

F. Concentration and Discernment

I. Jhana (concentration) and discernment are mutually supporting[\$171](page 248)

- A. some people will develop one of these factors before the other [\$165, \$166]
- B. both work in concert[\$111]
 - i. when practice reaches maturity

II. The role of jhana as a condition for transcendent discernment

- A. "transcendent": strong enough discernment to be liberated from dukkha
- B. is controversial
- C. has 3 positions in modern writings:
 - i. one following the tradition of the commentaries:
 - ii. (ancient commentaries written about the suttas)
 - a) Jhana is not necessary for awakening
 - b) awakening can happen with levels of concentration less than the first Jhana
 - iii. one based on the passage: [A.11.88, MFU page 103]
 - a) jhana is necessary for higher levels of Awakening
 - starting with the level of "non-returning"
 - but not the lower levels of awakening
 - iv. the third, at least the 1st Jhana is needed for all 4 levels of Awakening.

III. The Pali Canon only supports the 3rd position in the controversy (p 249)

- A. the attainment of stream entry has 8 factors
 - i. one of which is concentration defined as jhana[\$106]
 - a) the jhanas (not the formless ones) are required [\$168]

IV. The controversy can possibly be explained

- A. by "jhana" being defined
 - i. differently in the suttas & the commentaries on the suttas
 - a) the commentaries via "The Path Of Purification" (Vishuddamaga)
 - uses kasina meditation
 - where one stares at an object until it is imprinted on the mind
 - where jhana is defined as a counter sign, or image appearing in the mind after the image of the object is imprinted in the mind.
 - tries to define all other meditations in terms of kasina practice
 - it admits Breath Meditation doesn't fit its explanation
 - so it states that only Buddha's can use the breath to attain jhana
 - b) The Canon/Suttas
 - do not support the points of controversy made in the commentaries
 - mentions kasinas only once and with a very different description from the commentaries [M 121, MFU p 82 -85]

V. The "Path Of Purification" (commentaries) position on jhana

- A. along with its different definition of jhanas & kasinas
 - i. implies that either the Buddha or the compilers of the Pali Canon
 - a) left out an essential element of practice
- B. the version of jhanas and kasinas as presented in the commentaries)emphasized a

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meditation method not usable by many people

VI. The role of discernment in jhana (250)

A. is uncontroversial

B. discernment aids jhana on 2 levels:

- i. on the mundane level
 - a) it provides clarity into how concentration can be improved or impaired [\$175]
- ii. on the transcendent level (page 251)
 - a) it makes a special type of jhana open to Arahants [\$176, \$177]