ S 22.5, 35.99, 56.1.

⁸ *Samādhin bhikkhave bhāvētha. Samāhito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathā, bhūtaṃ pajānāti.* See DhsA 162.

⁹ See **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.14/2:301 f), **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.38/1:61), (**Pañca-k, khandha**) **Samādhi S** (S 22.5/3:13f), (**Salāyatana**) **Samādhi S** (S 35.99/4:80). See also **Dasa, bala S 1** (S 12.21/2:27 f), **Dasa, bala S 2** (S 12.23/2:29-32), **Siha S** (S 22.78/3:84-86), **Khemaka S** (S 22.89/ 3:126-132) and **Nāva S** (S 22.101/3:152-155). The origin and passing away of the aggregates are explained in **Paṭisallāna S** (S 22.6/3:15) by way of diachronic conditionality, and in **Upādāna Parivatta S** (S 22.56/3:58-61 = SD 3.7) & **Satta-t, ṭhāna S** (S 22.57/3:61-65) by way of synchronic conditionality. See S:B 743 n58.

¹⁰ The four formless meditative states (*ārūpa*) are properly called “formless attainments” (*arūpa, samāpatti*), or simply as “attainments” (*samāpatti*). As planes of existence, they are called “formless spheres” (*arūp āyatana* or *arūpa, loka*).

¹¹ The first-ploughing, that is, the rite of the first sowing, *vappa, maṅgala* (MA 2:290; J 1:57). On this first dhyana episode (M 36.31 f/1:246 f), cf Chinese version, T1428.781a4-11.

¹² That is, regarding the mindfulness of the in-and-out-breathing (MA 2:291).

¹³ *Sambādhe gataṃ okāsaṃ, avudā bhūri.medhaso | yo jhānaṃ abujjhi buddho, paṭilīna, nisabho munī ti.* For *abujjhi* here, S (PTS ed) has *vl abuddhi* (with no change in meaning). S:B tr: “The one of broad wisdom has indeed

Indeed, Pañcāla, caṇḍa, even in the midst of confines [the household life],
 They find the Dharma for attaining nirvana—
 Those who have gained mindfulness,
 Those rightly well-concentrated (in mind).¹⁴ (S 2.1.7/1:48)

The stanza, recorded in **the Pañcala, caṇḍa Sutta** (S 2.1.7), is first spoken by the devaputra Pañcala, caṇḍa before the Buddha himself, and in **the (Ānanda) Pañcala(caṇḍa) Sutta** (A 9.42), Ānanda is recorded as giving a full explanation of it to the monk Udāyī (A 9.42/4:449-451). The Saṃyutta Commentary, in explaining the phrase “in the midst of confines” (*sambādhe*) says that there are two kinds of confines: the confines of mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa, sambādha*) and the confines of the cords of sense-pleasures (*kāma, guṇa, sambādha*), and that the former is meant here. (SA 1:106). The Commentary is being somewhat technical, as I think we can take *sambādhe* just as fittingly here to mean “in the household life.” After all, we often find *sambādha* (“crowded”) in the phrase *sambādho gharavāso* (“the crowded household life”).¹⁵ It is also likely that the Buddha is alluding to his experience of the first dhyana as a young boy (M 36).

Bodhi translates *jhānaṃ abujjhi buddho* as “the Buddha who discovered jhāna,” by which he apparently takes “discovered” figuratively, in the sense that the Buddha “has awakened” or understood dhyana. **Brahmavamso** takes *abujjhi* literally as “discovered” in the sense of “found” what no one before him had done:

When it is said that the Buddha discovered *Jhāna*, it is not to be understood that no one had ever experienced *Jhāna* before. For instance, in the era of the previous Buddha Kassapa, countless men and women achieved *Jhāna* and subsequently realized Enlightenment. But in the India of twenty six centuries ago, all knowledge of *Jhāna* had disappeared. This was one reason that there is no mention at all of *Jhāna* in any religious text before the time of the Buddha.¹⁶

(Brahmavamso 2003:5)

Brahmavamso then goes to explain the Bodhisattva’s meditation training under Ālāra Kālāma (from whom he learned to attain the stage of nothingness) and Uddaka Rāmaputta (from whom he mastered his father Rāma’s teaching and attained the stage of neither-perception-nor-non-perception).¹⁷

However, these two attainments could not have been connected to *Jhāna*, because the Bodhisatta recalled, just prior to sitting under the Bodhi Tree, that the only time in his life that he had experienced any *Jhāna* was as a young boy, while sitting under a Rose-Apple Tree as his father conducted the first-ploughing ceremony (M 36).

One of the reasons why *Jhāna* was not practised before the Buddha’s enlightenment was because people then either indulged in seeking pleasure and comfort of the body or else followed

found | The opening in the midst of confinement, | The Buddha who discovered jhāna | The chief bull, aloof (from the herd), the sage.” See S:B 386 n151.

¹⁴ Lines cd: *Ye satim paccalattamsu sammā te susamāhitā ti. Paccalattamsu* (also *paccaladdhamsu*) is past 3 pl of *paṭilabhati*.

¹⁵ **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.41/1:63), **Subha S** (D 10.29/1:1206), **Tevijja S** (D 31.41/1:250); **Cūla Hatthipadopama S** (M 27.12/1:179), **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36.12/1:240), **Mahā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 38.32/1:267), **Kandaraka S** (M 51.13/1:344), **Ghoṭa, mukha S** (M 95.15/2:162), **Saṅgarava S** (M 100.9/2:211), **Devadaha S** (M 101.31/2:226), **Cha-b, bisodhana S** (M 112.12/3:33), **Danta, bhūmi S** (M 125.14/3:134), **Civara S** (S 16.11/2:219), **Thapati S** (S 55.6/5:350); **Attantapa S** (A 4.198/2:208), **Upāli S** (A 10.98/5:204), **Soṇa S** (U 5.6/59).

¹⁶ **The Dakkhiṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 142) mentions the “outsider free from lust for sense-pleasures” (*bāhirakā kāmesu vitarāga*) that is, a worldly dhyana-attainer¹⁶ (M 142.5/ 3:255). If such a meditator existed before the Buddha’s time in India or exists outside of Buddhism, then Ajahn Brahmavamso’s assertion that “the Buddha discovered *Jhāna*” may need to be re-examined (Brahmavamso 2003:5). See “The Layman and Dhyana,” SD 8.5(11c), 2005.

¹⁷ See **Ariya, pariyesanā S** (M 26.15a-17/1:163-167) = SD 1.11.

a religion of tormenting the body. Both were caught up with the body and its five senses and knew no release from the five senses. Neither produced the sustained tranquillity of the body necessary as the foundation for *Jhāna*. When the Bodhisatta began the easy practices leading to such tranquillity of the body, his first five disciples abandoned him in disgust. Such a practice was not regarded as valid. Therefore it was not practised, and so *Jhāna* never occurred.

(Brahmavamso 2003:6)

The Nagara Sutta (S 12.65) records the Buddha as comparing the noble eightfold path culminating in right concentration, namely, the four dhyanas, to “an ancient path, an ancient road travelled by the Perfectly Self-awakened Buddhas of the past” that he has re-discovered (S 12.65/2:105-107).¹⁸

3 Definition of *jhāna*

The Sanskrit cognate of *jhāna* is *dhyāna*,¹⁹ and its the Pali verb is *jhāyati*, of which there are three meanings: (1) to think, meditate; (2) to search; (3) to burn.²⁰ **The Samanta, pāsādikā** (the Vinaya Commentary) defines *jhāna* as follows (abridged):

Iminā yogino jhāyanti ti pi jhānam, By this, yogis [meditators] think/meditate, as such it is dhyana.

Or, *jhāyati upanijjhāyati ti jhānam*, “to think,” that is, “to think closely over (an object)” is dhyana... *Paccanika, dhamme jhāpeti ti jhānam*, “to burn opposing states” is dhyana.

Paccanika, dhamme dahati, gocaram vā cinteti ti attho, The meaning is “to burn opposing qualities,” or “to think over something suitable (*go, cara*).”

Hence, “thinking closely over” is its characteristic.

(VA 145 f)

By way of denotation (direct meaning), *jhāna* means meditation or contemplation, and also the stages of meditation; as connotation (extended meaning), it includes the sense of “burning,” that is, of destroying the mental defilements.

The (Kamma) Nidāna Sutta (A 3.33) contains the well-known simile of the seeds, that is, karma are like seeds that sprout or do not sprout depending on the conditions (A 3.33.2c/1:135).²¹ **The Aṅguttara Commentary** explains the second simile (of the destroyed seeds) by saying that the seeds here represent the wholesome karma and unwholesome karma. The man who burns the seeds is the meditator and the fire is the knowledge of the noble path. The burning of the seeds is like the destruction of the defilements

¹⁸ See further **Dhyana was Discovered by the Buddha** = SD 33.1.

¹⁹ Most good dictionaries like the Oxford English Dictionary and the Webster’s Third New International Dictionary have “dhyana.” Since this is an accepted English word, it should be used in translations. Although some may argue that there could be problem of meaning, it is important to understand that meaning is that ultimately speakers and audience give to them. Dictionaries only record such meanings and usages that were current, but meanings and usages change as the need and trend arise. Although some Buddhist terms may be used untranslated (such as Nibbāna, saṅkhāra, and dhamma), they are contextual and understood only by the specialist. If the ordinary reader is to understand the Buddhist texts, the language should be more reader-friendly.

²⁰ The Sanskrit cognate of *jhāna* is *dhyāna*, of which there are 3 roots:

√*dhī*, to think → Skt *dhyāyati*, P *jhāyati* (1a), to meditate, contemplate, think upon, brood over (with acc) (D 2:237; S 1:25, 57; A 5:323 f (+ *pa~*, *ni~*, *ava~*); Sn 165, 221, 425, 709, 818 (= Nm 149 *pa~*, *ni~*, *ava~*); Dh 27, 371, 395; J 1:67, 410; Vv 50.12; Pv 4.16.6.

√*dhā*, to think → Skt *dhyāyati*, P *jhāyati* (1b), to search for, hunt after.

√*kṣa(y)* & √*kṣī*, to burn → Skt *kṣāyati*; P *jhāyati* (2), to burn, to be on fire; fig to be consumed, to waste away, to dry up (D 1:50 (= *jāleti* DA 1:151)); caus *jhāpeti* (VvA 38 = *jhāyati* 1a: to destroy by means of *jhāna*).

See Gunaratana 1985:7 f.

²¹ For a comparison of the mind to seeds, see **Bīja S** (S 22.54/3:54 f). For a poetic version of the vegetation simile, see **Selā S** (S 5.9/1:134c = v550). For a comparison of consciousness to a seed, see **Bhava S** (A 3.76/1:223 f). For a comparison of karma to seeds, see **(Kamma) Nidāna S** (A 3.33/ 1:134-136) = SD 4.14.

on attaining path-knowledge. The reduction of the seeds to ashes is like when the five aggregates are cut off at the root (as in the arhat who is no longer motivated by craving). When the ashes are winnowed away in the wind or carried away by the stream, it is like when the five aggregates utterly cease (with the arhats' parinirvana), never again to arise in the cycle of life (AA 2:223).

The abstract noun *jhāna* (Skt *dhyāna*) as such originally meant “meditation, mental cultivation” and it is in this sense that the term is transmitted into Chinese (*chan*), Korean (*seon*), Japanese (*zen*) and Vietnamese (*th'ien*). Such being the case, a good modern word for the Pali term *jhāna* would be the anglicized Sanskrit “dhyana,” which is also found in better dictionaries. [1]

4 Right concentration

The importance of dhyana (*jhāna*) in early Buddhism is attested by the fact that it is placed prominently at the culmination point of the noble eightfold path and fully defined in such texts as **the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (D 22) and **the Sacca,vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 141) thus:

And what, friends, is **right concentration** (*sammā,samādhi*)?

Here, quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states, a monk enters and dwells in the **first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of seclusion.²²

With the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, the monk enters and dwells in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of concentration.²³

With the fading away of zest, the monk remains equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body. He enters and dwells in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’²⁴

With the abandoning of pleasure and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of happiness and grief—the monk enters and dwells in **the fourth dhyana**, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.²⁵

This, friends, is called right concentration.

(D 22.21/2:314 f, M 141.31/3:252; also D 2.75-81/1:73-75, M 27.19-22/1:181 f)

It is clear from the statement—“quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states”—in the above definition of right concentration that before dhyana can be attained, one has to overcome the five mental hindrances (*pañca,nīvaraṇā*), namely, sensual lust, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and perpetual doubt.²⁶

The well known stock phrase *ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhā,domanassam* (having put away covetousness and displeasure in the world, he dwells exertive, fully aware, mindful...) ²⁷ is

²² *Vivicc'eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi sa,vitakkaṃ sa,vicāraṃ viveka,jam pīti,sukhaṃ paṭhama-j,jhānaṃ*

²³ *Vitakka,vicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasadānaṃ cetaso ekodi,bhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhi,jam pīti,sukhaṃ dutiya-j,jhānaṃ*. The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuṇhī,bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking and discursion, *vitakka,vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:273); cf S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī,saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech: see **Kolita S** (S 21.1/2:273 f) & **Dutiya Jhāna S** (S 40.2/4:263 f). In **Ariya,-pariyesanā S** (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (i.e. either talk Dharma or meditate).

²⁴ *Pītiyā ca virāgā ca upekkhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno, sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti yan taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti, “upekkhako satimā sukha,vihārī ti tatiya-j,jhānaṃ*.

²⁵ *Sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbe'va somanassa,domanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkham asukhaṃ upekkhā,sati,parisuddhiṃ catuttha-j,jhānaṃ*.

²⁶ Respectively: *kāma-c, chanda, byāpāda, thīna,middha, uddhacca,kukkucca, vicikicchā* (A 3:62; Vbh 378). See Gunaratana 1985:28-30.

²⁷ See **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.3nn). Gethin discusses this basic formula, 2001:47-53.

found in such suttas as **the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (D 22.1c/2:290) and **Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10.3/1:56). The word “exertive” or “ardent” (*ātāpī*) connotes effort (*vīriya*) and “fully aware” (*sampajāno*) refers to incipient wisdom (*paññā*). The dvandva “covetousness and displeasure” (*abhiṭṭhā,domanassa*) is a synecdoche (or short form) for the first two mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇā*), sensual lust and ill will, but in the early Suttas, is a short form for the five hindrances (*pañca,nīvaraṇā*) themselves, whose removal leads to mindfulness (*sati*), mental concentration (*samādhi*) and absorption (*jhāna*).

Occasionally, the phrase, “concentrated with one-pointed mind” (*samāhitā ek’agga,cittā*)—eg **the (Satipaṭṭhāna) Salla Sutta**, (S 47.4/5:145)—shows the presence of concentration. Thus altogether four of **the five spiritual faculties** (*pañc’indriya*) are indicated here. Although faith (*saddhā*) is not mentioned here, it is implicit in the motivation behind the practice in the first place, and it is also implicit in one of the dhyana-factors of the second dhyana, “inner tranquility” (*sampasāda*) (Vbh 258), which has elements of both faith as well as peace [3]. This shows that mindfulness does not work alone, but in harmony with all the five spiritual faculties (*pañc’indriya*).

5 The four dhyanas

5.1 The first dhyana. The stock passage describing **the first dhyana** (*paṭhama-jjhāna*) is as follows:

Quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states, he enters and dwells in the **first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of seclusion.²⁸ (D 2.75b/1:73)

This formula both gives a description of the first dhyana and lists the dhyana-factors (*jhān’āṅga*). The descriptive part says: “quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states”, alluding to the overcoming of the five mental hindrances. **The Vibhaṅga** gives a list of five dhyana-factors as follows: initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), zest [joyful interest] (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) (Vbh 257). All the ancient Pali and Buddhist Sanskrit traditions agree on these five dhyana factors.²⁹ The state referred to by the phrase “born of seclusion” (*viveka,ja*) is called “one-pointedness of mind” by the Vibhaṅga.

However, it is important to note that the Sutta formula does *not* mention “one-pointedness of the mind” (*cittassa ekaggatā*) or “concentration” (*samādhi*). Buddhaghosa, however, argues that it should be a part of the first dhyana *simply because the Vibhaṅga says so* (Vism 147). The reason that one-pointedness of the mind is not mentioned in the canonical formula is because of the presence of “initial application and sustained application” (*vitakka,vicāra*), a kind of subdued mental chatter and investigating—which prevent any real mental concentration.³⁰ Only the Abhidhamma Piṭaka and later works like the Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha, and the Sanskrit works, Abhidharma,samuccaya and Abhidharma,kośa regard “one-pointedness of mind” as a factor of the first dhyana, but there is no evidence whatsoever in the Pali Canon to support this view.

5.2 The second dhyana. True one-pointedness of mind arises only in the second dhyana, when applied and sustained applications are suppressed. This is clear from the stock formula for **the second dhyana** (*dutiya-jjhāna*):

²⁸ *Vivicc’eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi sa,vitakkaṃ sa,vicāraṃ viveka,jaṃ pīti,sukhaṃ paṭhama-jjhānaṃ*

²⁹ For a comparative study of dhyanas across the early Buddhist schools, see Rahula 1978:101-109 (ch 10).

³⁰ Asaṅga in his **Abhidharma,samuccaya**, says that both applied and sustained thoughts are “mental babble” (*mano,jalpa*): while applied thought is “mental babble that seeks” (*paryeṣaka mano,jalpa*), sustained thought is “mental babble that reviews” (*pratyavekṣaka mano,jalpa*) (Abhds 10). Cf **Visuddhi,magga**: The first dhyana is disturbed by applied thought and sustained thought, like water disturbed by ripples and wavelets (Vism 4.144/156 f). See Rahula 1978:103 f.

With the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he enters and dwells in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.³¹ (D 2.77/1:74 f)

“Oneness of mind” (*cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ*) and “born of concentration” (*samādhi, jaṃ*) clearly describes the second dhyana. In place of “born of seclusion” (*viveka, jaṃ*) of the first dhyana, the second dhyana has “born of concentration,” which clearly shows that *viveka, ja* is used for the first dhyana because *samādhi, ja* does not apply there.

This formula, too, gives both a description of the second dhyana, and its four dhyana-factors, which, according to **the Vibhaṅga Sutta** analysis are: inner tranquillity (*sampasāda*),³² zest (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) (Vbh 258, 263). The **Vibhaṅga** Abhidhamma analysis gives three dhyana-factors: zest, happiness, one-pointedness of mind (Vbh 263).³³ As such, it appears as if we have here two different kinds of second dhyana. **The Visuddhi, magga** attempts to clarify this confusion, using the factors of the first dhyana as an example:

When these five factors (of the first dhyana) have arisen, it is said that dhyana has arisen. Hence these are called its five constituent factors. Therefore, it should not be considered that there is another thing called “dhyana” which made up of them. (Vism 4.107/146)

5.3 The third dhyana. The third dhyana (*tatiya-j, jhāna*) is described in this stock formula:

With the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body. He enters and dwells in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, “Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.”³⁴ (D 2.79/1:75)

The words “with the fading away of zest” (*pītiyā ca virāga*) show that the zest (joyful interest) of the second dhyana is suppressed here. From the remaining words of the passage, we can deduce the following four dhyana-factors of the third dhyana: equanimity (*upekkhā*), mindfulness (*sati*), full awareness (*sampajāna*), and happiness (*sukha*). Although there is no word in the formula indicating “one-pointedness of mind,” we can assume its presence by virtue of its being a factor of the second dhyana. Thus **the Vibhaṅga** (like the Abhidharma, samuccaya and Abhidharma, kośa) gives five factors of the third dhyana: equanimity, mindfulness, full awareness, happiness, and one-pointedness of mind (Vbh 260).

Now the question arises here whether “equanimity” (*upekkhā*) and “happiness” (*sukha*) can co-exist. **The Abhidharma, kośa** explains that “equanimity” (*upekṣa*) here is the “equanimity of formations” (*saṃ-skārôpekṣā*) and not “equanimity of feeling” (*vedanôpekṣā*) (Abdhk 8.8b/8:148). **The Visuddhi, magga**,

³¹ *Vitakka, vicārāṇaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanāṃ cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicārāṃ samādhi, jaṃ pīti, sukhaṃ dutiya-j, jhānaṃ*. The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṇhī, bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking and pondering, *vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur (S 2:273); cf S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya, pariyesanā S** (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (i.e. either talk Dharma or meditate).

³² *Sampasādana* here has 2 connotations: “faith” in the sense of trust or conviction, and “tranquillity” in the sense of inner peace. See Vbh 168 & Vism 4.144 f/156 f; also Gunaratana 1985:83.

³³ How the 4 dhyanas become 5 is explained in **Visuddhi, magga**: “What is second in the Fourfold Method, by splitting them into two, becomes second and third in the Fivefold Method. The third and fourth here (in the Fourfold Method) become fourth and fifth there (in the Fivefold Method). The first is the same in both methods” (Vism 4.202/169). See Rahula 1978:102.

³⁴ *Pītiyā ca virāgā ca upekkhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno, sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti yaṃ taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti, “upekkhako satimā sukha, viharī ti tatiya-j, jhānaṃ*.

however, says that it is “equanimity of dhyana” (*jhān’upekkhā*) (Vism 4.169 f/162). In the (Udāyi) Nibbāna (A 9.34), this dialogue (abridged) between the venerable Sāriputta and the venerable Udāyi is instructive:

- [Sāriputta:] “This nirvana, friends, is happiness!” (*sukham idam āvuso nibbānam*).
 [Udāyi:] “What happiness is there, friend Sāriputta, where nothing is felt?” (*kim pan’ettha āvuso Sāriputta sukham, yad ettha n’atthi vedayitan ti*).
 [Sāriputta:] “Indeed, friend, it is truly happiness where nothing is felt!” (*etad eva khv ettha āvuso sukham, yad ettha n’atthi vedayitam*). (A 9.34/4:414 f)

Sāriputta’s reply has the following significance to our discussion: (1) Feeling as experienced in the unawakened state is not the same as that in the awakened state, or even in the meditative state, which in the latter is much more refined; (2) Spiritual joy is not dependent on the physical senses: true happiness is a direct inner experience of the mind.

5.4 The fourth dhyana. The stock formula for the fourth dhyana (*catuttha-jjhāna*) is as follows:

With the abandoning of pleasure and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of happiness and grief—he enters and abides in **the fourth dhyana**, that is neither pleasant nor painful, and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.³⁵ (D 2.81/1:75)

Here, the **Vibhaṅga** gives three factors of the fourth dhyana—equanimity (*upekkhā*), mindfulness (*sati*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek’aggatā*)—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and two factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 168).

From the Pali formula itself, it is clear that the meditator in the fourth dhyana experiences neither pain nor pleasure, neither joy nor grief: he is “neutral” in feeling (physical or mental). The expression *upekkhā,sati,parisuddhi* is a difficult one, and can be interpreted either as a dvandva, as “the purity of equanimity and the purity of mindfulness” (as in the Abhidhamma, samuccaya and the Abhidhamma, kośa) or as a tatpurusha, as “the mindfulness fully purified by equanimity” (as followed here). If this is the case—taking *upekkhā,sati,parisuddhi* to mean “the mindfulness fully purified by equanimity”—then the dhyana-factor here is the “purity of mindfulness” and not the purity of equanimity itself.³⁶

In summary, we can tabulate (according to the Abhidhamma tradition) the respective **dhyana-factors** (*jhān’aṅgā*) of the four dhyanas as follows:

	<u>initial</u> <u>application</u>	<u>sustained</u> <u>application</u>	<u>zest</u>	<u>happiness</u>	<u>one-pointedness</u> <u>of mind</u>
1 st dhyana	<i>vitakka</i>	<i>vicāra</i>	<i>pīti</i>	<i>sukha</i>	(<i>ek’aggatā</i>) ³⁷
2 nd dhyana	...	...	<i>pīti</i>	<i>sukha</i>	<i>ek’aggatā</i>
3 rd dhyana	...	...	...	<i>sukha</i>	<i>ek’aggatā</i>
4 th dhyana	...	...	...	...	<i>ek’aggatā</i>

Here it is useful to note that these various sets of dhyana-factors mentioned are not the only mental phenomena present in the dhyanas. In the **Anupada Sutta** (M 111), for example, Sāriputta gives the following additional concomitants: contact, feeling, perception, volition, consciousness, desire, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity and attention.³⁸ The Abhidhamma gives even longer lists of concomitants. **The**

³⁵ *Sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbe’va somanassa,domanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkham asukhaṃ upekkhā,sati,parisuddhiṃ catuttha-jjhānaṃ.*

³⁶ See Rahula 1978:108 f; Gunaratana 1985:99.

³⁷ In the position of “one-pointedness” (*ek’aggatā*) in the 1st dhyana, see §6a.

³⁸ M 111.4-11/3:25-27. *Phasso vedanā saññā cetanā cittaṃ chando adhimokkho viriyam sati upekkhā manasikaro.*

Dhamma,saṅgaṇī, for example, lists about 60 mental states for the first dhyana. The **Abhidhammattha,saṅgaha**, however, narrows the list down to a set of 33 distinct concomitants (Abhs: BRS 2.2-5/76-88). However, only the five mentioned in the above table are the dhyana-factors of the first dhyana because “when these have arisen, dhyana is said to have arisen” (Vism 4.107/152).³⁹

6The five dhyana factors

6.0 The dhyana-factors,⁴⁰ as the term suggests, must appear all together at same time to effect a meditation dhyana. As seen from the above table, there are these five dhyana-factors:⁴¹

- (1) initial application (*vitakka*),
- (2) sustained application (*vicāra*),
- (3) zest (*pīti*),
- (4) happiness (*sukha*), and
- (5) one-pointedness (of the mind) (*ekaggatā*).

At this point, it is useful to note Brahmavamso’s “summary of the landmarks of all dhyanas”:

1. There is no possibility of thought;
 2. No decision-making process is available;
 3. There is no perception of time;
 4. Consciousness is non-dual, but only of bliss that does not move; and
 5. The five senses are fully shut off, and only the sixth sense, the mind, is in operation.
- (“The Jhānas,” 2003:43)

As such, if during meditation, one is wondering whether it is dhyana or not, once can be sure that it is not! These features of dhyana can only be recognized after emerging from it, using reviewing mindfulness once the whole mind is on the move again. We shall examine each the dhyana factors against the background of this summary.

6.1 Initial application (*vitakka*). The Pali term *vitakka* (Skt *vitarka*) means thinking or considering (and is an aspect of right thought, Vbh 257), but in meditation practice, it refers to the start of “bare attention”⁴² of the mind to a single object (such as the breath in breath meditation), that is, non-judgemental awareness. This dhyana-factor is unstable during the counting (*gaṇanā*) and connecting stages (*anubandhanā*), but is fully developed during the contact (*phusanā*) or fixing stage (*thapanā*) of the breath meditation.⁴³ In early Buddhism, it is always paired with the second dhyana-factor, sustained application.

Although all dhyanas are states of unmoving bliss, there is, however, some movement discernible in the first dhyana, which Brahmavamso calls “the wobble.” In the first dhyana, the mind instinctively grasps at the bliss, as it is so delicious. However, because the bliss here is fuelled by letting go, the mind automatically lets go again, and the bliss grows again. It is this subtle involuntary movement gives rise to the “initial application” of the first dhyana.⁴⁴

6.2 Sustained application (*vicāra*). The Pali term *vicāra* means examination or investigation, but in meditation terminology, it is the mind’s thorough awareness of the object (such as the breath). This factor first appears in the connecting stage of the breath meditation.

³⁹ See Gunaratana 1985:69 f.

⁴⁰ *Jhānaṅga*, also tr as absorption factors or constituents of absorption.

⁴¹ On how these 5 dhyana factors relate to the 4 dhyanas, see Brahmavamso, 2003:44-64 (pt 3).

⁴² This expression is borrowed from Nyanaponika, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation: a handbook of mental training based on the Buddha's way of mindfulness*. London: Rider 1962. Repr NY: Samuel Weiser 1971.

⁴³ These are the first 4 stages taught in **Visuddhi,magga** (Vism 8.189-197/278-280; cf VA 2:418).

⁴⁴ On *vitakka,vicāra*, see also **Bhāvanā** = SD 15.12(8.5).

Let us consider the famous commentarial analogy of the wild calf tied to a post.⁴⁵ The calf represents the mind, the post is the breath, and the rope is mindfulness. The calf's being tied to the post is initial application; its dashing about at the rope is sustained application.

Another well-known analogy is that of the striking of a bell or a gong—the striking action represents initial application and the reverberating sound is sustained application (Vism 4.89/142). They both go together. A further analogy is that of a man polishing a metal pot (Vism 4.91/142). The man holds the pot in his right hand and polishes it with his left. The holding of the pot is analogous of initial application and the polishing is sustained application.

In computer jargon, initial application is like clicking on an icon on the computer monitor, and sustained application is one's attention to what appears on the screen. Another modern example is that of the driver's braking while driving a motor car—the braking is analogous of initial application and the momentum that pushes the car on is sustained application. The two factors, therefore, function closely together.

Earlier on [6.1], we saw how the mind instinctively grasps at the bliss, and then automatically lets go again—by way of initial application—and the bliss grows again. Another way of looking at this “wobble” is the back and forth movement between involuntary grasping towards the bliss and automatic letting-go of: this is in fact the process of the dhyana factors of “initial application” (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*). According to Brahmavamso *vicāra* is the involuntary grasping of the bliss, while *vitakka* is the automatic movement back into the bliss.

While in non-meditation contexts, *vitakka* and *vicāra* may refer to “initial thought” and “sustained thought” respectively,

it is impossible that such a gross activity as thinking can exist in such a refined state as *Jhāna*. In fact, thinking ceases a long time prior to *Jhāna*. In *Jhāna*, *Vitakka* and *Vicāra* are both sub-verbal and so don't qualify as thought. (Brahmavamso, 2003:43)

6.3 Zest (*pīti*). In meditation language, *pīti* is joy “dissociated from sensual desire” or “joyful interest.” It is an exhilarating sense of relief that one has overcome sensual desire with such positive thoughts as “I've attained what was to be done!” It is an energizing joyful interest in the pleasant meditative states that arises. As such, zest is the result of “letting go” or renunciation of negative mental states. **The Visuddhi-magga** speaks of five kinds of zest (Vism 143):⁴⁶

1. “Minor zest” (*khuddaka.pīti*) which often causes horripilation (hair-raising or “goose pimples”).
2. “Momentary zest” (*khaṇika.pīti*) because it lasts only a brief moment like lightning flashes at different times.
3. “Flooding zest” (*okkantika.pīti*) because it showers and flows repeatedly throughout the body as like waves breaking on the sea-shore.
4. “Uplifting zest” (*ubbega* or *ubbeṇḍa.pīti*), makes one feel so light that one might actually levitate into the air!
5. “Pervading zest” (*pharaṇa.pīti*), because it floods one's being like a torrent that fills a mountain cave.

This classification may be problematic in reference to such sutta statements about dhyana, as this one found in **the Sāmañña-phala Sutta** (D 2): “There is no part of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of seclusion” [8]. Apparently, only the fifth type of zest applies fully to a dhyana state, while the earlier four types are only weak, momentary, or preliminary experiences of zest.

Many non-Buddhists, too, experience these forms of zest or “rapture” in their own prayers and rites. All these are only by-products of the first dhyana—mind-made, temporary and ultimately unsatisfactory, and cannot be owned by anyone. For Buddhist practitioner, such intense joy is not the aim of religion or meditation, but only a side-effect, albeit a pleasant one, of the spiritual quest. A Buddhist practitioner strives even beyond such joys for the higher joy of spiritual liberation!

⁴⁵ DA 3:762 f = MA 1:247 = PmA 2:488 f = VA 2:405 f = Vism 268 f; cf MA 2:82, 4:198. This analogy is discussed in detail in “The training of the bull” (SD 8.2).

⁴⁶ On the stages of zest, see *Bhāvanā* = SD 15.12(9.3).

6.4 Happiness (*sukha*). Happiness or joy (*sukha*) arises because the mind is free from the mental hindrances⁴⁷ and is filled with zest. While zest is the joyful satisfaction at getting a desirable object (like winning a contest, or getting a windfall), happiness (*sukha*) is the actual experiencing of that happiness (Vism 145) but the latter is usually short-lived.

Like initial application and sustained application, zest and happiness, too, go together. However, there are two important points to note between the two. While zest must co-exist with happiness, only happiness (*sukha*) can occur by itself in meditation. Zest is a mental formation (*saṅkhāra*), while happiness is a feeling (*vedanā*). Zest, being karmically potential, is the *cause* of happiness.

6.5 One-pointedness of the mind (*cittassa ekaggatā*). One-pointedness of the mind occurs when it fully focusses only on one mental object (such as the breath). It follows after one has gained the fixing (*t hapanā*) of the mind on the counter-image.⁴⁸ The mind does not waver or flutter, but is fixed and still. One-pointedness of the mind, sometimes called the “fixedness,” focussing, or resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*) of the mind, is mental concentration (*samādhi*) in the true sense of the word. It is important to note that true one-pointedness of the mind only occurs in the second dhyana onwards. [5.1]

7 What happens when one reaches dhyana?

The dhyana-factors do not act singly but work together. They are merely constituents that make up meditation dhyana like a rope with five strands or the ingredients of “five-spice powder” (popular local ingredient in cooking). When the mind experiences the first dhyana, all the five factors are present. They are all firm in themselves, but are interdependent like five poles firmly sunk together into the ground are made firmer by securing the top ends together.

When the counter-image appears, both initial application and sustained application are no longer present. They are transformed into mental concentration on the breath “at one point.” They have not really disappeared but have progressively become more subtle right up to the stage of fixing (that is, the counter-image)—the mind has gained attainment or full concentration. When all the five dhyana-factors are present and the meditator experiences dhyana.

Although the dhyana-factors arise simultaneously, each of them has a special function. **Applied thought**, that is the mind’s initial anchoring on a single object, has a contrary character to sloth and torpor. Sensual desire, and restlessness and worry, too, cannot arise when the mind is **concentrated**. The same is true of **sustained application**: it is especially incompatible with perpetual doubt. For as long as it is present, the mind dwells watchful of the meditation object.

Zest and happiness are incompatible with ill will, and restlessness and worry respectively. When people are zestful and happy, they do not harbour these negative thoughts. Though **the one-pointedness of**

⁴⁷ “Mental hindrances” (*nīvaraṇā*). The 5 mental hindrances are: sensual desire (*kāma-c, chanda*); ill will (*vyāpāda*); sloth and torpor (*thīna, middha*); restlessness and worry (*uddhacca, kukkuccha*); and perpetual doubt (*vicikicchā*). See **Nīvaraṇa Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55) = SD 3.12, & “Listening Beyond the Ear,” SD 2.2(5).

⁴⁸ **Counter-image** (*paṭibhāga nimitta*). The term *nimitta* (mental image or reflex) is the image of one’s mind while one is deeply engrossed in meditation, appearing so vividly as if one were seeing it with one’s eyes. In commentarial terms, there are three levels of mental images: (1) the preparatory image (*parikamma nimitta*) or the meditation object perceived at the start of one’s meditation. (2) When this image has reached some degree of focus, albeit still unsteady and unclear, it is called the acquired image (*uggaha nimitta*). (3) On greater mental focus, an entirely clear and immovable image arises, and becomes the counter-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*). As soon as this image arises, the meditator has attained access (or neighbourhood) concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). It is also by means of the counter-image that one gains full concentration (*appanā samādhi*). In the **Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha**, the meditation methods in terms of these three images, are called cultivation (*bhāvanā*), ie as *parikamma bhāvanā* (preparatory cultivation), *upavacāra bhāvanā* (access cultivation) and *appanā bhāvanā* (full cultivation) respectively. (Vism 4.27-31/125 f; Abhs:BRS 9.16-18/340-342; Abhs:SR 203)

the mind is the special enemy of sensual desire, it effectively dispels all the hindrances. These incompatibilities (*paṭipakkhā*) can be summarized in this table:⁴⁹

Applied thought	is incompatible with	sloth and torpor;
Sustained thought	is incompatible with	perpetual doubt;
Zest and happiness	are incompatible with	ill will & restless and worry respectively;
One-pointedness of the mind	is incompatible with	sensual desire.

That is to say, the dhyana factors are incompatible with the mental hindrances: they cannot co-exist. Conversely, when the hindrances are overcome, dhyana arises.

The overcoming of these five hindrances by dhyana is merely a temporary suspension, called “overcoming by suppression” (*vikkhambhana, pahāna*). However, they disappear forever on one’s entering the supramundane path, thus:⁵⁰

Perpetual doubt is uprooted on attaining stream-winning;
 [Once-return only destroys part of the three unwholesome roots: greed, hate, delusion.]
 Sensual desire, ill will and worry are uprooted on attaining non-return;
 Sloth and torpor, and restlessness are uprooted on attaining arhathood.

8 Similes of the four dhyanas

The Sāmañña,phala Sutta (D 2), recounting a spiritually intense dialogue between the Buddha and the young king and parricide, Ajāta, sattu, gives a set of graphic and progressive similes for the four dhyanas (D 2:74-76). The simile for the first dhyana is given thus:

Maharajah, just as if **a skilled bathman or bathman’s apprentice** would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again and again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within and without—would not drip; even so, the monk permeates—this very body with zest and happiness born of seclusion. There is no part of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of seclusion. (D 2.76/1:74)

The two main items in the simile are water and dry bath powder (which represents respectively the mind and its meditation object). The two are kneaded together (clearing away the hindrances) in a brass basin (meditation) until they become a ball of bath powder (mental concentration). In short, this is an analogy of how the meditating mind becomes unified on a simple level.

The simile for the second dhyana, too, employs water in an extended and natural way:

78 Maharajah, just like **a lake with spring-water welling up from within**, having no inflow from the east, west, north, or south, and with the sky supplying abundant showers, time and again, so that the cool spring welling up from within the lake would permeate and pervade, suffuse and fill it with cool waters, there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters; even so, the monk permeates this very body with zest and happiness born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of concentration. (D 2.78/1:75)

The theme of this simile is clearly that of seclusion with the suppression of applied and sustained application, that is, the shutting down of the language centre of the brain. With the temporary suspension of mental chatter, the mind fills with zest (abundant showers from the sky) and the body with happiness (the water in the lake) giving an overall pleasant (cool) experience.

⁴⁹ **The Visuddhi, magga** actually uses the term “incompatible” (*paṭipakkha*) and lists “concentration” first: *samādhi kāma-c, chandassa paṭipakkho, pīti vyāpādassa, vitakko thīna, middhassa, sukha uddhacca, kukkucassa, vicāro vicikicchāyā ti* [] *peṭake vuttā* (Vism 114).

⁵⁰ See A 1.2, 6.21; S 46.51.

The third dhyana continues with the water imagery, adding in the lotus, the most sacred flower in Buddhism:

80 Maharajah, just as in a pond of the blue lotuses, red-and-white lotuses, or white lotuses,⁵¹ born and growing in the water, stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated, pervaded, suffused and filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water; even so, the monk permeates this very body with happiness free from zest, so that there is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded with this joy free from zest. (D 2.82/1:75)

The lotus roots grow in the mud below the waters but it blooms in the bright sunshine, and the lotus flower has seeds even while growing and in bloom. The meditator is like a lotus: no matter what defilements he has, they can be removed through mental cultivation since it is able to uproot their causes. That is to say, the problems are treated not only symptomatically but radically, removed at their roots. With the joy of meditation, one breaks old negative habits and cultivate new wholesome ones. The lotuses here are submerged totally in water (the mind), since at this level, there is only the mental experience of transcendental joy with the shutdown of the five physical senses.

The simile for the fourth dhyana is the shortest but the most dramatic:

82 Maharajah, just as if a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; even so, the monk sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright mind. There is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded by pure, bright mind. (D 2.82/1:75 f)

The simile uses a totally different image than the previous similes: a man sitting enveloped head to foot in a clean white cloth that glows with its own light, as it were. At this point, one is in touch with one's real self, one's individuality: one really knows one's mind or oneself. One is in direct contact with the radiant mind (*pabhassara, citta*), completely free from mental impurities and in profound spiritual peace. It is in this connection, that the Buddha declares:

Monks, this mind is radiant, and it is freed from adventitious impurities [that "arrive" through the sense-doors].

The instructed [wise] noble disciple understands things as they really are.

Therefore there is mental development for the instructed noble disciple, I say!⁵²

(A 1.6.2/1:10; also 1.5.10/1:10)

9 Using dhyana as basis for wisdom

Dhyana is very useful even on a very mundane level: that of the unawakened meditator. There are some passages in **the Majjhima** that show how dhyana can lead to liberating insight. The method comprises two stages: first, one gets into dhyana; then, one emerges and reflects on the three characteristics—that the state is impermanent, suffering and not-self—or something similar. Of the two stages, **the Aṭṭhaka, nagara Sutta** (M 52) says:

Here, householder, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk attains to and dwells in the first dhyana that is accompanied by initial application and sustained application, with zest and happiness born of seclusion.

He considers this and understands it thus: "This first dhyana is conditioned and willfully formed.⁵³ Whatever is conditioned and willfully formed is impermanent, subject to ending."

⁵¹ *uppala* (Skt *utpala*), *paduma* (*padma*) and *puṇḍarīka* respectively.

⁵² *Pabhassaraṃ idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttaṃ. Taṃ sutavā ariya, sāvako yathā, bhūtaṃ pajānati. Tasmā sutavato ariya, sāvakassa citta, bhāvanā atthi ti vadāmi ti.*

If he is steady in that, he reaches the destruction of the cankers.⁵⁴ If he does not reach the destruction of cankers because of the desire for the Dharma, the delight in the Dharma,⁵⁵ then with the destruction of the five lower fetters,⁵⁶ he becomes one who would reappear spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes) and there attain final nirvana without ever returning from that world.

(M 52.4/1:351)

The Mahā Mālunkya Sutta (M 64), using almost the same words as the Aṭṭhaka, nagara Sutta, shows a slightly different manner of self-liberation (in this case, leading to non-return):

And what, Ānanda, is the path, the way to the abandoning of the five lower fetters?

Here, with the seclusion from the acquisitions,⁵⁷ with the abandoning of unwholesome states, with the complete tranquillization of bodily inertia,⁵⁸ *quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a monk attains to and dwells in the first dhyana, that is accompanied by initial application and sustained application, with zest and happiness born of seclusion.*

Whatever exists by way of form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness, he sees those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as void, as not self.⁵⁹ He turns his mind away from those states⁶⁰ and directs it to the deathless element [nirvana] thus:

“This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the letting go of all acquisitions [attachments], the destruction of craving, dispassion [letting go of craving], cessation (of suffering), nirvana.”⁶¹

⁵³ *Abhisankhataṃ abhisañcetaṃ*. These two terms are stock indicating a conditioned state in which volition (*cetanā*) is the most important conditioning factor.

⁵⁴ “With mental cankers,” *s’āsava* = *sa* + *āsava*. The term *āsava* (lit “cankers”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (i.e. either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as “taints” (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists four *āsava*: the canker of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’-āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These four are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of three cankers (omitting the canker of views) is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict: *āsava*.

⁵⁵ “The desire...the delight for the Dharma,” *dhmma,rāgena dhmma,nandiyā*. Comy says that these two terms signify strong desire (*chanda,rāga*) towards calm and insight (*samatha,vipassanā*). If one were to let go of this desire, one becomes an arhat; otherwise, one becomes a non-returner reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:13).

⁵⁶ **The 10 fetters** are: (1) Personality view (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*), (2) persistent doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rules and rites (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma,rāga*), (5) repulsion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa,rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa,rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61, A 10.13/5:17; Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (*paṭigha*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are **the lower fetters** (*orāma,bhāgiya*), and the rest, **the higher fetters** (*uddham,bhāgiya*).

⁵⁷ “The seclusion from acquisitions” (*upadhi,viveka*). Comy glosses *upadhi* here as the five cords of sense-pleasures (MA 3:145). See M:NB 1268 n654.

⁵⁸ “Bodily inertia,” (*kāya,duṭṭhulla*). Comys gloss it as “bodily idleness” (*kāyālasīya*) (MA 3:145, 4:202) or “bodily unwieldiness due to food” (*bhattam nissāya kāyassa akammaññatā*) (VbhA 479). See M 3:151, 159.

⁵⁹ Like the prec **Aṭṭhaka,nagara S** passage, this passage shows the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā*) on the basis of calm (*samatha*), using dhyana on which the insight-practice is based as the object of insight. The terms “impermanent” (*aniccato*) and “disintegrating” (*palokato*) here show the characteristic of impermanence; three terms—“alien” (*parato*), “void” (*suññato*), and “not self” (*anattato*)—show the characteristic of not-self; the remaining 6 terms—*dukkhato, rogato, gaṇḍato, sallato, aghato, ābādhato*—show the characteristic of suffering (MA 3:146).

⁶⁰ Comy: “He turns his mind away from those states” (*so tehi dhammehi cittam paṭivāpeti*) from the 5 aggregates included in the dhyana, which he has seen to be marked with the 3 characteristics” (MA 3:146).

⁶¹ The “deathless element” (*nibbāna,dhātu*) is nirvana. First, “he directs his mind to” it with the insight consciousness, having heard it praised and described as being “peaceful, sublime,” etc. Then, with the supramundane

If he is steady in that, he reaches the destruction of the cankers. If he does not reach the destruction of cankers because of the desire for the Dharma, the delight in the Dharma, then with the destruction of the five lower fetters, he becomes one who would reappear spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes) and there attain final nirvana without ever returning from that world.

This is the path, the way to the abandoning of the five lower fetters.

(M 64.9/1:435 f; italicized texts are same as those of the Aṭṭhaka, nagara Sutta)

Such passages show how to cultivate “insight preceded by calm” (*samatha, pubbaṅgamā vipassanā*). Having first attained a dhyana, the meditator emerges from it and reflects on that state as having been created by conditions, especially volition. Then he notes its impermanence, and then reflects on the dhyana with insight into the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self.

10 Types of practitioners

Using the various teachings of the Suttas, the Commentaries introduce the idea of three kinds of practitioners and their respective vehicles, namely,

the calm [tranquillity] practitioner (*samatha, yānika*, lit, one whose vehicle is calmness),

the insight practitioner (*vipassanā, yānika*, lit, one whose vehicle is insight), and

the dry-insight practitioner (*sukkha, vipassaka*), ie one who practises only insight.

This commentarial threefold system is rooted in such canonical texts as the three (**Samatha, vipassanā Samādhi Suttas** (A 9.92-94). **The Samādhi Sutta 1** (A 9.92), the shortest of the three texts, describes the three kinds of practitioners (without naming them) thus:⁶²

Monks, there are these four persons to be found in the world. What are the four?

(a) Here, monks, a certain person is one who gains inner mental calm but does not gain the higher wisdom of insight into things.

(b) Here, monks, a certain person is one who gains the higher wisdom of insight into things but does not gain inner mental calm.

(c) Here, monks, a certain person is one who neither gains inner mental calm nor does he gain the higher wisdom of insight into things.

(d) Here, monks, a certain person is one who both gains inner mental calm and gains the higher wisdom of insight into things.

These, monks, are the four persons to be found in the world. (A 9.92/2:92)

In (**Samatha, vipassanā Samādhi Suttas 2-3** (A 9.93-94), the Buddha encourages the first practitioner—the one who gains inner mental calm but does not gain the higher wisdom of insight into things—that is, the calm practitioner (*samatha, yānika*)—to strive for “the higher wisdom of insight into things” (*adhipaññā, dhamma, vipassanā*). The second practitioner—the one who gains the higher wisdom of insight into things but does not gain inner mental calm—is exhorted to strive for mental calm.

The Aṅguttara Commentary explains “mental calm” (*ceto, samatha*) as the attainment concentration, or full concentration, of mind (*appanā, citta, samādhi*)⁶³ and “higher wisdom of insight into things” as

path, “he directs his mind to it” by making it an object and penetrating it as the peaceful, the sublime, etc. (MA 3:146)

⁶² *Cattāro me bhikkhave puggalā santo saṁvijjamānā lokasmiṁ. Katame cattāro?*

Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo lābhī hoti ajjhataṁ ceto, samathassa na lābhī adhipaññā, dhamma, vipassanāya.

Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo lābhī adhipaññā, dhamma, vipassanāya na lābhī ajjhataṁ ceto, samathassa.

Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo na c’eva lābhī hoti ajjhataṁ ceto, samathassa na lābhī adhipaññā, dhamma, vipassanāya.

Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo c’eva lābhī hoti ajjhataṁ ceto, samathassa lābhī adhipaññā, dhamma, vipassanāya. Ime kho bhikkhave cattāro puggalā santo saṁvijjamānā lokasmiṁ ti.

⁶³ Cf A 1:93.

the insight knowledge that discerns formations (*saṅkhāra, pariggaha, vipassanā, ñāṇa*), that is, insight into the five aggregates (AA 2:325).

The fact that individuals are capable of one attainment in the absence of the other provides a starting point for a differentiation of vehicles adapted to their differing capacities. In the end, however, all meditators have to enter upon the development of insight in order to reach the liberating path. (Gunaratana 1985:148)

The Yoganaddha Sutta (A 4.170) makes a very clear reference to the various vehicles for mental cultivation for the attaining to arhathood.

Thus have I heard.

At one time, the venerable Ānanda was staying in Ghosita's Monastery, near Kosambī.

Then the venerable Ānanda addressed the monks thus: "Friends!"

"Friend," the monks replied the venerable Ānanda.

The venerable Ānanda said this:

"Friends, whichever monk or nun declare before me that they have attained the final knowledge of arhathood, all of them do so in one of these four ways. What are the four?

(a) Here, friends, a monk cultivates insight preceded by calm.⁶⁴ While he thus cultivates insight preceded by calm, the path arises in him. Then he pursues, cultivates and develops that path, and while he does so, the mental fetters⁶⁵ are abandoned and the latent tendencies⁶⁶ are destroyed.

(b) ...a monk cultivates calm preceded by insight⁶⁷...

(c) ...a monk cultivates calm and insight coupled together⁶⁸...

(d) Furthermore, friends, a monk's mind is seized by agitation caused by higher states of mind.⁶⁹ But there comes a time when his mind becomes internally steadied, composed, unified and

⁶⁴ *Samatha, pubb'āṅgamaṃ vipassanaṃ*. This refers to the calm practitioner (*samatha, yānika*), ie one who first cultivates access concentration (*upacāra, samādhi*), the dhyanas or the formless attainments and then takes up insight (*vipassanā*) meditation. "Access concentration" is the concentration gained just before attaining to dhyana. See MA 1:112.

⁶⁵ Mental fetters, see §7 n above.

⁶⁶ **Latent tendencies** (*anusayā*), alt trs "underlying tendencies," "latent dispositions." There are 7 of them: (1) sensual desire (*kāma-rāga*); (2) aversion (*paṭigha*); (3) wrong view (*dīṭṭhi*); (4) perpetual doubt (*vicikicchā*); (5) conceit (*māna*); (6) desire for existence (*bhava-rāga*); (7) ignorance (*avijjā*). They are also listed in **Saṅgīti S** (D 33.2.3(12)/3:254, 282), **Chachakka S** (M 148.28/3:285), **Anusaya S** (A 7.11 & 12/4:8 f) and **Vibhaṅga** (Vbh 383). They are deeply embedded in one's mind through past habitual acts and can only be uprooted on attaining the Path. Wrong view and perpetual doubt are eliminated at stream-winning; sensual desire and aversion, at non-return; conceit, attachment to existence and ignorance, only at arhathood. See Abhs 7.9: "The latent dispositions (*anusayā*) are defilements which 'lie along with' (*anusevanti*) the mental process to which they belong, rising to the surface as obsessions whenever they meet with suitable conditions. The term 'latent dispositions' highlights the fact that the defilements are liable to arise so long as they have not been eradicated by the supramundane paths. Though all defilements are, in a sense, *anusayas*, the seven mentioned here are the most prominent." (Abhs:B 268). See also Abhs:SR 172. The first 3 latent tendencies are mentioned in **Sall'atthana S** (S 36.6/4:207-210) in SD 5.5 or "Early Buddhist Sutras" (2004 ch 2). See **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18) = SD 16.3 Introd (5).

⁶⁷ *Vipassanā, pubb'āṅgamaṃ samatham*. Here the practitioner first enters access concentration (*upacāra, samādhi*) or full concentration (*appanā, samādhi*), and then takes up insight by regarding those states as impermanent, etc (MA 1:108 f). "This refers to one who by his nature first attains to insight and then, based on insight, produces concentration" (AA 3:143), ie the insight practitioner (*vipassanā, yānika*). See MA 1:112.

⁶⁸ *Samatha, vipassanā, yoganaddham*. Here, one enters the first dhyana and emerging from it, one applies insight to that experience, ie one sees the 5 aggregates within the dhyana (form, feeling, perceptions, formations, consciousness) as impermanent, subject to suffering and not self. Then one enters the 2nd dhyana, emerges and applies insight to it. One applies the twofold reflection to the other dhyanas as well in the same manner until the path of stream-entry, or higher, is realized.

concentrated. Then the path arises in him, and while he does so, the fetters are abandoned and the latent tendencies are destroyed.

Friends, whichever monk or nun declare before me that they have attained the final knowledge of arhathood, all of them do so in one of these four ways.” (A 4.170/2:156 f)

11 The insight meditator

Concentration is necessary for seeing things as they really are. However, in the case of the insight meditator (*vipassanāyānika*), there is neither access concentration nor dhyana—what concentration then can the insight meditator use? The answer is found in a type of concentration that is different from access concentration or dhyana but pertains to calm vehicle, that is, the “**momentary concentration**” (*khaṇika samādhi*). Despite its name, momentary concentration does not refer to a single moment of concentration nestling in the midst of a distracted mind.

Rather, it denotes a dynamic concentration which flows from object to object in the ever-changing flux of phenomena, retaining a constant degree of intensity and collectedness sufficient to purify the mind of the hindrances. Momentary concentration arises in the *samathayānika* yogin simultaneously with his post-*jhānic* attainment of insight, but for the *vipassanāyānika* it develops naturally and spontaneously in the course of his insight practice without his having to fix the mind upon a single exclusive object. (Gunaratana 1985:152)

The Pali Commentaries often attest to the importance of momentary concentration in the insight vehicle. The **Visuddhi,magga**, in its discussion of the breath meditation, for example, says:

At the actual time of insight, momentary unification of the mind arises through the penetration of the characteristics (of impermanence, and so on). (Vism 8.232/289)

The **Paramattha,mañjūsā** (Visuddhi,magga Commentary) defines “momentary unification of mind” (*khaṇika citt’ek’aggatā*) as concentration lasting only for a moment:

For that, too, when it occurs interruptedly on its object in a single mode and is not overcome by opposition, fixes the mind immovably, as if in absorption. (VismṬ 278 = VismṬ:Be 1:342; see Vism:Ñ 311 n63)

This momentary concentration is essential for insight practice, “for there is no insight without momentary concentration”⁷⁰ (VismMhṭ:Be 1:11; see Vism:Ñ 3 n4).

Momentary concentration is a fluid mental focus consisting in the continuity of mind that is uninterruptedly noticing the sequence of objects as though fixed in absorption, keeping out the mental hindrances and cultivating mental purification. “For this reason momentary concentration can be understood as implicitly included in access concentration in the standard definition of purification of mind as consisting in access and absorption” (Gunaratana 1985:154).

⁶⁹ *Dhamm’uddhacca,viggahitaṃ mānasam hoti*. Comy says that the “agitation” (*uddhacca*) here refers to a reaction of the 10 “impurities of insight” (*vipassanā’nupakkilesa*) when they are wrong taken as indicating path-attainment (AA 3:143). That is, he is distracted by any of these 10 impurities: evil conduct of body, speech and mind; sensual thoughts, thoughts of ill will, violent thoughts; thoughts about relatives, home country and reputation; thoughts about higher mental states (*dhamma,vitakka*) (**Jāta,rūpa S**, A 3.100.1-10/1:253-256). The **Visuddhi,magga** uses *dhamma,vitakka* (“thoughts about higher states”) to refer to the same 10 impurities (Vism 20.105-128/633-638). Bodhi: “It is plausible, however, that the ‘agitation caused by higher states of mind’ is mental distress brought on by eagerness to instantaneous enlightenment experience” (A:ÑB 294 n69). See the story of Bāhiya Dārucīriya in **Bāhiya S** (U 1.10/6-9) & also the story of Anuruddha in (**Anuruddha**) **Upakkilesa S** (M 128/3:152-162).

⁷⁰ *Na hi khaṇika,samādhim vinā vipassanā sambhavati* (VismMhṭ:Be 1:11).

12 Conclusion

Dhyana is clearly an important part of spiritual training in early Buddhism, as evident from its comprising right concentration at the end of the noble eightfold path [1, 4]. Of the two principal approaches to Buddhist meditation—calm meditation (*samatha, bhāvanā*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā, bhāvanā*)—dhyana belongs to the category of calm meditation, but it is also a helpful tool in the cultivation of insight.

In terms of practice, the dhyanas has to be cultivated progressively beginning with the first dhyana, progressing into the second and so on. As **Brahmavamso** puts it, “each Jhāna is within the other...,” or

To put it another way, in the simile of the four-roomed house, the rooms are concentric. Thus one does not come out from the First Jhāna to go next to the Second Jhāna. Instead, one goes deeper into the First Jhāna to go into the Second Jhāna, deeper into the Second Jhāna to get to the Third Jhāna, and deeper into the Third Jhāna to enter the Fourth Jhāna. The next level of Jhāna always lies within the present Jhāna. (2003:59)

The ascent through the dhyanas consists in the successive elimination of the coarser dhyana-factors. Once the meditator has mastered the four dhyanas (or the form absorptions), he may continue, if he wishes, to refine his concentration towards attaining the four formless attainments, and so mastering the eight attainments (*aṭṭha, samāpatti*).

However, the dhyanas in themselves do not destroy the mental hindrances, the mental impurities and the latent tendencies [7-8]. The defilements are only temporarily suppressed (*vikkhambhana pahāna*) in the course of dhyana experience—this is because they are merely the mundane dhyanas. Only the supramundane dhyanas of the paths and fruits are truly liberating. The practitioners of both vehicles—the calmness practitioner and the insight practitioner—experience this. The paths and fruits always occur at a level of dhyana and are thus considered as forms of dhyana. This is the dhyana of **the right concentration** factor of the noble eightfold path [4].

No dhyana, however, is necessary for the attainment of stream-winning or once-return.⁷¹ The formula for right concentration apparently only implies that they must eventually attain dhyana in the course of developing the path culminating in arhathood. As non-returns have already eliminated desire and ill will, they should have no problem in entering dhyana.

Is dhyana necessary for the attainment of nirvana? It should be understood that mundane dhyana is helpful but not necessary here. Supramundane dhyana is essential for liberation, and it results from insight either alone or in combination with mundane dhyana. Although there is the possibility of the “dry-insight” arhats who reach their goal by pure insight, the early saints beginning with the Buddha himself regard the ability to attain the four dhyanas as a valuable asset of an arhat, especially by way of mastering the eight deliverances⁷² and the six super-knowledges.⁷³

— — —

⁷¹ See “The Layman and Dhyana” = SD 8.5.

⁷² *Aṭṭha vimokkha* (D 15.35/2:70 f, 16.3.33/2:111 f, 34.2.1(10)/3:288; A 8.66/4:306 f). See **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15.35/2:70 f) = SD 5.13 2004.

⁷³ *Cha-l-abhiññā*. See **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.87-98/2:87-98).

Bibliography

- Bodhi, Bhikkhu
 2001 “The Jhānas and the Lay Disciple.” In *Buddhist Studies in honour of Professor Lily de Silva*. Ed PD Premasiri. Peradeniya: University of Peradeniya, 2001:36-64.
- Brahmavamso, Ajahn
 2003 *The Jhānas*. Singapore: Buddhist Fellowship, 2003 [BE 3546]. Free booklet. Repr in *Basic Buddhist Meditation Practice and the Jhānas*, 2005 (second half).
 2005 *Basic Buddhist Meditation Practice and the Jhānas*. Singapore: Buddhist Fellowship, 2005. Free booklet. Contents: (1) “The basic method of meditation”; (2) “The Jhānas.”
 2006 *Mindfulness, Bliss and Beyond: A meditator's handbook*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2006.
 Reviews: <http://www.amazon.com/Mindfulness-Bliss-Beyond-Meditators-Handbook/dp/0861712757>.
- Bronkhorst, Johannes
 1993 *Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*. [Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1986. xii 145pp 24 cm] 2nd ed Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993. xviii 153pp hb incl pagination of 1st ed.
- Gethin, Rupert ML
 2001 *The Path to Awakening*. [E J Brill 1992] Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2nd ed 2001. [A study of the 37 *bodhi, pakkhiya, dhammā*.]
- Gunaratana, Henepola
 1985 *The Path of Serenity and Insight: An explanation of the Buddhist Jhānas* [according to the Pali texts]. Delhi: MLBD, 1985 ch 4-5.
- Johansson, REA
 1978 *The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism*, London, 1978 ch 10.
- Khantipalo [Laurence Mills]
 1980 *Calm and Insight*. London: Curzon, 1980:57.
- King, WL
 1980 *Theravada Meditation*. Pittsburgh: Penn State University, 1980 ch 3.
- Nakamura, Hajime
 2000 *Gotama Buddha: A biography based on the most reliable texts* Vol 1. Tr Gaynor Sekimori. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing, 2000.
- Rahula, Walpola
 1978 *Zen and the Taming of the Bull: Towards the definition of Buddhist thought*. [Essays]. London: Gordon Fraser, 1978:101-109 (ch 10).
- Samuels, Jeffrey
 1999 “Views of householders and lay disciples in the *Sutta Piṭaka*: A reconsideration of the lay/monastic opposition.” *Religion* 29 1999:231-241.
- Schopen, Gregory
 1997 *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks: Collected papers on the archaeology, epigraphy, and texts of monastic Buddhism in India*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.

040505; rev 061108; 071008; 080912