

*Towards a unified understanding of philosophy, science, religion, and art*

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*All things arise and cease due to  
interdependent causes and conditions*

~Δ~

## The Eight Stages of Right Meditation

*Compiled and adapted by*

*Bing Escudero*

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## The Eight Stages of Right Meditation\*

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### First Stage of Meditation [*Jhana* or *Dhyana*]: Joyous detachment

Detached from sense-desires, detached (also from the other four) unwholesome states, one dwells in the attainment of the first meditation, which is accompanied by applied and discursive thinking, born of detachment, rapturous and joyful.

[The four unwholesome states or distortions are: (1) Taking impermanent phenomena as being permanent, (2) Taking impure phenomena as being pure, (3) Taking selfless phenomena as having self, and (4) Taking suffering phenomena as having fun or being blissful.]

### Second Stage of Meditation: Joyous concentration

From the appeasing of applied and discursive thinking, one dwells in the attainment of the second meditation, where the inward heart is serene and uniquely exalted, and which is devoid of applied and discursive thinking, born of concentration, rapturous and joyful.

### Third Stage of Meditation: Even-minded and mindful

Through distaste for rapture one dwells even-mindedly, mindful and clearly conscious; one experiences with this body that joy of which the Noble Ones [*Arahants*] declare, *Joyful lives one who is even-minded and mindful*.

### Fourth Stage of Meditation: Purifying even-mindedness [equanimity] and mindfulness

From the forsaking of joy, from the forsaking of pain, from the going to rest of one's former gladness and sadness, one dwells in the attainment of the fourth meditation, which is neither painful nor pleasurable, thus purifying even-mindedness and mindfulness from all oppositions.

### Fifth Stage of Meditation: Endless space

By passing quite beyond all perceptions of form, by the going to rest of the perceptions of impact, by not attending to the perception of manifoldness, on thinking *endless space*, one dwells in the attainment of the station of endless space.

#### Sixth Stage of Meditation: Unlimited consciousness

By passing quite beyond the station of endless space, on thinking *endless consciousness*, one dwells in the attainment of the station of unlimited consciousness.

#### Seventh Stage of Meditation: Empty of illusions

By passing quite beyond the station of unlimited consciousness, on thinking *there is not anything* [or any bit of a thing made by the mind], one dwells in the attainment of the station of nothing whatsoever [empty of illusions].

#### Eighth Stage of Meditation: Non-duality of extremes Neither perception nor non-perception

By passing quite beyond the field of nothing whatsoever [empty of illusions], one dwells in the attainment of the station of neither perception nor non-perception [non-duality of extremes or polarizations]. Cessation or freedom from all oppositions [conflict of opposites], dualities, polarities. Into total Oneness, ineffable Reality.

#### The Ten Impediments to Meditation\*\*

[Unless severed, made to let go, within]

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 Dwelling [location hassles] | 6 Travel [demands on a journey]            |
| 2 Family [preoccupation]      | 7 Kin [co-residents, relationships]        |
| 3 Gain[ful engagements]       | 8 Affliction [any kind of illness]         |
| 4 Class [group associations]  | 9 Books [recitations, readings]            |
| 5 Building [construction]     | 10 Supernormal powers [fascination, pride] |

*The Prerequisites leading to Right Meditation, eighth and last step of the Noble 8-Fold Path, starts with No. 1, Right Understanding (of the Four Noble Truths), through No. 7, Right Effort. For the complete enumeration, see Back page.*

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\*Komito, David Ross. *Nagarjuna's Seventy Stanzas* [Sunyata-saptatikarika-nama translation], with new commentary by Geshe Sonam Rinchen, 1987. Snow Lion Publications, P.O.Box 6483, Ithaca, NY 14851. ISBN 0-937938-39-4. See p. 59-60, and p. 211 Footnotes (originally taken from *Visuddhimagga*, translated by Edward Conze in *Buddhist Meditation*, p. 113-118). *Jhana* or *dhyana* [a spelling variation] means *meditation*.

\*\**The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga) of Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa*, translated from Pali by Bhikkhu Nyananda, 2 vols. [884 pp.], Berkeley & London: Shambhala, 1976. ISBN 0-87773-080-6. For details with stories, see p. 91-98; for comparison with the *The Eight Stages...*, see p. 144-176, The First Jhana to The Fivefold Reckoning of Jhana.

The World Renown 4-Noble Truths & The 8-Fold Path

The Truth of Suffering	1st	<i>Dukkha</i>	
The Truth of the Cause	2nd	<i>Samudaya</i>	
The Truth of Cessation	3rd	<i>Nirodha</i>	
The 8-Fold Path Truth	4th	<i>Magga</i>	
Right Understanding	1	<i>Samma Ditthi</i>	Prerequisites (Nos. 1- 7) leading to
Right Thought	2	<i>Samma Sankappa</i>	
Right Speech	3	<i>Samma Vaca</i>	
Right Action	4	<i>Samma Kamanta</i>	
Right Livelihood	5	<i>Samma Ajiva</i>	
Right Effort	6	<i>Samma Vayama</i>	
Right Attention	7	<i>Samma Sati</i>	
Right Meditation	8	<i>Samma Samadhi</i>	

The Four Kinds of Happiness

- |   |   |                       |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Economic security or sufficient wealth acquired by just and righteous means.              | 1 | <i>Atthi-sukha</i>    |
| Liberal spending of that wealth on oneself, friends, relatives, and on meritorious deeds. | 2 | <i>Bhoga-sukha</i>    |
| Being free from debts. (However, Nos. 1, 2, and 3 are not worth a 1/16th part of No. 4.)  | 3 | <i>Anna-sukha</i>     |
| Living a faultless and pure life, in thought, word, and deed.                             | 4 | <i>Anavajja-sukha</i> |

Four Requirements Conducive to Worldly Happiness

- |  |   |                        |
|--|---|------------------------|
| Be engaged in a profession, with skill and expertise, earnest and energetic, productive and perfective, efficient and effective. | 1 | <i>Utthana-sampada</i> |
| Protect and secure income earned righteously.  | 2 | <i>Arakka-sampada</i>  |
| Have good [and loyal] friends.   | 3 | <i>Kalyana-mitta</i>   |
| Live simply within your means.   | 4 | <i>Samajivikata</i>    |

The Four Immeasurables or Boundless Sublime States *Four Viharas*

- |   |   |                |
|---|---|----------------|
| Kindness, universal love, goodwill                            | 1 | <i>Metta</i>   |
| Compassion, sympathy  | 2 | <i>Karuna</i>  |
| Joy on seeing others freed or rescued from suffering          | 3 | <i>Mudita</i>  |
| Renunciation, equanimity in all vicissitudes, quietude, peace | 4 | <i>Upekkha</i> |

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