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## Samādhi Mūlaka Ṭhiti Sutta

The Discourse on Remaining Rooted in Samadhi | S 34.2

Theme: We need to learn to remain for a proper duration in mental stillness

Translated by Piya Tan ©2013

Introduction

**1 THE JHĀNA SAṂYUTTA**, the last of the 13 chapters (*vagga*) of Khandha Vagga (the chapter on the aggregates), is a set of 55 connected discourses on meditation (*jhāna*).<sup>1</sup> Its first chapter and only chapter, actually a “subchapter” (*vagga*), **the Jhāna Vagga**, so that it is its alternate title.

The Jhāna Saṃyutta is a cycle of teachings on meditation, like a wheel (*cakka*), listing all the possible twinning of 11 skills related to meditation. Each pair is then listed by way of 4 possibilities, that is, one who has only *one* of the skills, one who has only *the other* skill, one who has *neither*, and one who is skilled in *both*. The last is always declared to be the best, the “cream” (*maṇḍa*) [S9].<sup>2</sup>

The Saṃyutta commentary tells us that the entire Jhāna Saṃyutta deals with mundane dhyana, that is, only the process of deep meditation without mentioning the results of such a practice (with neither path nor fruition).

**2 THE SUTTA TYPOLOGY.** This Sutta and those in the rest of the Jhāna Saṃyutta seems to be artificially put together for the same of Abhidhamma-like completion. This could reflect a time when the suttas were given great prominence as a scriptural canon, perhaps during on the early Buddhist councils before Asoka’s time, that is, between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE.

As sutta students, we should be curious about such developments for a broader perspective of sutta history and significance. Having said that, we can still reflect on such a sutta as an effort in directing our attention to specific qualities we need to cultivate in meditation. In this Sutta, we should not only know *about* meditation, but we should also **learn to remain within samadhi**, that is, maintain a concentrated and still mind, especially dhyana itself.<sup>3</sup>

As we persevere and progress in our meditation, such suttas become more meaningful to us. They become like a checklist reminding us to ensure that our practice is properly done. The unawakened mind easily becomes bored with repetitiveness, but an awakening mind, or one that loves solitude, will notice even the passing, seemingly uneventful, day is peaceful and meaningful when we see them as moments of our own breath.

**3 THE SAMĀDHI MŪLAKA ṬHITI SUTTA.** The Samādhi Mūlaka Ṭhiti Sutta (S 34.2), as the title suggests, gives this list of 4 kinds of meditators, in regard to samadhi, in a broad sense of mental concentration, especially as our *remaining in dhyana*, thus:

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|--|------|
| (1) skilled <u>about</u> samadhi in regard to samadhi, but not skilled in <i>remaining</i> in samadhi. <sup>4</sup>                    | [S4] |
| (2) skilled in <u>remaining</u> in samadhi, <sup>5</sup> but unskilled <i>about</i> samadhi in regard to samadhi. <sup>6</sup>         | [S5] |
| (3) <u>neither</u> skilled <i>about</i> samadhi in regard to samadhi, nor skilled in <i>remaining</i> in samadhi. <sup>7</sup>         | [S6] |
| (4) <u>both</u> skilled <i>about</i> samadhi in regard to samadhi <u>and</u> also skilled in <i>remaining</i> in samadhi. <sup>8</sup> | [S7] |

<sup>1</sup> On this meaning, see **Samādhi Samāpatti S** (S 34.1) @ SD 41.12 (1.1).

<sup>2</sup> For details, see SD 41.12 (1.3.5).

<sup>3</sup> See SD 41.14 (2.2).

<sup>4</sup> *Idha bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim samādhi, kusalo hoti, na samādhismim ṭhiti, kusalo.*

<sup>5</sup> See SD 41.14 (2.2).

<sup>6</sup> *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim ṭhiti, kusalo hoti, na samādhismim samādhi, kusalo.*

<sup>7</sup> *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī n’eva samādhismim samādhi, kusalo hoti, na ca samādhismim ṭhiti, kusalo.*

The last is the best, the “cream” (*maṇḍa*) [§9].<sup>9</sup> This pattern reflects that of **the Samādhi Samāpatti Sutta** (S 34.1), the first discourse in the Jhāna Saṃyutta itself. This Sutta has been fully translated and annotated elsewhere, and should be referred to for other detailed notes.<sup>10</sup>

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## Samādhi Mūlaka Ṭhiti Sutta

### The Discourse on Remaining in Samadhi

S 34.2

**1-3** Originating in Sāvattḥī.

Bhikshus, there are these **4 kinds of meditators**.

What are the four?

**4** (1) Here, bhikshus, some meditators are skilled about samadhi [mental concentration] in regard to samadhi, but not skilled in *remaining* in samadhi.<sup>11</sup>

**5** (2) But, here, bhikshus, some meditators are skilled in remaining in samadhi,<sup>12</sup> but not skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi.<sup>13</sup>

**6** (3) But, here, bhikshus, some meditators are neither skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi, nor skilled in *remaining* in samadhi.<sup>14</sup>

**7** (4) But, here, bhikshus, some meditators are both skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi and also skilled in *remaining* in samadhi.<sup>15</sup>

**8** Here, bhikshus, this meditator who is both skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi and also skilled in *remaining* in samadhi—

of these four kinds of meditators, he is the foremost, the best, the leader, the highest, and most excellent.<sup>16</sup>

**9** Bhikshus, just as from **a cow** comes milk; from milk, cream; from cream, butter; from butter ghee; and from ghee, the cream of ghee: here the cream of ghee is the foremost<sup>17</sup>—

**10** even so, bhikshus, this meditator who is both skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi and also skilled in *remaining* in samadhi—

of these four kinds of meditators, he is the foremost, the best, the leader, the highest, and most excellent

**11** These, bhikshus, are these 4 kinds of meditators.

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<sup>8</sup> *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim samādhi, kusalo ca hoti, samādhismim ṭhiti, kusalo ca.*

<sup>9</sup> For details, see SD 41.12 (1.3.5).

<sup>10</sup> S 34.1/3:263 f, SD 41.12.

<sup>11</sup> *Idha bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim samādhi, kusalo hoti, na samādhismim ṭhiti, kusalo.*

<sup>12</sup> See SD 41.14 (2.2).

<sup>13</sup> *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim ṭhiti, kusalo hoti, na samādhismim samādhi, kusalo.*

<sup>14</sup> *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī n’eva samādhismim samādhi, kusalo hoti, na ca samādhismim ṭhiti, kusalo.*

<sup>15</sup> *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim samādhi, kusalo ca hoti, samādhismim ṭhiti, kusalo ca.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ayaṃ imesaṃ catunnaṃ jhāyīnaṃ aggo ca seṭṭho ca mokkho [Ke Se pāmokkho] ca uttamo ca pavaro ca.*

<sup>17</sup> *Seyyathā’pi bhikkhave gavā khīraṃ khīramhā dadhi dadhimhā nava, nītaṃ nava, nītamhā sappi sappimhā sappi, maṇḍo tatra aggam akkhāyati.* See **Samādhi Samāpatti S**, SD 41.12 (1.3.5).