

Time for Stream Entry

Comprehensive informal exploration
into the time and practice required to attain Stream Entry Enlightenment

By Can Luis Özkan
Sept to Dec 2023

Navigation

1. **General Information**

- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2. Stream Entry
- 1.3. Aim of this Study
- 1.4. Analyzing Stream Entry
- 1.5. Defining Stream Entry
- 1.6. Analyzed Practitioners

2. **Stream Enterers under the Lens**

2.1. **Prominent/Public Practitioners**

- 2.1.1. Comparison Table
- 2.1.2. Timelines

2.2. **Questionnaire Participants**

- 2.2.1. Questions
- 2.2.2. Results

2.3. **Book Analysis:** *Entering the Stream to Enlightenment*

3. **Insights from Teachers**

- 3.1. Sayadaw Vivekananda, Daniel M. Ingram, Kenneth Folk, Bill Hamilton, Bhante Vimalaramsi

4. **Practice**

- 4.1. Methods
- 4.2. Time Investment
- 4.3. The Three Trainings
- 4.4. Enlightenmend lay practitioners?

5. **Conclusion**

6. **Further Reading**

Glossary: Technical Terms, Teachers, Practices

7. **About the Author**

Contact

General Information

Introduction

This informal Study examines the time and practice it takes to attain Stream Entry and relies on the subjective Experience of the Research Participants and the cited Authors and Teachers. It is written to also be understood by those not familiar with Buddhism and I sought to find a balance of dipping into related subjects to provide proper context, without delving unnecessarily deep into non-time related aspects. For clarification on challenging technical terms, refer to the glossary and footnotes.

Initially written as a personal documentation for my pursuit of Stream Entry, this paper evolved organically as I recognized its potential to help others.

A heartfelt thank you to all who contributed their experiences through the questionnaire, assisted in proofreading, source recommendations and to the generous teachers sharing their wisdom.

Stream Entry

is a translation of the Pali Term *sotāpatti* which is the first Stage of enlightenment in Buddhism and specifically emphasized in the Theravada Tradition. SE correlates to the first Satori/Kensho/Bodhi Enlightenment of other traditions and frameworks like Zen, Advaita and Yoga, but has distinct characteristics to differentiate it from other unitive experiences, which might also be called enlightenment by other Traditions.

Aim of this Study

The aim of this study is Exploring the Time and Practice it took for Practitioners to attain Stream Entry, with the Purpose of making it more accessible and showing with examples that it is possible for normal people. By comparing Practice Timelines of Stream Enterers and citing Teachers on the subject, I am oriented to convey a sense of what it takes to attain Stream Entry and if it is a fitting aspiration for your own practice. Here is an analogy that illustrates the essence of this study: in the act of searching within a bag for an item, one usually feels more patient when they are sure that the item is definitely in the bag. This study boldly asserts, "It's definitely the Bag!"

Analyzing Stream Entry

As mentioned before there are enlightenment experiences in all Traditions, however there are a few points which make stream entry easier to analyze which are:

- A set of clear cut characteristics, with which an experienced meditator or teacher can with varying accuracy diagnose SE.
- The openness with which attainments are handled and communicated by many who are using this stage model of Theravada Buddhism called *The Four Path Model*.
- SE is one of the easiest meditation attainments to diagnose¹ and being the first stage it's naturally also the most common of the higher attainments which makes much more data available and the analysis relevant for a larger number of people.

Defining Stream Entry

There are multiple definitions of Stream Entry, but the following is the classic one based on the *suttas*, which will be used here.²

Stream Entry signifies the attainment of the first stage of enlightenment or awakening. This transformative state is marked by the breaking of three fundamental mental fetters:

- Sakkāya-diṭṭhi (Personality View): The stream-enterer fundamentally understands and experiences the absence of a permanent and unchanging self or ego. This realization leads to a profound shift in perspective, breaking the illusion of a fixed personal identity.
- Vicikicchā (Doubt): Doubt regarding the path to enlightenment and the teachings of Buddha is dispelled. The stream-enterer gains unwavering confidence in the Buddha (the teacher and possibility of Enlightenment), the Dharma (the teachings and reality), and the Sangha (the community of true practitioners), which are the Triple Gem in Buddhism.
- Sīlabbata-parāmāsa (Attachment to Rites and Rituals): The stream-enterer transcends the attachment to superficial rituals and external practices as the sole means of spiritual progress. They understand that true liberation comes from inner transformation and the cultivation of wisdom.

In addition to breaking these three fetters permanently, the stream-enterer also has a glimpse or direct experience of Nirvana or Cessation, a moment of complete non-experience. This profound shift in understanding and experience sets the stream-enterer on the irreversible

¹ General Notion of most teachers I listened to.

² *The Water-Snake Simile Alagaddūpama Sutta* (MN 22)

path to full enlightenment, with subsequent stages of awakening building upon this initial breakthrough.

Stream Entry Sotapanna is the first of *the four paths* (stages) of awakening in Buddhism, the second one being Once-Returner (Sakadagami), the third Non-Returner (Anagami) and the fourth and final one being Arhatship, complete awakening.

Analyzed Practitioners

All analyzed and quoted Practitioners and Teachers practiced some form of Vipassana, the original method given by the Buddha, which is based on mindfully observing differing aspects of reality, such as the body and mind. Many Practitioners of the Pragmatic Dharma Context are chosen because Practitioners of most other Traditions often don't talk about their attainments openly and detailed enough to be included here. Also there are more accounts and citings of advanced Lay Practitioners included, because buddhist monks with higher ordination are prohibited to openly talk about their own attainments.³

There is some *survivorship bias* present in this work, because only practitioners which were successful in attaining Stream Entry were analyzed. There seem to be cases of people not attaining, even after long practice, which can be caused by a broad variety of factors.

I have heard of people doing it [Stream Entry] in two weeks, and one friend was not able to finish after 10 years of doing at least one three-month retreat every year.⁴

Bill Hamilton

³ *The 227 rules of pātimokkha, pārājika 4*

⁴ *Saints and Psychopaths* by Bill Hamilton

Analyzing Stream Enterers

Prominent Practitioners

Comparison Table

This Table compares the time which prominent practitioners needed to attain Stream Entry. The data is contrived from their AutoBiographical Material.

	Number of Retreats	Total Retreat Time	Time since 1st Retreat
Kenneth Folk	2	5 Month (150 days)	1-2 Years
Daniel M. Ingram	4	2,5 Month (67 days)	2 Years
Frank Yang	2	20 Days	3 Years
Shinzen Young	multiple	3+ years (temporary Monk)	4

With intense practice of one to three hours per day between Retreats.

Timelines

Kenneth Folk ⁵ Born 1959

•1991 Three Month Retreat attaining 10 of 16 Stages before Stream Entry (his teacher Bill Hamilton commented at that time that if he practiced more in the retreat instead of thinking, he "might even have attained stream entry!")

•6 Month Retreat Malaysia »Stream entry at 2nd month (**age about 33**)

•6 Month Retreat Burma

STREAM ENTRY: After 5 months total Retreat time.

Daniel Ingram ⁶

1994 (Nine Day) First Retreat IMS

1994 Second Retreat (Seventeen Day) » Begins to sit for an hour a day (**age 25**)

Third Retreat (Two weeks)

1996 Fourth Retreat (27 days) »Stream Entry (January 13, 1996 **age approx 27**)

STREAM ENTRY: After 2,5 Month total Retreat time and two years since first Retreat.

Frank Yang ⁷ Born 1985

2016 First 10 Day Goenka

2019 Second 10 Day Goenka »Stream Entry (**Age 34**)

STREAM ENTRY: After 20 Days of total Retreat Time and 3 years since first Retreat.

Shinzen Young ⁸ Born 1944

Age 25 Begins to practice

Ordained 1970 as monk in Japan for 3 years (Age 26)

Attains Stream Entry at Home In sitting practice (Self Inquiry) at (**age 29 or 30**) after 4 Years of Practice.

It's noteworthy that Shinzen practiced in a lineage which is not aimed directly at Stream Entry, which explains why it took longer than the others. Though 4 years is still a quick progression.

⁵ [Contemplative Fitness](#) by Kenneth Folk

⁶ [Mastering The Core Teachings Of The Buddha](#) by Daniel M. Ingram

⁷ [Frank Yangs Website](#)

⁸ [Shinzen Stream Entry Story](#)

Questionnaire Participants

I created a Questionnaire consisting of the following 11 Questions and submitted it to the users of the Dharma Overground and the r/StreamEntry forums and got 11 Responses. I also included the public cases from above, so data of 15 Stream Enterers.

Authenticity of the Data

The limitations of validating the authenticity of these Answers is obvious. Since no in-depth Interview, monitored by a meditation master, was held with each Participant, we have to rely on their accounts. However 80% of the Participants stated that their experience was validated by a teacher.

The Trends in the Answers are quite clear, so it's secondary if all of them are authentic or if some are not.

Questionnaire for Stream Winners, Sotāpannas

1. Name or Initials/Alias:
2. Method(s) with which Stream Entry was attained:
3. Intensity of practice [short description]:
4. Verified by Teacher [Yes/No/Explain]:
5. Age at which Stream Entry was attained:
6. Approx. Time since attainment:
7. Retreats [kind, number of and (total) duration]:
8. Time it took from the first Retreat/Regular Practice period to attainment:
9. Attained at home/retreat and if on- or off-cushion:
10. Additional Remarks:
11. Short Definition of Stream Entry:

Questionnaire Results

I sorted the data of the participants into a Table which is too large to include here, but can be viewed here: [Stream Entry Questionnaire Results](#)

Out of this limited Data, still a few trends became visible.

2. Method All 15 participants practiced some form of Buddhist Meditation, which is not surprising since *Stream Entry* is a Buddhist Term and practitioners of other Traditions would describe their attainments in their respective terms. 6 Mentioned Mahasi Vipassana and many practiced other kinds of Vipassana. Jhana, Self Inquiry and Zen were also mentioned.

3. Practice Intensity Almost all participants report practicing 1 to 3 hours a day while off Retreat. Those who took retreat practiced all waking hours during those phases.

4. Validation 12 out of 15 got their attainment validated by a teacher. The remaining 3 are the practitioners who did not take part in Retreats and thus have less opportunity to talk to teachers.

5. Age at Attainment All Participants attained SE between their 27th and 45th Birthday. 12 out of 15 attained before the age of 40.

6. Time since Attainment 14 of 15 Participants attained 2 to 32 years ago (from 2023). One attained 5 Month ago. This number is relevant to determine if the participants were able to observe the long time effects of their attainment which also tells of its authenticity. The Traditional Time span in which attainments should be probed is '1 year and one day'.

7. Retreat Time 11 of the 15 did Retreats ranging from one or a few 10-Day Goenka Retreats to multiple long Mahasi Retreats (3 Month). The other 4 practiced without formal Retreats.

8. Total Time Of the 15, 10 took anywhere from 2 to 4 years to attain since they began to practice regularly or started going on Retreat. The other 5 took either much shorter (from weeks to months) or longer (up to a decade).

9. On or off Retreat Of the 15 Individuals 8 attained on Retreat and 6 of those on cushion, the other two during general retreat activities such as eating or doing their assigned work i.e. cleaning or cooking while maintaining mindfulness.

Of the 7 who attained at home, 6 attained on cushion. So 12 of 15 attained during formal sitting/walking practice.

Entering the Stream to Enlightenment

Book analysis

A fellow practitioner recommended a book to me called *Entering the Stream to Enlightenment* in which the Author Yuki Sirimane (Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies) researches the Theravada Path Attainments and Stream Entry in particular.

For her book, Sirimane interviewed 7 Stream Winners from Sri Lanka on their experience, 5 of which are Monks, one a Nun and one which is a housewife, in a very precise manner. I'll include some of Siriman's findings, having received the kind permission of the publisher.

What's noteworthy is that 2 of the Monks attained Stream Entry before they decided to ordain and together with the housewife that is 3 out of the 7 interviewed Stream Enterers attained as Laypeople.

All interviewees attained during formal meditation Practice.

Sirimane posed the interesting question, on the circumstance of people who attained Stream Entry in their last incarnation, to and experience Monk:

When asked whether he has come across noble persons [Stream Enterers] by birth and how one could recognize them, Ajahn Brahmavamsa confirms that he has come across people who have attained stream-entry in a previous birth. He says: "The only way you know that, is to re-experience that phala [fruit of Stream Entry] in this life. In other words if you were, say, a stream-enterer in your previous life, you would not know that as a baby, you would not know that as a young man, or a young girl. There'll come a time in your life when you re-experience the same thing and you say you are a stream-enterer again."

Sirimane also included two accounts of young Western men aged 16 and 18 who probably have re-experienced stream Entry without prior training, due to their attainment in their last birth. This is also an explanation for cases like Eckhart Tolle who also awakened after deep inner suffering without prior spiritual training.

All of the interviewed stream enterers stated that they do not feel that they need a teacher to complete the path after stream entry, although most of them still practice with a teacher.

Teachers on How long it takes to attain SE

Sayadaw Vivekananda in a Dharma Talk ⁹ [paraphrasing]:

Mahasi says it takes 45 days for women and 90 days for men [of Burmese heritage]. Sayadaw Vivekananda commented that it takes longer for westerners because they were brought up in a non-buddhist culture. S Vivekananda further says that it is not so common that retreatants attain SE, but that it is just a question of time and right practice.

Question to and Answer from *Daniel Ingram*¹⁰:

Q: I have a full time job/studies +/- kids/dogs/cats/aging parents +/- a partner, very limited time for retreats, try to sit some each day, and I want to get enlightened. Help me!

A (Daniel Ingram): While I do know of someone who got stream entry on about 3 hours/day of sitting over a few years, and one person who got it on her first short retreat, for most people retreats of some reasonable duration are required. While opinions on how easy it is to get enlightened vary widely, and I am much more on the "It can be done" side than most, it tends to require the sort of time commitment that any other serious endeavor requires. Thus, unless you happen to be unusually talented, if you really want to get what the Buddha was talking about, you will probably have to go on at least some retreats, and probably of a few weeks each at least, and this assumes that you will practice very well and can put aside dealing with your "stuff", which most just don't seem willing or able to do most of the time.

Kenneth Folk in *Contemplative Fitness*¹¹:

When someone asks me how long it takes to reach stream entry or some other mile-marker of progress, I point out that a similarly unanswerable question would be "how long does it take to be able to do twenty pushups?" For some

⁹ [Dharma Talk](#) by Sayadaw Vivekananda

¹⁰ [Integrated Daniel faq](#)

¹¹ [Contemplative Fitness, Chapter 4](#)

people, it is trivial; they can already do twenty pushups. For others, doing twenty pushups is a big deal, and some people may never be able to do it in their lifetime. Similarly, with contemplative fitness there is a great deal of individual variation in the time it takes to make progress, depending on what you're bringing to the table and how much time and energy you are willing to invest. Based on my experience working with students, we can model a bell curve for how long it takes to get stream entry, the first goal I recommend to my students and to the readers of this book. **Most people who take on the project are likely to get stream entry within a year or two.** On the tail ends of the curve, I know people who have been working seriously towards stream entry for several years and haven't yet gotten it, and I also know people who managed it within a month or two of getting serious about their meditation practice. Having attained stream entry, you are likely to find that there is more to do and that you are more interested in your meditation practice than ever. Ultimately, there is no end to contemplative development. Like evolution, it adapts forever, always changing and moving into new spaces, never resting or growing stale. Plan on practicing for the rest of your life and falling more deeply in love with your practice with each passing year.

*Bill Hamilton in Saints & Psychopaths*¹²:

I haven't seen any good statistics on how long it takes to become enlightened. In any event, there are many variables to consider such as how enlightened and suitable your teacher is, the proper environment, the state of your practice, understanding and following the instructions, just to mention a few. The Buddha said that if people practiced continuously it would take between seven years and seven days to become an Arahant. Those figures seem reasonable if your teacher is the Buddha. One of my teachers, Tungpulu Sayadaw, practiced in a cave for thirty-nine years without lying down, and he emerged an Arahant. Another of my teachers, Dipa Ma, did three consecutive three-month retreats, and attained a new level of enlightenment during each. **If you have a strong, correct daily practice, then a reasonable expectation could be to attain *deep insight* in a ten-day retreat. If you have attained *deep insight* in a ten-day retreat, then you have excellent chances of attaining enlightenment on a three-month retreat.**

[...]

¹² [Saints and Psychopaths](#) by Bill Hamilton

Again, I haven't seen any good statistics on how long it takes to get from *deep insight* to Stream-winning. One teacher said it takes an average of seven weeks for the average person. I have heard of people doing it in two weeks, and one friend was not able to finish after 10 years of doing at least one three-month retreat every year. My sense of it is that **the seven week figure is probably fairly close to the average.**

Comment by unknown Stream Enterer (included because Mahasi Sayadaw's estimate is cited the same by different sources)¹³:

Mahasi Sayadaw's school claims most people hit stream entry in a retreat of a month or two in length.

*Bhante Vimalaramsi*¹⁴

In this country [USA] they're not quite as good as they are in Indonesia with being able to experience nibbana. **But about between 25% and 35% of the people that come [to a ten day Retreat] have that experience [Nibbana, Stream Entry].** And I get questioned about why do you think you know [that they attained], when only the buddha is supposed to know who's really [enlightened]. But i have questions that I ask about what's happening in their mind and how their perception of things are and how their physical existence is and they always have the same things to say so I have to assume that "yeah you've had this experience." **But I'll give a [ten day] retreat for ten people and three, sometimes four people attain at least the first stage [Stream Entry].** And some of the other students that are around that listen to me give dhamma talks and listen to me interview and I go hmm another one [that attained] but it's really a special thing that's happened for them.

Comment by the Author: This might sound like marketing for his own method, however the suttas state that Moggallana attained Arhatship in one week and Sariputra attained Arhatship within two weeks.¹⁵ So Bhante Vimalaramsi's claim is not in conflict with the developments mentioned in the traditional texts. There are also many credible Stream Enterers which confirm his claims such as Frank Yang and Delson Armstrong.

¹³ [On Reddit](#)

¹⁴ [B. Vimalaramsi Interview](#)

¹⁵ [Moggallana attains in one Week](#)

Practice

Methods

As the Practices that led to Stream Entry many different forms of Vipassana were mentioned, which is obvious, since it is the original Practice taught by the Buddha. Vipassana Methods such as Noting, Labeling, Mindfulness of the body, Body Sweeping, Investigation of the three characteristics and Investigation of the six sense fields were mentioned, to name a few prominent ones out of a great selection.

Modern Vipassana Systems which are often mentioned by Stream Enterers are Mahasi, TWIM, Goenka and Unified Mindfulness.

Concentration Meditations, in contrast to Insight Meditations, are not directly oriented towards Stream Entry, which is an Insight Attainment. Nevertheless the collected mind and non-distractedness gained by Concentration Meditation are mentioned to be beneficial by many Stream Enterers as well as the traditional Buddhist texts. Mentioned practices are Jhana, TMI and others.

Other practices which are not necessarily directly aimed at Stream Entry itself, but are also often mentioned are different forms of Zen and Self Inquiry.

Daniel Ingram Talks about how he observes that some Methods are more stable and others more quick. He observed *Mahasi Noting* to be fast for attaining Insight, but more destabilizing and challenging for the mood, while giving a very good technical understanding. *TMI Practice* he observed to be slower but more stable and safe. And *Fire Kasina* was very colorful and psychedelic and as fast as Mahasi Vipassana in terms of insight progress according to his observation.¹⁶

Time

Most lay Practitioners mentioned to practice 1 to 3 hours daily leading up to Stream Entry. Regular Retreats in which one dedicates themselves to continuous practice from the moment of waking to reclining greatly accelerate Insight progress.

¹⁶ Daniel Ingram: [Comparing Methods](#)

*Kenneth Folk on Buddhist Geek Podcast*¹⁷ on right Practice:

When I asked Bill [Hamilton] why people seem to be going to these long Retreats every year, for example the three-month year-end retreat at Insight Meditation society. And some people would go year after year and they were regulars. And yet by their own testimony, they had not yet reached some of the important early landmarks on the progress of insight. So for example maybe they hadn't had what Bill called "Deep Insight". Deep Insight refers to, on the progress of insight, the fourth Insight knowledge technically called "the arising and passing away of phenomena". So [I asked him,] how could people sit there hour after hour, day after day, month after month, year after year and not get to that early attainment? Bill said "They're doing psychology." Yet another really foundational principle in what I think of as pragmatic Dharma. We want to tease apart these threads. Psychology is great, we should absolutely all do psychology. But **if you're meditating and you're sitting there thinking about the Narrative of your life, you're doing psychology and you're not doing the thing that leads to Awakening in this Mahasi Buddhist context.**

The Three Trainings

Since Stream Entry is an Insight attainment, this paper mainly deals with Insight Training and Progress. However the Three Trainings which consist of Sila (Ethical Conduct), Samadhi (Concentration) and Prajna (Wisdom/Insight) need to be balanced and stable to create the ground for Insight Progress.

Is Enlightenment possible for lay Practitioners?

In Buddha's time and in the present day, People have Enlightenment Experiences and attain the higher Insight Stages. Many Practitioners who are now monks, attained Stream Entry and further also higher attainments, as lay people before they decided to ordain and often ordained as a consequence of their attainment. This might partly be the effect of the fetter Breaking Experience, because when one attains Stream Entry one supposedly permanently and completely loses doubt in the Buddha and his Teaching which makes it much more reasonable for an Individual to take on the robes and become a Monk or Nun.

¹⁷ Kenneth Folk on [Buddhist Geek Podcast](#)

That said, it is clearly observable that the attainments beyond Stream Entry are much more common in Monks and other Full Time Practitioners, since these often take much more work and time.

Stream Entry seems to be a reasonable goal for Lay Practitioners who are sincere about their practice and ready to put in the necessary amount of time and Energy.

Bill Hamilton in *Saints & Psychopaths* on the **impact of high quality Teachers**¹⁸:

The teacher is more important than the technique. The attainment of enlightenment is very dependent upon the quality of teaching and teachers. For example, in 1984 Sayadaw U Pandita led a three-month retreat for teachers at IMS in Barre, Massachusetts. During that retreat, some teachers attained the second level of enlightenment or insight to that level. Since that retreat, the number of people attaining deep insight during regular retreats has doubled. Also, it was unknown for people to attain higher levels of enlightenment at IMS before then, and since then a few have attained the third level.

¹⁸ [*Saints and Psychopaths*](#) by Bill Hamilton

Conclusion

The time it takes to attain Stream Entry depends on many complex factors:

1. One's current Stage of Insight and Personal Dispositions: The practitioner's progress through the stages of insight meditation can impact the time it takes to attain Stream Entry. Individual differences, such as psychological resilience, openness to new experiences, and natural inclination towards introspection, as well as cultural background, influence Insight progress.
2. Practice Intensity: The dedication and intensity with which one engages in meditation practice can influence the speed of progress. Regular and consistent daily meditation practice is crucial for deepening insights and achieving milestones.
3. Practice and Retreat Time: The amount of time spent in formal meditation practice, as well as participation in longer meditation retreats. The proportion of more practice time to faster progress is not always linear in all individuals, but a connection is very clearly observable.
4. Form and Orientation of Practice: The specific meditation techniques and methods used, as well as the overall approach to practice, affects the pace of progress. Different Methods and systems put emphasis on different Aspects.
5. Teacher/Guide Quality: The guidance and instructions from a skilled meditation teacher or guide can significantly impact the practitioner's understanding and progress.
6. Mindfulness in Daily Life: Integrating mindfulness into everyday activities and maintaining awareness throughout the day reinforces insights gained in formal practice.
7. Sangha (Community): Being part of a supportive meditation community or having a spiritual community can provide motivation and a sense of shared purpose.
8. Life Circumstances: External factors like stress, life events, and work commitments can either facilitate or hinder progress on the path to Stream Entry.
9. Mind-Body Connection: Physical health and well-being can influence mental clarity and focus during meditation.
10. Depth of Concentration: The ability to achieve deep states of concentration (samadhi) can expedite progress in insight meditation.
11. Clear Goal Setting: Having a clear understanding of the goal (Stream Entry) and a strong motivation can provide a sense of direction and purpose in the practice.

So a definitive and general time length of the required practice period cannot be stated.

It has to be kept in mind that this paper relies solely on subjective experience since Stream Entry is an insight experience and objective science was not able to retrace it by EEG brain scans or other methods till today.

However, from the gathered data it seems reasonable to say that it's possible for the average meditator to attain Stream Entry within one to three years of committed and intensive daily Practice of 1 to 3 hours and less than 5 Months of total Retreat Time with competent Teachers. It can further be said that putting more time and energy into practice and retreats generally quickens the progress, the importance of balance and health apply of course.

A commonality between the analyzed Stream Enterers is that almost all of them attained during formal sitting meditation Practice. Attaining during walking practice and out of practice, in daily life, also occurs.

It tends to require the sort of time commitment that any other serious endeavor requires.¹⁹

Daniel M. Ingram

¹⁹ [Integrated Daniel faq](#)

Further Reading

Very helpful for a Pragmatic Dharma understanding.

Sorted simplest to most complex:

1. **Aloha Dharma (Document)** by Ronald Crouch (free)
Is the best place to get an overview over Insight Stages and Vipassana Practice leading up to Stream Entry
2. **The science of enlightenment** by Shinzen Young
Practical Overview of the three main kinds of Buddhist Practice and much more.
3. **Contemplative Fitness** by Kenneth Folk (free)
Is the Autobiography of an accomplished Mahasi Vipassana meditator from which the reader can learn a lot, with a second part that leads through the Theravada Awakening Stage Theory in a detailed way.
4. **Saints and Psychopaths** by Bill Hamilton (free)
An analysis of the Characteristics of Saints and Psychopaths, as well as very helpful information for Insight Meditators. A gold mine.
5. **Mastering The Core Teachings Of The Buddha** by Daniel M. Ingram (free)
In depth Understanding of Models, States and Stages in modern and refreshingly open language.
6. **Entering the Stream to Enlightenment** by Yuki Sirimane
Academic Work on Stream Entry, containing six Interviews with Stream Enterers.

Glossary

Technical Terms

1. **Four Path Model** of Theravada Buddhism: This model is a framework in Theravada Buddhism used to describe the stages of spiritual progress or enlightenment. It includes four distinct paths:
 - Stream Entry: The first stage, marking the initial breakthrough to enlightenment. It is characterized by a deep understanding of the impermanence of reality and a reduction in suffering.
 - Once-Returner: The second stage, where an individual has further reduced attachment and aversion, and is destined to be reborn in the human realm only once more.
 - Non-Returner: The third stage, where one has eliminated the desire for sensual pleasures and is no longer subject to rebirth in the human realm.
 - Arahant: The fourth and final stage, signifying full enlightenment. Arahants have completely eradicated all defilements and are liberated from the cycle of birth and death.
2. **Jhana**: Jhana is a meditative state characterized by deep concentration and absorption. In Buddhist practice, there are multiple Jhana states, each marked by heightened mental clarity, tranquility, and a profound sense of joy. The cultivation of Jhana is central to developing profound levels of insight and understanding.
3. **Jhana Practice**: Jhana practice involves the systematic cultivation of meditative absorption states. Practitioners focus on refining concentration, often using specific meditation objects. As one progresses through Jhana stages, the mind becomes increasingly stable, and sensory distractions diminish. Jhana practice is not only a means of deepening concentration but also a pathway to profound insights and transformative experiences on the spiritual journey.
4. **Lay People**: Non-monastic individuals in Buddhist communities who follow ethical precepts, engage in meditation, and seek spiritual development while living in the lay world. Lay practitioners integrate Buddhist teachings into their daily lives.
5. **Pragmatic Dharma Movement**: A contemporary movement within Buddhism that emphasizes a pragmatic and non-dogmatic approach to meditation and spiritual practice. It often integrates insights from various Buddhist traditions with modern psychological and scientific perspectives to achieve personal transformation and awakening.
6. **Stream entry**, in the context of meditation and Buddhism, signifies the attainment of the first stage of enlightenment or awakening. This transformative state is marked by the breaking of three fundamental mental fetters or chains that bind individuals to the cycle of birth and death (samsara). These three fetters are:

- Sakkāya-ditṭhi (Personality View): The stream-enterer fundamentally understands and experiences the absence of a permanent and unchanging self or ego. This realization leads to a profound shift in perspective, breaking the illusion of a fixed personal identity.
- Vicikicchā (Doubt): Doubt regarding the path to enlightenment and the teachings of Buddhism is dispelled. The stream-enterer gains unwavering confidence in the Buddha's teachings, the Dharma, and the Sangha, which are the Triple Gem in Buddhism.
- Sīlabbata-parāmāsa (Attachment to Rites and Rituals): The stream-enterer transcends the attachment to superficial rituals and external practices as the sole means of spiritual progress. They understand that true liberation comes from inner transformation and the cultivation of wisdom.

In addition to breaking these three fetters, the stream-enterer also gains a glimpse or direct experience of Nirvana. Nirvana is the ultimate goal in Buddhism, representing the state of liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth. The stream-enterer, at this stage, experiences a taste of Nirvana, which serves as a powerful motivator for further spiritual practice.

This profound shift in understanding and experience sets the stream-enterer on the irreversible path to full enlightenment, with subsequent stages of awakening building upon this initial breakthrough.

7. Suttas Traditional Buddhist Scriptures.

8. Three Characteristics In Buddhist philosophy, the Three Characteristics (also known as the Three Marks of Existence) are fundamental attributes that characterize all phenomena. These characteristics provide insights into the nature of reality and form key aspects of Buddhist teachings. The Three Characteristics are:

- Impermanence (Anicca): This principle underscores the transient and ever-changing nature of all things. It suggests that nothing in the material or mental world is permanent or enduring. Recognizing impermanence is essential for understanding the nature of life and cultivating detachment.
- Suffering or Unsatisfactoriness (Dukkha): Dukkha refers to the inherent dissatisfaction, suffering, or unsatisfactoriness present in all aspects of existence. It encompasses physical and mental pain, as well as the sense of discontentment that arises from the impermanent and conditioned nature of reality.
- Non-Self (Anatta): Anatta emphasizes the absence of a permanent, unchanging self or soul. It challenges the concept of a fixed, independent identity and encourages the recognition that all phenomena are interdependent and lack inherent selfhood. Understanding non-self is crucial for breaking free from attachments and reducing suffering-

The contemplation and realization of these Three Characteristics are central to Buddhist practice, leading to insight and wisdom that forms the foundation of the path to liberation (Nirvana).

9. **Three Trainings:** The Three Trainings are fundamental principles in Buddhist practice, guiding individuals on the path to enlightenment. Each training addresses a specific aspect of personal development:
 - **Sila (Ethical Conduct):** Sila involves cultivating virtuous behavior and moral conduct. Practitioners adhere to ethical precepts, avoiding harmful actions and promoting positive conduct. Sila provides the foundation for a wholesome and harmonious life.
 - **Samadhi (Concentration or Mental Discipline):** Samadhi focuses on developing mental discipline and concentration through meditation. Practitioners train the mind to achieve one-pointed concentration, leading to states of tranquility and deep absorption. Samadhi is crucial for cultivating mindfulness and insight.
 - **Prajna (Wisdom):** Prajna is the training in wisdom and insight into the nature of reality. Through contemplative practices and direct experience, practitioners gain a profound understanding of impermanence (Anicca), suffering (Dukkha), and non-self (Anatta). Wisdom is essential for liberation from ignorance and the cycle of rebirth.

10. **Vipassana:** Vipassana is a form of meditation that is part of the Theravada Buddhist tradition. It focuses on insight into the true nature of reality through mindful observation of bodily sensations, thoughts, and emotions. Vipassana meditation aims to develop wisdom and liberate the practitioner from suffering by directly experiencing impermanence, suffering, and the absence of a permanent self.
11. **Vipassana Retreat:** A structured and often intensive meditation retreat dedicated to the practice of Vipassana meditation. These retreats typically involve extended periods of silent meditation, guided instructions, and a controlled environment conducive to deepening one's meditation practice and insights.

Teachers and Practitioners

Please write glossary in alphabetical order: Bill Hamilton, Daniel M. Ingram, Frank Yang, Kenneth Folk, Bhante Vimalaramsi, Mahasi Sayadaw, Sayadaw Vivekananda, Shinzen Young, Ajahn Brahmavamso, Leigh Brasington

1. **Bill Hamilton** was a meditation teacher known for his contributions to the field of meditation, particularly within the context of Vipassana (insight meditation). Born in the United States, he played a crucial role in guiding and influencing practitioners on their spiritual journeys. He was a senior spiritual friend to Kenneth Folk and Daniel M. Ingram. Hamilton was a dedicated student of Asian traditions and studied under various meditation masters, including the renowned Burmese monk Sayadaw U Pandita. His teachings often reflected a pragmatic and accessible approach to meditation, emphasizing direct experience and understanding.
2. **Daniel M. Ingram:** Daniel M. Ingram is a prominent figure in the contemporary Buddhist and meditation community. He is known for his book "Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha," which discusses his experiences and insights into meditation and enlightenment. Ingram is associated with the pragmatic dharma movement and has been influential in the discussion of attainments and progress in meditation practice.
3. **Frank Yang:** Frank Yang is a YouTuber and internet personality known for his eclectic content, which often combines elements of fitness, philosophy, spirituality, and art. He has explored a wide range of topics, including meditation, consciousness, and self-improvement, and has a unique and often unconventional approach to these subjects. He has attained to all the stages of the four path model.
4. **Kenneth Folk:** Kenneth Folk is a meditation teacher and practitioner known for his contributions to the pragmatic dharma movement. He offers meditation instruction and guidance, drawing from various Buddhist traditions and emphasizing a pragmatic, results-oriented approach to meditation practice.
5. **Mahasi Sayadaw:** Mahasi Sayadaw, also known as the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw U Sobhana, was a renowned Burmese Buddhist monk and meditation teacher. He played a significant role in popularizing the Vipassana meditation method, particularly the "Mahasi noting technique," which involves continuous mindfulness and noting of mental and physical phenomena.
6. **Bhante Vimalaramsi:** Bhante Vimalaramsi, a Buddhist monk, is recognized for his teachings on meditation, particularly within the context of Vipassana (insight meditation). Bhante Vimalaramsi is associated with the Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation (TWIM) method, which integrates mindfulness and Metta practices.
7. **Sayadaw Vivekananda:** Sayadaw U Vivekananda is a German Buddhist monk and meditation teacher who has gained recognition for his teachings and writings on Vipassana meditation and Buddhist philosophy. He has been influential in transmitting the teachings of Mahasi Sayadaw and promoting meditation practice in the West.

Practices

Body Scanning: A meditation technique involving systematic attention to the sensations throughout the body. It is commonly used in practices like Vipassana to develop mindfulness and insight into bodily experiences.

Fire Kasina: A form of concentration meditation where practitioners focus on an external or internal visualized image of fire. This technique is intended to cultivate concentration, mental clarity, and heightened states of awareness.

Goenka Vipassana: A specific form of Vipassana meditation popularized by S.N. Goenka. The technique involves observing bodily sensations to develop mindfulness and insight into the impermanence and nature of sensations, aiming for liberation from suffering.

Jhana Practice: The systematic cultivation of meditative absorption states called Jhanas. Practitioners focus on deep concentration, leading to states of mental tranquility and joy. Jhana practice is often part of advanced meditation traditions.

Mahasi Vipassana: A style of Vipassana meditation associated with the Mahasi Sayadaw tradition. It involves noting or observing the arising and passing away of phenomena in a systematic and moment-to-moment manner, leading to insight and liberation.

Self-Inquiry: A contemplative practice where individuals inquire into the nature of the self. Popularized by Advaita Vedanta, it involves questioning the nature of one's identity to realize the non-dual nature of consciousness.

TMI (The Mind Illuminated): A comprehensive meditation guidebook by Culadasa (John Yates), providing a systematic approach to meditation practice. TMI outlines progressive stages of concentration and insight for spiritual development.

Twim (Tranquil Wisdom Insight Meditation): A meditation technique that combines concentration (Samatha) and insight (Vipassana) practices. Twim involves focusing on the breath to develop tranquility and wisdom, fostering a balanced and harmonious mind.

Unified Mindfulness: A meditation system developed by Shinzen Young, emphasizing a comprehensive and adaptable approach to mindfulness. Unified Mindfulness integrates various meditation techniques, making it accessible to practitioners of different traditions.

Vipassana: A meditation practice that involves observing the impermanence of bodily sensations and mental phenomena. It aims to develop insight into the nature of reality, leading to liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth.

About the Author



Can is an accomplished practitioner who has engaged in a diverse array of traditions, including Zen, Qi Gong, Chi-based Martial Arts, Healing Arts, and Vipassana. His comprehensive exploration has involved immersive experiences and studies within the spheres of meditation, martial arts, and holistic healing. His multifaceted background serves as a valuable foundation for insights presented within this paper. For inquiries, feel free to contact Can directly.

Contact information:

Website (Recommended)
Can-Zen.de

Instagram
[@can.zen.here](https://www.instagram.com/can.zen.here) DE

[@can.the.frog](https://www.instagram.com/can.the.frog) Int

Mail
can luis oezkan [at] [gmail.com](mailto:can_luis_oezkan@gmail.com)
(without the spaces)