

## **“The Four Ecstasies” – by Ven Dr M. Punnaji Maha Thera**

**Suākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo**

**Sandiṭṭhiko akāliko**

**Ehipassiko opanayiko**

**Paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi ti**      *(Reflection On The Dhamma)*

The Teaching of the Buddha is clearly stated in words

It is experiential and non-temporal

It is verifiable and introspective

It can be personally experienced by the intelligent

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### **ENTERING THE FIRST JHĀNA**

One can enter the **First Ecstasy (1st Jhāna)** by:

- ❖ **PREVENTION (“samvara”)** – guarding one’s senses against impurities entering one’s mind by withdrawing one’s attention from perceived sensory objects;
- ❖ **ELIMINATION (“pahāna”)** – removing emotional excitement by withdrawing one’s attention from the memory of past experiences.

When one enters the First Ecstasy, one is at the thresh-hold of the **Sensual Realm (“kāma-bhava”)** and reverting to the **Imagery Realm (“rūpa-bhava”)**.

The **First Ecstasy (1st Jhāna)** has five parts to it:

#### **1. Inference (“vitakka”)**

- Inference is the process of arriving at a conclusion based on rational deduction;

#### **2. Inquiry (“vicāra”)**

- Inquiry is the process of examining and questioning about the meaning of the perceived object;

#### **3. Rapture (“pīti”)**

- Rapture is state of happiness resulting from the disappearance of emotional arousal;

#### **4. Comfort (“sukha”)**

- Comfort is the state of complete relaxation of the muscles of the body due to the absence of emotional arousal;

#### **5. Stillness of Mind (“ekaggatā”)**

- Stillness of mind due to freedom from mental conflict between the affective activity and the cognitive activity known as **cognitive dissonance (“vicikicchā”)**.

**GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL OF ATTENTION**

<b><u>1<sup>st</sup> Jhāna</u></b>	<b><u>2<sup>nd</sup> Jhāna</u></b>	<b><u>3<sup>rd</sup> Jhāna</u></b>	<b><u>4<sup>th</sup> Jhāna</u></b>
<b>Inference</b> ( <i>vitakka</i> )			
<b>Inquiry</b> ( <i>vicāra</i> )			
<b>Rapture</b> ( <i>pīti</i> )	<b>Rapture</b> ( <i>pīti</i> )		
<b>Comfort</b> ( <i>sukha</i> )	<b>Comfort</b> ( <i>sukha</i> )	<b>Comfort</b> ( <i>sukha</i> )	
<b>Stillness of Mind</b> ( <i>ekaggatā</i> )	<b>Stillness of Mind</b> ( <i>ekaggatā</i> )	<b>Stillness of Mind</b> ( <i>ekaggatā</i> )	<b>Stillness of Mind</b> ( <i>ekaggatā</i> )

**CULTIVATION & MAINTENANCE**

- ❖ The purity of mind reached in any “**Jhāna**” is unstable and can be polluted;
- ❖ It is only by practicing **Cultivation (*bhāvanā*)** and **Maintenance (*anurakkhana*)** that it can be brought to the point that it can never be polluted (*akuppā-ceto-vimuttī*):
  - **CULTIVATION (*bhāvanā*)** – cultivation of the “**Seven Steps to Awakening**” (*satta bojjhanga*) by focusing attention on the experience within (*satipatthāna*);
  - **MAINTENANCE (*anurakkhana*)** – maintaining focus on the experience within every moment in one’s life;

**The Experience Within**

The **experience within** is in three stages: (i) **Cognitive** (conceptualization), (ii) **Affective** (emotion), and (iii) **Conative** (verbal or physical behaviour).

Stillness of mind can be achieved by a gradual reduction of the experience within starting from the **conative**, followed by the **affective**, and ending in the **cognitive**.

**SEVEN STEPS TO AWAKENING (*Satta Bojjhanga*)**

The 1<sup>st</sup> step in the **Seven Steps to Awakening (*satta bojjhanga*)** is **Introversion of Attention** (“*sati*”).

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** Download on-going and past Sutta Class audio recordings (MP3) and notes (PDF) from new website: **WWW.BHANTEPUNNAJI.COM**