

## 25

## Samādhi Mūlaka Sappāya,kārī Sutta

The Discourse on the Samadhi-rooted Suitability | S 34.10

Theme: The suitability of samadhi guarantees the success of our meditation

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. This *saṁyutta* is also the last of the 13 chapters (*vagga*) of Khandha Vagga (the chapter on the aggregates).

The Jhāna Saṁyutta 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*) [§9].<sup>2</sup>

The Saṁyutta commentary tells us that the entire Jhāna Saṁyutta 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 Saṁyutta 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 understand what are suitable for samadhi, that is, making the right efforts to nurture and protect the samadhi.<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 love solitude, will notice even the passing daily, seemingly uneventful, as peaceful and meaningful as the measured moments of our own breathing.

**3 THE SAMĀDHI MŪLAKA SAPPĀYA,KĀRĪ SUTTA** (S 34.10), as the title suggests, gives this list of 4 kinds of meditators, in of samadhi, in a broad sense of mental concentration, especially *the suitability* of dhyana, thus:

- (1) skilled about samadhi in regard to samadhi, but not skilled in *the suitability* of samadhi.<sup>4</sup> [§4]
- (2) skilled in the suitability of samadhi,<sup>5</sup> but unskilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi.<sup>6</sup> [§5]
- (3) neither skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi, nor skilled in *the suitability* of samadhi.<sup>7</sup> [§6]

<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> SD 41.15 (1.6).

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

<sup>5</sup> SD 41.15 (1.6).

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

(4) both skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi and also skilled in *the suitability* of samadhi.<sup>8</sup> [§7]

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 Sappāya,kārī Sutta

### The Discourse on Samadhi-rooted Suitability

S 34.10

**1-3** Originating in Sāvattṭhī.

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 *suitability* regarding samadhi.<sup>11</sup>

**5** (2) But, here, bhikshus, some meditators are skilled in suitability regarding 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 *suitability* regarding samadhi.<sup>14</sup>

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

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

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

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

<sup>12</sup> SD 41.15 (1.6).

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

<sup>14</sup> *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī neva samādhismim samādhi,kusalo hoti, na ca samādhismim sappāya,kārī.*

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

<sup>16</sup> *Ayam imesaṃ catunnaṃ jhāyīnaṃ aggo ca seṭṭho ca makkho [Ke Se pāmakko] 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).*

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