

The Four Stages Of Enlightenment

Sotapanna (Stream Entry) - The first stage of enlightenment. He is no more a wordling (puthujjana) but an Ariya (Noble One). He has eliminated three fetters (samyojana) : - self illusion (sakkaya ditthi), doubt (vicikiccha) and Adherence to wrongful rites and ceremonies (silabbata paramasa). He also permanently eliminates five immoral consciousness namely; the four rooted in attachment connected with wrong view and one rooted in ignorance associated with doubt. And so he also eradicated four immoral mental states; wrong view, jealousy, avarice and doubt.

A sotapanna being a sekha, yet to undergo training were experience 50 types of consciousness; 7 immoral (4 attachment disconnected with wrong view, 2 ill-will and 1 restlessness), 17 rootless (excluding smile-produce consciousness), 16 beautiful moral and resultant, 5 form-sphere moral, 4 formless-sphere moral and 1 fruition sotapanna.

As he has not completely eradicated all the fetters that bind him to existence, he is reborn seven times at the most. In his subsequent birth he may or may not be aware of the fact that he is a sotapanna. Nevertheless, he possesses the characteristic peculiar to such a saint. He gains implicit confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, and would never violate any of the five precepts nor commits the heinous crimes. He is free from woeful state, for he is destined to Enlightenment.

There are three classes of Sotapanna, namely:-

1. Those who will be born seven times at most in heavenly and earthly realms (sattakkhattuparama). Before seeking an eighth birth, they attain Arahantship.
2. Those who seek birth in noble families two or three times before they attain Arahantship (kolamkola).
3. Those who are born only once more before they attain Arahantship (ekabijji).

Sotapanna may be found in sensuous plane, form plane and formless plane but not in unhappy plane and mindless plane. An Sotapanna who develops the fifth jhana in the normal way whether to a minor, medium or high degree may be reborn in the realm of Great Reward (Vehapphala).

Once who mastery over the fifth jhana attain to the direct knowledge (Abhinna) the five psychic powers :-

1. Divine eye
2. Divine ear
3. Supernormal powers
4. Knowledge of others minds
5. Recollection of past lives

Sakadagami (Once-Returner) - The second stage of enlightenment. He is reborn on earth only once in case he does not attain to Arahantship in that life itself. As he can only weaken in the next two fetters:- sense desire (kamaraga) and ill-will (patigha) occasionally he may be disturbed by thought of lust and anger to a slight extent. And so he only weakens the two immoral consciousness that rooted in ill-will, and the two immoral mental states; attachment and hatred.

As he yet to undergo training he were experiences 50 types of consciousness; 7 immoral, 17 rootless, 16 beautiful moral and resultant, 5 form sphere moral, 4 formless sphere moral and 1 fruition Sakadagami.

There are five classes of Sakadagami:-

1. Those who attain Sakadagami here and attain Parinibbana here itself.
2. Those who attain Sakadagami in a heavenly realm and attain Parinibbana there.
3. Those who attain Sakadagami here and attain Parinibbana in a heavenly realm.
4. Those who attain Sakadagami in a heavenly realm and attain Parinibbana in this human plane.
5. Those who attain Sakadagami here and, having being born in a heavenly realm, seek birth in this human plane and attain Parinibbana.

Sakadagami may be found in the sensuous plane, form plane, formless plane but not in unhappy plane and mindless plane.

An Sakadagami who develop the fifth jhana in the normal way whether to a minor, medium or high degree may reborn in the realm of Great Reward (vehapphala).

Anagami (Non-Returner) - The third stage of enlightenment. It is by attaining to this stage of sainthood, that he completely discard the two fetters; sense desires and ill-will. He also permanently eliminates the two immoral consciousness rooted in ill-will, and so is the three immoral mental states; attachment (sensual desires), hatred and worry.

As he yet to undergo training he were experience 48 types of consciousness; 5 immoral (4 attachment disconnected with wrong view and 1 rooted in restlessness), 17 rootless, 16 beautiful moral and resultant, 5 form sphere moral, 4 formless-sphere moral and 1 fruition Anagami.

Since he has rooted out the desire for sensual pleasures he is neither return to this world nor does he seek birth in celestial realms. After death he is reborn in the 'Pure Abodes' (suddhavasā) environment reserved for Anagami and Arahant. There he attain Arahantship and lives till the end of his life.

There are five classes of Anagami:-

1. Those who attain Parinibbana within the first half life-span in the Pure Abodes (antarapariniḅbayi).
2. Those who attain Parinibbana having lived more than half a life-span (upahaccapariniḅbayi).
3. Those who attain Parinibbana with exertion (sasankharapariniḅbayi).
4. Those who attain Parinibbana without exertion (asankharapariniḅbayi).
5. Those who, passing beyond one Brahma realm to another higher Brahma realm, attain Parinibbana in the Highest Brahma realm. (uddhamsotaakanitthagami).

Anagami may be found in the sensuous plane, form plane, formless plane and Pure Abodes. But not in the unhappy plane and mindless plane.

The Anagami, who have developed the fifth jhana and who possess the five faculties such as confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom to an equal degree are born in the Realm of Great Reward. Those who surpass in confidence (saddha) are born in the Durable realm (Aviha plane). Those who surpass in effort (viriya) in the Serene realm (Atappa plane). Those who surpass in mindfulness (sati) in the Beautiful realm (sudassa plane). Those who surpass in concentration (samadhi) in the Clear-sighted realm (sudassi plane). And those who surpass in wisdom (panna) in the Highest realm (Akanittha plane). There is no fixed rule that Anagami are not born in other suitable planes.

'Dry-visioned' (sukkha-vipasska) Anagami, who have followed the contemplation course, develop jhana before death and are consequently born in the Pure Abodes. It may be that the Pure Abodes are open only to Anagami who possess the fifth jhana, while Anagami with lower jhana attainment will be reborn elsewhere in the form-plane. However, all Anagami must be reborn in the form-plane because they have eradicated sensual desire (kamaraga), the fetter which leads to rebirth in the sensuous-plane.

Arahant - The fourth and final stage of enlightenment. He make his final advance, and destroying the remaining five fetters : - Attachment to form-sphere (ruparaga), Attachment to formless-sphere (aruparaga), Conceit (mana), Restlessness (uddhacca) and Ignorance (avijja) attains to Arahantship.

He also permanently eliminates the remaining types of immoral consciousness; the 4 rooted in attachment disconnected with wrong view and the one rooted in ignorance associated with restlessness. And thus he permanently eradicated the remaining immoral mental states; Delusion, Shamelessness, Fearlessness, Restlessness, Conceit, Sloth and Torpor.

An Arahant, being as Asekha, beyond training, have eliminated all defilements thus no longer experience any immoral consciousness, they experiences 44 types of consciousness; 18 rootless, 16' beautiful resultant and functional, 5 form-sphere functional, 4 formless-sphere functional and 1 fruition of Arahant.

An Anagami and Arahant who have mastery over the rupa and arupa jhana can, by mental development, enter a meditative attainment in which the stream of consciousness and its concomitants is temporarily ceased. In such a state known as Nirodha Samapatti - the attainment of cessation - all mental activities cease.

(for more detail see the Abhidhamma Notes on page 103)

Arahant may be found in sensuous plane, form-plane, formless-plane and Pure Abodes, but not in unhappy plane and mindless plane.

When an Arahant attain to Parinibbana there is no more rebirth for them, as they have completely eradicated all defilements.

According to the way Nibbana is experienced is twofold:-

1. Saupadisesa-Nibbanadhatu (The element of Nibbana with residue remaining).

The element of Nibbana as experienced by Arahant is called 'with the residue remaining' because, though the defilements have all been extinguished. The 'residue' of aggregates acquired by past clinging remains through the duration of the Arahant's life. In other words, the body or the five aggregates still remaining.

2. Anupadisesa-Nibbanadhatu (The element of Nibbana without residue remaining).

The element of Nibbana attained with the Arahant's demise is called that 'without the residue remaining' because the five aggregates and passions are discarded and are never acquired again.

These two elements of Nibbana are also called, in the commentaries, the extinguishment of the defilements (kilesa-parinibbana) and the extinguishment of the aggregates (khandha-parinibbana). Thus according to the way it is experienced before and after death.

Ten Fetters - Dasa Samyojana

1. Self illusion (Sakkāya ditthi) 2. Doubts (Vicikicchā) 3. Adherence to Wrongful Rites and Ceremonies (Silabbata Parāmāsa)	} Eradicated by Sotapanna
4. Sense Desires (Kāmarāga) 5. Ill Will (Patigha)	} Weaken by Sakadagami Eradicated by Anagami
6. Attachment to Form-sphere (Rūpārāga) 7. Attachment to Formless-sphere (Arūpārāga) 8. Conceit (Māna) 9. Restlessness (Uddhacca) 10. Ignorance (Avijjā)	} Eradicated by Arahant

Plane Of Existence Where The Four Stages Of Enlightenment Are To Be Found

Individual Beings	Unhappy Plane	Sensuous Plane	Form Plane	Mindless Plane	Pure Abodes Plane	Formless Plane
Worldling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Sotapanna	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Sakadagami	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Anagami	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Arahant	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

In the Pure Abodes no worldlings, sotapanna, sakadagami are be found.

The Ariyas are not born in mindless plane and unhappy plane.

In others planes are born both Ariyas and worldlings.

Table show how the 12 immoral consciousness are eliminated by the four stages of Sainthoods.

12 Immoral Consciousness Akusala Citta		Stream Entry Sotapanna	Once-returner Sakadagami	Non-returner Anagami	Arahant
Attachment Lobha	1st C	Eliminated	E	E	E
	2nd C	Eliminated	E	E	E
	3rd C				Eliminated
	4th C				Eliminated
	5th C	Eliminated	E	E	E
	6th C	Eliminated	E	E	E
	7th C				Eliminated
	8th C				Eliminated
Ill will Patigha	9th C		Weaken	Eliminated	E
	10th C		Weaken	Eliminated	E
Ignorance Moha	11th C	Eliminated	E	E	E
	12th C				Eliminated

Table show how the 14 Immoral Mental-States are eradicated by the Four Stages of Sainthoods.

14 Immoral Mental States		Stream Entry Sotapanna	Once-returner Sakadagami	Non-returner Anagami	Arahant
1	Delusion				Eradicated
2	Shamelessness				Eradicated
3	Fearlessness				Eradicated
4	Restlessness				Eradicated
5	Attachment		Weaken	Eradicated gross	eradicated subtle
6	Wrong View	Eradicated	E	E	E
7	Conceit				Eradicated
8	Hatred		Weaken	Eradicated	E
9	Jealousy	Eradicated	E	E	E
10	Avarice	Eradicated	E	E	E
11	Worry			Eradicated	E
12	Sloth				Eradicated
13	Torpor				Eradicated
14	Doubt	Eradicated	E	E	E

The Types Of Consciousness Experience By The Four Stages Of Enlightenment.

Arahants - 'asekkha' here refer as beyond training, they have eliminated all defilements and thus no longer experience any immoral consciousness. They experience 44 types of consciousness :-

- 18 rootless
- 16 beautiful resultant and functional
- 5 form-sphere functional
- 4 formless-sphere functional
- 1 fruition of Arahantship

Sotapatti, Sakadagami and Anagami - 'sekkha' here refer as yet to undergo training. The consciousness they experience are as follows :-

Sotapatti

- 7 immoral of 4 attachment of 2 ill will of 1 restlessness
- 17 rootless
- 16 beautiful moral and resultant
- 5 form-sphere moral
- 4 formless-sphere moral
- 1 fruition Sotapatti

50 Consciousness

Sakadagami

- 7 immoral
- 17 rootless
- 16 beautiful moral and resultant
- 5 form-sphere moral
- 4 formless-sphere moral
- 1 fruition Sakadagami

50 Consciousness

Anagami

- 5 immoral of 4 attachment of 1 restlessness
- 17 rootless
- 16 beautiful moral and resultant
- 5 form-sphere moral
- 4 formless-sphere moral
- 1 fruition Anagami

48 Consciousness