

Samādhībhāvanā Sutta

AN IV 41 Discourse on Developing of Meditation

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*M*onks, there are these four developments of meditation¹.

What four?

- (1) *There is the development of meditation which,
When developed and cultivated,
Brings about a pleasant abiding, visible here and now.*
- (2) *There is the development of meditation which,
When developed and cultivated,
Brings about knowledge and clear sight.*
- (3) *There is the development of meditation which,
When developed and cultivated,
Brings about presence and full awareness.*
- (4) *There is the development of meditation which,
When developed and cultivated,
Brings about the stilling of the mental movements².*

[1. Pleasant Abiding]

*1. What is the development of meditation which
brings a pleasant abiding visible here and now?*

¹ *Samādhī*: Mental Harmony, stillness of heart or unity of mind.

² *Āsava*: Effluents, conditionings, kammic propensity.

- (1) *Disengaged from the outward desire,
and detached from unwholesome mental states,
Attended by thinking and reflection,
With the blissful happiness born of mental disengagement,
One understands and abides in the first level of meditation.*
- (2) *With the calming of thinking and reflection,
and with inner tranquilization,
One's mind becoming unified,
Without thinking and reflection
And with the blissful happiness born of samādhi,
One understands and dwells in the second level of meditation.*
- (3) *With the stilling of excitement,
Abiding in mental steadiness,
Present with open awareness,
Experiencing ease within his body,
Which the righteous ones describe as:
 *"Steady presence of mind:
 This is a pleasant abiding."*
One understands and abides in the third level of meditation.*
- (4) *Going beyond the notions of pleasure and displeasure,
With the settling of mental gladness and affliction,
With neither pain nor pleasure,
Purified by unmoving presence,
One understands and abides in the fourth level of meditation.*

*This is the development of meditation which
brings about a pleasant abiding visible here and now.*

[2. Knowledge and Clear Sight]

2. What is the development of meditation which brings about knowledge and clear sight?

*Here, a monk directs his mind towards mental clarity,
Firmly established in the perception of day:*

*As by day, so by night;
as by night, so by day.*

*With an open mind, which is uncovered,
He develops a mind that is completely radiant.*

*This is the development of meditation which
brings about knowledge and clear sight.*

[3. Presence and Full Awareness]

3. What is the meditation which, brings about presence and full awareness?

(1) *One knows feeling as it arises,
Knows it as it settles,
Knows it as it goes away.³*

(2) *One knows reasoning⁴ as it arises,
Knows it as it settles,
Knows it as it goes away.*

(3) *One knows thinking as it arises
Knows it as it settles
Knows it as it goes away.*

³ This entails not holding on to feeling, simply allowing and letting go, not engaging, relaxing. In this way, there is the blooming of *Sampajañña*, full awareness, since it is unconstricted by the narrow craving mind.

⁴ **Sañña**: Perception, cognition, concepts.

*This is the meditation which
brings about presence and full awareness.*

[4. Stilling of the Mental Movements]

*4. What is the development of meditation which
brings about the stilling of the mental movements?⁵*

*One meditates,
Observing the growth and decay
Of the five fields⁶ of possessiveness⁷.*

- (1) This is form,
This is the increase of form,
This is the calming of form.⁸*
- (2) This is feeling,
This is the increase of feeling,
This is the calming of feeling.*
- (3) This is cognition,
This is the increase of cognition,
This is the calming of cognition.*
- (4) This is mental activity⁹,
This is the increase of mental activity,
This is the calming of mental activity.*

⁵ *The way to the dissolution of the three Āsavas: Kāmāsava (Sense), Bhāvāsava (Becoming) and Diṭṭhāsava (View) are all connected to the five fields of possessiveness. Ungrasping, unflowing.*

⁶ *Khanddha: Usually translated as “aggregates”. I find other terms more appropriate like: Materials, bulk, fabrics, constituents, fields, objects, masses (To which one clings as “My self”)*

⁷ *Upadānā: Clinging, grasping, holding on, taking on, possessiveness.*

⁸ *“And what is the origin of form? ... “Here, one seeks pleasure, one welcomes, one remains holding [to form]. (And so on for the five fields of possessiveness.) -SN III 22.5 Samādhisutta*

⁹ *Sankhāra: Conditionings, fabrications, activities, creations, constructs, stuff.*

(5) *This is consciousness,
This is the increase of consciousness,
This is the calming of consciousness.*¹⁰

*This is the development of meditation which
brings about the stilling of the fluxes.*

These are the four developments of meditation monks.

[Pārāyāna]

*It is in this connection,
that I said in the Pārāyāna, in the questions of Puṇṇaka*¹¹:

*“One who has discerned this world, all and beyond,
Unagitated by the things of this world
At peace, fumeless, undisturbed, hungerless.
He has gone beyond birth and death, I say.”*

¹⁰ This is a characteristic formulation for the cultivation of wisdom, in training the mind to understand reality as it is, with the aid of the Ariyan Truths. The first Ariyan truth [ex. Form], the second Ariyan truth [ex. The increase of form (ie. Clinging to form)] and the third Ariyan Truth [ex. The calming of form (ie. Letting go of clinging to form)]. Observing the five fields of possessiveness in this way continually, one practices the fourth Ariyan Truth, which is the Path to Freedom.

¹¹ Snp V 3 Puṇṇakamāṇavapucchā



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