

E. Right Concentration

I. Right Concentration has 4 possible uses in Buddhism (231)

- A. to produce a pleasant abiding in the here and now
- B. to produce mindfulness and alertness
- C. to help end the asavas, the mental effluents
- D. attainment of knowledge and vision

II. Right Concentration (page 224)

- A. is singleness of mind [#148]
 - i. though you can have singleness of mind without it being "Right Concentration"
- B. is the 4 Jhanas [\$102, \$152]
 - i. where the jhanas are devoid of unskillful mental qualities

III. The Jhanas [\$150, M121; MFU pages 82-85]

- A. are states of strong concentration on a single object
- B. are called "meditative absorptions"
 - i. as the meditation object is reduced to a single quality/thing
 - a) that fills all of the meditators awareness
- C. come in two classes:
 - i. the "Form Jhanas"
 - a) these are the 4 Jhanas listed under Right Concentration in the Noble 8 Fold Path
 - ii. the "Formless Jhanas"
- D. produce pleasures (page 231)
 - i. that can ruin a meditator's progress toward liberation
 - a) if the meditator becomes attached to it [M 138, MFU pages 114 - 115]
 - b) that must be faced
 - to master the concentration
 - necessary for achieving "non - returning" [A.III.88, MFU p 103]
 - ii. that enable the mind to stay in the present moment
 - a) necessary for the mental stability required for insight meditation
 - iii. that helps break attachments to sensory pleasures
 - a) as jhanic pleasure is not dependent on the the senses
 - as jhanic pleasures are stronger
 - iv. that help the meditator face adversity by nourishing the psyche

IV. Right concentration does not include [\$152] (page 227)

- A. states of concentration
 - i. where upon leaving them one has no recollection of being present during the meditation
 - ii. of mental quietude without mindfulness

V. Form Jhanas (page 224)

- A. are the 4 Jhanas of Right Concentration
- B. focus on the body [\$72, \$102]
 - i. or upon shapes appearing in the mind during sitting [\$163, \$164]
- C. the mind focuses on an activity of an object (p 229)

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VI. Formless Jhanas (page 230)

- A. deal with a variety of objects
- B. are of 4 main types:
 - i. perception of infinite space
 - ii. perception of infinite consciousness
 - iii. perception of nothingness
 - iv. state of neither perception or non - perception
- C. happen progressively, one leading another
- D. the first formless jhana happens when (p 229)
 - i. the mind focuses on space around the body
 - a) leaving behind the perception of the body
- E. the second formless jhana happens when
 - i. the mind sheds its perception of space
 - a) leaving behind the perception of the body
- F. the third formless jhana happens when
 - i. the mind sheds its perception of awareness
 - a) leaving the perception of inactivity
- G. the fourth formless jhana happens when (p 230)
 - i. the mind lets go of the perception of activity
 - a) abandoning perceptions of "perception"

VII. Cessation of feeling and perception [\$162, \$164]

- A. is the most advanced state produced by Right Concentration
- B. if one reaches this state one also becomes a "non - returner"

VIII. Abandoning the 5 Hindrances & dealing with distractions (page 225)

- A. is necessary for Right Concentration [\$154]

IX. Distractions in concentration practice can be dealt with by [\$159]

- A. ignoring the distractions
 - i. reacting to them makes them worse
 - ii. being alert to the energy the distraction wastes
 - iii. forcefully not thinking about them
 - a) you can use this approach if
 - you have STRONG concentration
 - and less developed discernment, otherwise other methods are probably more suitable

X. Guides to Right Concentration practice

- A. are in the description of the jhanas [\$149, \$150]
- B. are in the Buddha's 16 steps of Breath Meditation [\$151]
- C. should not be used to plan one's practice in advance (p 227)
 - i. do not try to achieve specific states on purpose
 - a) focus on your current state and the others will come

XI. The Buddha's 16 Steps To Breath Meditation [\$151] (p 226)

- A. are the most detailed meditation instructions in the Pali Canon (page 227)

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- B. are not steps of experiences to be had in sequence (p 226)
- C. are listed in the order in which the steps can be mastered
- D. is one of several ways of developing " 4 Frames Of Reference" practice
- E. focuses on all of the elements of "fabrication" (sankhara) (p 228)
 - i. which are listed in the theory of "Dependant Co-Arising" [\$218 - \$223]
 - a) bodily fabrication (the breath itself)
 - b) verbal fabrication (directed thought used in the first jhana)
 - c) mental fabrication (feelings and perceptions)

XII. The First 2 Steps Of Breath Meditation

- A. involve using "directed thought or evaluation"[\$151]
 - i. which means:
 - a) making a conscious effort to pay attention to the meditation object,
 - necessitating consciously bringing the mind back to the object
- B. involves evaluating the lengths of breaths
 - i. to learn how to adjust the rhythm of the breathing to produce feelings of jhanic pleasures
 - a) necessary for the first jhana -- according to some modern teachers

XIII. The remaining steps of Breath Meditation

- A. involve "training oneself"
 - i. by manipulating awareness
 - a) to make it "sensitive to the body as a whole"
 - ii. by manipulating bodily sensations
 - a) by letting the breath calm down
 - after the body is calmed mental fabrications are more clearly seen (this happens in the 3rd jhana)

XIV. Steps 10 - 12 Of The 16 Steps Of Breath Meditation (p 229)

- A. involve the mastery of concentration
 - i. by reviewing the various levels of jhana achieved
 - a) being alert to how the mind relates to the breath
 - this reveals
 - how the mind can be liberated
 - how the jhanas can free the mind of the mental factors [\$175]
 - b) by reviewing how subtle defilements impede better concentration
 - at this point one sees defilements clearly
 - c) by developing Insights into the causes of jhanic states
 - by learning how to master them on one's own
 - this happens in the second stage of practicing the 4 Frames Of Reference..... focusing on phenomenon arising and then passing away

- B. result in developing the 4 formless Jhanas

XV. Steps 9 - 12 of the 16 steps of Breath Meditation(page 232)

- A. help lead to the ending of the mental effluents (asavas)

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i. by providing opportunities for insights

- a) into how the mind relates to meditation objects
 - while the mind is relating to it
 - while the mind is in a state of concentration
- b) into how kamma is generated in the present moment[\$172]
 - by the meditator trying to achieve the jhanas. S/He sees how intentions cause "fabrications", in this example, in trying to reach the jhanas
- c) how "fabricated" states are transitory, impermanent
 - like the jhanas the meditator worked so hard to achieve
- d) how egoless, anatta, "fabricated" states are
 - one sees that the states of jhana are "not me"
- e) how striving to achieve jhanas are also dukkha
- f) These Insights result in
 - detachment from having the jhanas
 - achieving a state of "non-fabrication" [\$179, \$183]
 - completing the 7 Factors Of Awakening [\$197]