

Handout 6: Realms of Existence

Names of Realms

Categories			Name of realm
31	Immaterial Plane	Immaterial Jhāna	Neither perception nor non-perception
30			Nothingness
29			Infinite consciousness
28			Infinite space
27	Fine Material Plane	5 th Jhāna	Pure Abodes
26			Highest Pure Abode
25			Clear-sighted Abode
24			Beautiful Abode
23			Serene Abode
22			Durable Abode
21		4 th Jhāna	Gods without consciousness
20			Gods of great reward
19			Gods of steady aura
18		2 nd & 3 rd Jhāna	Gods of infinite aura
17			Gods of minor aura
16			Gods of radiant luster
15		1 st Jhāna	Gods of infinite luster
14			Gods of minor luster
13			Great Brahmās
12	Sensuous Plane	Happy Destinations	Ministers of Brahmā
11			Retinue of Brahmā
10			Gods wielding power over creation of others
9			Gods delighting in creation
8			Heaven of the contented Gods
7		Deva Realms	Heaven of the Yāma Gods
6			Heaven of the 33 Gods
5			Heaven of the Four Great Kings
4		Woeful States	Human ☺
3			Asura
2			Peta (Hungry Ghosts)
1			Animal
			Hell

Details of Realms 12–31

Fine Material Plane (12–27) and Immaterial Plane (28–31)

Categories			Cause of rebirth into this Realm	Life- continuum	Lifespan	Destination	
						Non- saints	Saints
31	Immaterial Plane	Immaterial Jhāna	Mind Moment 73	77	84,000 Great aeons	5–11, 31	31
30			Mind Moment 72	76	60,000 Great aeons	5–11, 30, 31	30, 31
29			Mind Moment 71	75	40,000 Great aeons	5–11, 29–31	29–31
28			Mind Moment 70	74	20,000 Great aeons	5–11, 28–31	28–31
27	Fine Material Plane	5 th Jhāna	Understanding	64	16,000 Great aeons	-	-
26			Concentration		8,000 Great aeons	-	27
25			Mindfulness		4,000 Great aeons	-	26, 27
24			Energy		2,000 Great aeons	-	25–27
23			Faith		1,000 Great aeons	-	24–27
22			Dispassion to perception		500 Great aeons	5–11	-
21			-		500 Great aeons	5–22, 28–31	21, 23–31
20		4 th Jhāna	Highest Degree		64 Great aeons	5–22, 28–31	20–21, 23–31
19			Medium Degree		32 Great aeons	5–22, 28–31	19–21, 23–31
18			Minor Degree		16 Great aeons	5–22, 28–31	18–21, 23–31
17		2 nd & 3 rd Jhāna	Highest Degree	3 rd Jhāna 62	8 Great aeons	5–22, 28–31	17–21, 23–31
16			Medium Degree	2 nd Jhāna 61	4 Great aeons	5–22, 28–31	16–21, 23–31
15			Minor Degree		2 Great aeons	5–22, 28–31	15–21, 23–31
14		1 st Jhāna	Highest Degree	60	1 Incalculable aeon	5–22, 28–31	14–21, 23–31
13			Medium Degree		$\frac{1}{2}$ Incalculable aeon	5–22, 28–31	13–21, 23–31
12			Minor Degree		$\frac{1}{3}$ Incalculable aeon	5–22, 28–31	12–21, 23–31

Details of Realms 1–11 (Sensuous Plane)

Happy Destinations (5–11)

	Cause of rebirth into this Realm	Life- continuum	Lifespan	Destination	
				Non-saints	Saints
11			9216 million years		
10	3-rooted superior kamma → being with life-continuum of 39, 40, 43, 44 (3 roots)	39, 40, 43, 44	2304 million years		
9			576 million years	Being with life-continuum of 39, 40, 43, 44 → <i>1–22, 28–31</i>	
8			144 million years		<i>5–21</i> <i>23–31</i>
7	3-rooted superior kamma or 2-rooted superior kamma → being with life-continuum of 41, 42, 45, 46 (2 roots)	_____	36 million years	Being with life-continuum of 27, 41, 42, 45, 46 → <i>1–11</i>	
6	2-rooted inferior kamma → being with life-continuum of 27 (0 roots)		9 million years / Indefinite		
5			Indefinite		

Woeful States (1–4)

	Cause of rebirth into this Realm	Life- continuum	Lifespan	Destination	
				Non-saints	Saints
4	“Completed” unwholesome kamma				
3	“Completed” unwholesome kamma	19	Indefinite	<i>1–11</i>	-
2	“Completed” unwholesome kamma & behaving like an animal				
1	“Completed” unwholesome kamma & five heinous deeds				