

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	Highest Pure Abode
26				Clear-sighted Abode
25				Beautiful Abode
24				Serene Abode
23				Durable Abode
22				Gods without consciousness
21		Gods of great reward		
20		4 th Jhāna	Gods of steady aura	
19			Gods of infinite aura	
18			Gods of minor aura	
17		2 nd & 3 rd Jhāna	Gods of radiant luster	
16			Gods of Gods of infinite luster	
15			Gods of minor luster	
14	1 st Jhāna	Great Brahmās		
13		Ministers of Brahmā		
12		Retinue of Brahmā		
11		Gods wielding power over creation of others		
10	Sensuous Plane	Happy Destinations	Deva Realms	Gods delighting in creation
9				Heaven of the contented Gods
8				Heaven of the Yāma Gods
7				Heaven of the 33 Gods
6				Heaven of the Four Great Kings
5				Human ☺
4	Woeful States	Asura		
3		Peta (Hungry Ghosts)		
2		Animal		
1		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	Thought Moment 73	77	84,000 Great aeons	5–11, 31	31
30			Thought Moment 72	76	60,000 Great aeons	5–11, 30, 31	30, 31
29			Thought Moment 71	75	40,000 Great aeons	5–11, 29–31	29–31
28			Thought 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				