June 15th, 2017 EDIT:
I will be playing tank for my raid group in 4.0. As a result, I probably will not be writing a 4.0 Summoner guide. Sorry guys!

June 6th, 2017 EDIT:
I released this document roughly 24 hours after the media embargo was lifted. I based a lot of my analysis off of the English tooltips that were floating around, and my analysis was a little rushed. In addition to missing some nuances on my first writing and some of the Japanese tooltips differing from the English ones, the first iteration of this document was full of misinformation. Thanks to the help of multiple people, I've updated this document to be as accurate as possible using all of the information we currently have available.

I originally wrote this piece with one goal in mind: to address and assuage the concerns regarding the Summoner changes. I still believe that the document fulfills that purpose for the average Summoner player, but many people are referring to this document as more than what it really is: a speculation and "first look" piece. It was not intended to be in-depth or an analysis of the best rotations. If you are looking for that kind of depth, others have done a great job with the more advanced theorycrafting, and you should check out their contributions at the end of this edit!

Simply put: If you're interested in looking at the changes and learning how it modifies the Summoner playstyle, this document is for you. If you're interested in more than that, here are links to several fantastic advanced Summoner theorycraft sources:

The Balance Discord
SMN 4.0 Spreadsheet and Potencies Observation - by Laqi (/u/Eddo)

4.0 Summoner Speculation

By **Hai Hai** of **Elysium «EM»** on Gilgamesh

Released: June 1st, 2017

Disclaimer:
I'm known for writing very long documents. This one happens to be 41 pages shorter than the previous one.

Hey everyone, Hai Hai here. Back right before 3.0, I released a theorycraft and speculation piece on the 3.0 Summoner. I attempted to piece together leaks of tooltips and abilities and speculated how the 3.0 Summoner worked, and I managed to hit upon a lot of right ideas (and a lot of wrong ones!). That was then followed up with my guide, which I get meme'd on constantly to this day *(Is that **THE** HAI HAI OF THE 60 PAGE SUMMONER GUIDE?? - everyone in Elysium)*.

I didn't know whether or not I wanted to do another one of these, but as soon as I saw the media release of all the Stormblood information, I started unintentionally piecing things together for Summoner. Eventually, I decided that I needed to write down my thoughts, which led to, of course, this document.

I actually was getting really annoyed with things people were saying… A lot of vocal people were calling Summoner a dead class, saying they were gonna jump ship to Red Mage, and saying that Summoner got gutted and nerfed to all hell.

Well, I don't think that's the case at all… In fact, after my extensive analysis on all the information I've had available to me, I think Summoner will be in an extremely strong spot. They've been given access to more single target damage as well as multiple raid utility buffs. A lot of their power has been shifted from their DoTs into their pets, but that can definitely be a welcome change.

In this document, I go through all of the changes to previous abilities as well all of the new abilities coming in 4.0. I also address controversial statements regarding these changes.

Please note and understand that this is a **speculation** piece. Nothing is set in stone and it's very likely that I will be wrong about things. This piece is simply an avenue for my thoughts and a way to stimulate discussion amongst the Summoner community about what the 4.0 Summoner will be like.

Furthermore, I am by no means an excellent Summoner. There are many things that expert Summoners will correct me on, and I sincerely hope that they do. My works and guides have only been possible thanks to the many, many Summoner players who have corrected me on any mistakes that they've found and have helped me with all of my theorycraft. It's thanks to them and their passion for Summoner that I'm able to present to you the correct information.

As always, if you have any questions, corrections, comments, concerns, or you just wanna tell me I'm bad, please leave a comment in the Reddit thread and we can talk it out. You can also message me either on Reddit at /u/Haisquared or on Twitter @haihaixiv. You can also potentially reach me in-game on Gilgamesh at /t Hai Hai.

I thank you in advance for your time and interest in my work, and I sincerely hope you enjoy it.
Hai Hai

Ruin

First, let's look at what happened to the old Ruin spells:



Both the English and Japanese tooltips for Ruin 1 show it to be 80 potency, but based on the analysis of Ruin 1's damage in videos, it seems that Ruin 1 was buffed to 100 potency.

Ruin 2 was originally 80 potency and caused Blindness. They removed the Blindness and increased the potency by 20 to 100 total potency. Overall, these are buffs to both Ruin 1 and 2.

Ruin 3 was originally 200 potency, and is now 150 potency. Overall, this is a nerf to Ruin 3. Which sounds pretty bad, until we look at the new toys we got:



Ruin 4 is our new toy which *seems* to be just Ruin 3. It's a spell that only works with the trait, Ruin Mastery. **Ruin Mastery** grants a 15% chance that Ruin and Ruin 3 are automatically upgraded to Ruin 4 after your pet uses any spell or weaponskill.

Ruination Potency is related to Tri-Disaster's new additional effect, which applies a debuff on the enemy called Ruination. Ruination increases the potencies of all Ruins on a target affected by it by 10%. I'll explain a bit more about this in the Tri-Disaster section.

In general, Ruin 4 is something you'll never have to pay attention to. You'll be spamming Ruin 1 outside of DWT and Ruin 3 inside of it, and Ruin Mastery will automatically replace them with Ruin 4's 220 potency when it procs. There's not even a point in having it on your bar, really.

Let's go ahead and address 4.0 Summoner Speculation Controversy #1: **Square Enix nerfed Ruin 3 and dumbed down the job to the extreme! It's so boring now!**

Hoo boy, this topic has a much larger scope than just Summoners and is quite controversial as a whole. I'm going to present my thoughts on it, and if you and I have differing opinions, that's okay. That's the whole point of opinions.

The nerf to Ruin 3 was to address the fact that people were spamming it outside of DWT to up their DPS and ignoring the MP cost. While using Ruin 3 outside of DWT and managing MP were signs of a skilled summoner, one of Square Enix's goals for this expansion is to make it clear for Summoners on how to maximize their DPS and play their class - and spamming Ruin 3 outside of DWT wasn't clear for newer Summoners at all. In fact, it's completely counterintuitive: Ruin 3 uses 10% of my total MP for one cast outside of DWT and 1.5% inside of it! Newer Summoners look at these abilities and believe: "Hey, I'm supposed to use this only when I have DWT active." They would never think "Hey, I can maximize my DPS by spamming this outside of DWT!"

By removing the incentive to use Ruin 3 outside of DWT, Square Enix is indeed dumbing down the job and making it simpler. They're also making it simpler by having Ruin 4 automatically replace Ruin 1 and 3 when it procs, so you don't have to think about it.

Is this really such a bad thing?

Should we, as a group of longtime FFXIV players, desire our jobs to have high barriers to entry? If somebody wants to play and learn the job, should they have to jump through convoluted and complicated hoops to learn how to play it? Should our jobs be counterintuitive and confusing in maximizing DPS?

Or should we desire our jobs to be simple and straightforward with some touches of complexity? Sure, Ruin 4 automatically replacing Ruin 1 and 3 seems a bit hand-holdy at first, but could you imagine if it didn't? How much time you would dedicate looking for procs so you don't miss them?

I mean, it's like Square Enix knew everyone would say "Man I wish Ruin 4 would just automatically replace Ruin 1 or 3 when it procs" and actually did it. That's exactly what people wanted with Ruin 3: they wanted Ruin 3 to automatically replace Ruin 1 in DWT.

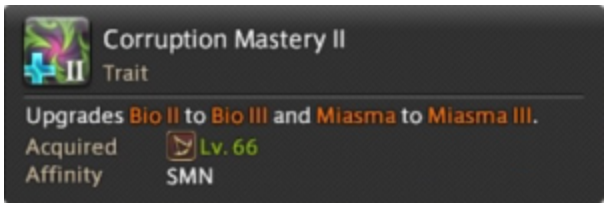
I believe that Square Enix is doing the right thing in their approach to simplifying jobs in this expansion. By making it easier, simpler and more straightforward to play a job correctly, Square Enix can focus on what really makes fights fun in this game: mechanics. We're going to be seeing much more complicated and cool mechanics in fights simply because we don't have to be thinking about our rotation constantly anymore!

Alright, let's move on to the changes in a summoner's DoTs.

Damage over Time Abilities - DoTs

Bio 3 and Miasma 3

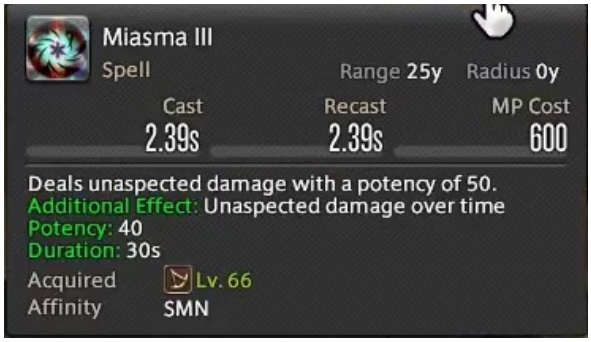




According to this Corruption Mastery trait (which is probably wrong, since getting Bio 3 at level 26 is weird), our friendly neighborhood Bio is getting an upgrade to a slightly more handsome **Bio 3** (probably actually Bio 2). Corruption Mastery II upgrades Bio 2 to Bio 3 and Miasma to **Miasma 3**. I believe the implication is that both Bio and Bio 2 are both replaced by just Bio 3, and Miasma is replaced by Miasma 3. It also seems that Miasma 2 was completely removed the game. The idea behind the change is that, in order to reduce button bloat and simplify rotations, Square Enix wanted all the DoTs to be consolidated into only 2 DoTs: Bio 3 and Miasma 3.

Alright, let's see what Bio 3 and Miasma 3 do:





As a reminder, here are the old DoTs:

	Skill	Potency	Duration	Cast Time	Ticks	Overall Potency
-	Bio	40	18s	Instant	6	240
-	Miasma	35	24s	GCD	8	280 (+20 on application)
-	Bio 2	35	30s	GCD	10	350
-	Miasma 2	10	15s	Instant	5	50 (+20 on application)

Bio 3 is a 30s DoT that ticks for 40 potency, meaning it deals 400 potency over 30s. Note that it's an instant cast. So Bio 3 took the potency and cast time from Bio and the duration from Bio 2, which is actually the best parts of both spells.

Miasma 3, on the other hand, is what happens when Miasma goes to the gym. Miasma 3 deals 50(!) potency on application, deals 40 potency a tick, and also has a duration of 30s, 6s longer than the duration of Miasma. Overall, Miasma 3 deals a total of 450 potency.

	Skill	Potency	Duration	Cast Time	Ticks	Overall Potency
-	Bio 3	40	30s	Instant	10	400
-	Miasma 3	40	30s	GCD	10	400 (+50 on application)

So, before the DoT changes, Bio + Miasma + Bio 2 dealt a collective total of 240 + 280 (+20) + 350 = 890 potency. After the DoT changes, Bio 3 + Miasma 3 deals a collective total of 400 + 400 (+50) = 850 potency.

Alright, let's look at 4.0 Summoner Speculation Controversy #2: **Summoners lost a DoT, and they lost 40 potency if you look at the math, so it's a nerf!**

Not a nerf, but not a buff either.

What people tend to ignore in this situation is the **duration of the DoTs** and the **GCDs saved**.

For this example, let's completely ignore the existence of Contagion(*RIP*) and (*Bi*)Tri-Disaster. Before the changes, in one single 60s timespan:

Bio only lasts 18s, so you will have casted Bio at least 3 times, probably 4, to maintain it for 60s.
Miasma only lasts 24s, so you will have casted Miasma at least 2 times, probably 3.
Bio 2 lasts 30s and is only casted 2 times.
This adds up to **7 to 9 GCDs** used to maintain the original trio of DoTs in one 60s timespan.

Now let's look at the same situation with the new DoTs:

Bio 3 lasts 30s, so you will cast it twice to maintain it for 60s.
Miasma 3 lasts 30s, so you will cast it twice to maintain it for 60s.
This adds up to **4 GCDs** used to maintain the new DoTs in one 60s timespan.

The conclusion is that **you will save an average of 4 GCDs a minute** with these new DoTs, assuming we ignore the existence of Tri-Disaster (which we really shouldn't, but we'll be hitting on that momentarily). If we assume the lowest value of a GCD, which is a Ruin 1's 100 potency, this means that the new duo of DoTs will give you an additional 4 Ruins worth of potency in 60 seconds, which is 400 potency. This doesn't even take into account that any one of those Ruin 1's can be a Ruin 3 or 4! In fact, if all 4 of those Ruin 1's become Ruin 4's, we'll have gained a total of 200*4 = 800 potency.

However! Even though the Bio + Miasma + Bio 2 dealt a collective total of 890 potency, **that is only over their respective durations**. As in, Bio as a GCD dealt 40 potency a tick for 18s, which means it dealt 240 potency over 18s. Over a full 60 seconds, however, a maintained Bio dealt 40*(60/3) = 800 potency.

Similarly:

Miasma = 35 potency * (60s / 3s per tick) = 700
Miasma On-Hit = 20 potency * 3 (Assuming 3 Miasma casts) = 60
Bio 2 = 35 potency * (60s / 3s per tick) = 700

This means that Bio + Miasma + Bio 2 dealt a collective total of 800 + 700 + 60 + 700 = 2260 potency over a 60 second duration.

On the flip side, our new duo of DoTs, Bio 3 and Miasma 3:

Bio 3 = 40 potency * (60s / 3s per tick) = 800
Miasma 3 = 40 potency (60s / 3s per tick) = 800
Miasma 3 On-Hit = 50 potency * 2 casts = 100

So Bio 3 + Miasma 3 deals a collective total of 800 + 800 + 100 = 1700 potency over a 60 second duration.

So, originally, Bio + Miasma + Bio 2 dealt a collective total of 2260 potency over a 60 second duration and typically used an average of 8 GCDs.

Now, Bio 3 + Miasma 3 deals a collective total of 1700 potency over a 60 second duration and uses 4 GCDs.

This is a loss of 2260 - 1700 = 560 potency, but we gained 4 GCDs. Assuming we use all 4 of those GCDs on Ruin 1/2 (100 potency), we would still have lost 160 potency. If we either use an extra 3 Ruin 3's or gain at least 2 Ruin 4 procs, we will have broken even.

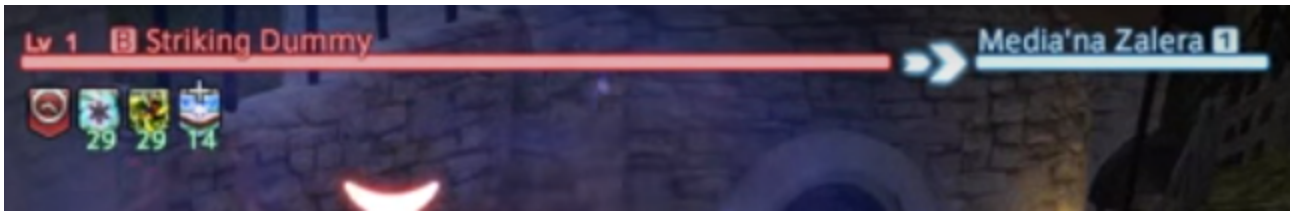
While this seems like a nerf, I believe that it actually breaks even in the long run thanks to the Tri-Disaster change. Tri-Disaster obtained a Ruin debuff that is placed on the enemy that buffs your Ruin spells, so the 4 GCDs that we gained will be slightly stronger. To summarize, **the loss of potency from losing a 3rd DoT was reallocated into the Ruin debuff of Tri-Disaster**. It's not a nerf, but it's not exactly a buff either.

Now let's look at Tri-Disaster.

Tri-Disaster



The assumption here is that Tri-Disaster simply applies Bio 3 and Miasma 3, and that the tooltip is a bit off because it's still in development. Now, Tri-Disaster got an **Additional Effect: Increases potency of Ruin spells.** Now, I had to do some digging for this one, but if we take a look at MrHappy's summoner video at 0:20, we can see that he uses Tri-Disaster and it applies the Ruination debuff to the enemy:



Now, for the life of me, I can't find anybody that actually hovered over the debuff, and there's a high chance that it wouldn't have shown a number anyway. However, if we see that Ruin 4's "Ruination potency" is 220 instead of 200 when triggered, it's safe to assume that Ruination is a 10% damage increase on all Ruins to the target.

That's just straight up a single target damage increase for summoners. Also, since it's a debuff on the target, we might be able to assume that it'll have synergy with a scholar's Ruins! (They would rather use Broil though so it might not be relevant at all).

Anyway, that's not even the most important part about Tri-Disaster. It's the new synergy with Dreadwyrm Trance!



Entering DWT now **resets the Tri-disaster recast timer.** This has some major implications, but it gets really funky from here on out.

Since DWT resets Tri-Disaster, this means that you can pretty much synchronize using Tri-Disaster with Aetherflow, and subsequently, DWT. However, that was already true in the first place, since Aetherflow and Tri-Disaster both have a 60s cooldown. If you enter DWT, reset Tri-Disaster and immediately use it, then it comes back up right after you enter DWT again. So did nothing really change here? Is the Tri-Disaster reset going to waste if you just immediately cast Tri-Disaster after entering DWT every time?

I foresee a way to potentially get 3 Tri-Disasters per 2 minutes, rather than just 2, which might be best explained visually:

0s	Tri-Disaster
30s	DWT (reset), Tri-Disaster
60s	Bio 3, Miasma 3
90s	Tri-Disaster
90.5s	DWT (reset)
120s	Tri-Disaster
150s	DWT (reset), Tri-Disaster
180s	Bio 3, Miasma 3

So, if we pay attention to the first use of DWT, we reset the cooldown on Tri-Disaster and immediately use it at 30s. At 60s, we refresh the DoTs with Bio 3 and Miasma 3. At 90s, both DWT and Tri-Disaster are ready to go. What we do here, is instead of doing DWT and then Tri-Disaster, **we use Tri-Disaster first and then immediately reset it with DWT**. We then use Tri-Disaster again after the DoTs fall off at 120s. Then when DWT is ready to go at 150s, it resets Tri-Disaster and we use it again.

So what does this mean? If you look at the stretch between 90s and 180s, you can see that **we maintained our DoTs using only Tri-Disaster for 90 seconds.** Sure, we sacrificed not having the DWT buff on our DoTs at 90s, but we saved 2 GCDs not casting Bio 3 and Miasma 3. So if we break down the math real quick:

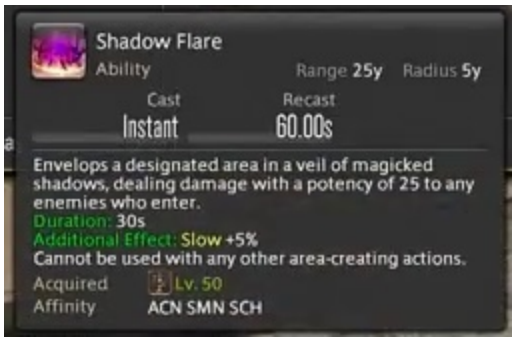
800*(0.10) = 80 potency gain from using Tri-Disaster inside of DWT

So we lose 80 potency by using Tri-Disaster before DWT, but we gain 2 GCDs, which is at least 100*2 = 200 potency! We also lose the on-hit potency from Miasma 3, which is 50 potency. But it's an overall gain of at least 70 potency, if not more.

The short story is, if we use Tri-Disaster this way, we'll only have to cast Bio 3 and Miasma 3 once every 2 minutes, and the other 90s is covered completely by Tri-Disaster!

Shadow Flare

Alright, time to address 4.0 Summoner Speculation Controversy #3: **Shadow Flare is now on a 60s cooldown, which means you can't maintain it 100%, which means it's a nerf!**



WRONG.

This is **not** a nerf at all. Shadow Flare used to be a GCD, which means you used 2 GCDs every minute to maintain it. It is now an offGCD (oGCD), which means you can weave it. By being an oGCD, Shadow Flare is no longer competing with Ruins for a GCD slot. This means that we gain *at least* 200 potency a minute, if not more.

However, since we can only maintain the new iteration of Shadow Flare for 30s out of 60s, we did lose 30s worth of Shadow Flare, which is 250 potency (assuming single target).

On the flip side, if we also take into account that Shadow Flare had a 0.5s longer cast time than regular spells and cost 4x more MP than a Ruin did, we're saving 8 Ruin's worth of MP a minute and 1 full second of casting time, as well as no longer clipping into the GCD.

So what does this mean? It means that the Shadow Flare change is neither a buff nor a nerf, but rather a direct transition from a GCD to an oGCD. If you were able to maintain the oGCD iteration of Shadow Flare for the full 60s, it would be a complete buff!

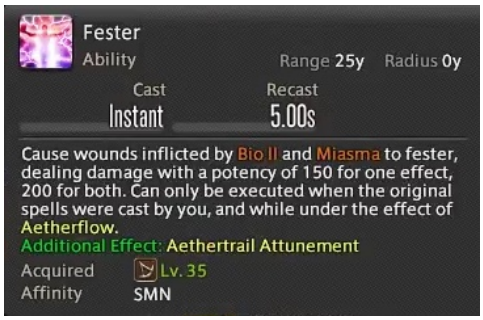
Overall, I think the Shadow Flare change should be considered a good one. It no longer costs MP, it's instant cast, and it can be used inside of buffs. Furthermore, if both GCDs that replace Shadow Flare are Ruin 4s, it's an overall gain in potency.

Note: In the MrHappy video, Shadow Flare only lasted 15s, not 30s. However, based on this analysis, Shadow Flare's potency was changed to 50 per tick instead of 25. In that case, it deals the same potency over a shorter duration.

Next, we'll talk about Aetherflow, and the dreaded topic of the Bane nerf.

Aetherflow







Alright, let's immediately get 4.0 Summoner Speculation Controversy #4 out of the way: **Fester's been nerfed to 200 potency?!?! What's even the point of using it instead of Painflare now?!?**

First, have some pictures:





You can see these both at MrHappy's Summoner video at 0:11. Neither Fester nor Painflare crit, Painflare was used immediately after Fester, and Fester dealt 5370 damage and Painflare dealt 3464. This means that Fester is either at 300 or 400 potency. So one of two things happened here:

1. It's a bad tooltip and is actually 300 potency. If we use the numbers here, it's likely that it's 300 potency.
2. "150 for one effect, 200 for both" is supposed to mean "both Miasma 3 and Bio 3 cause 200 potency" which totals out at 400 potency.

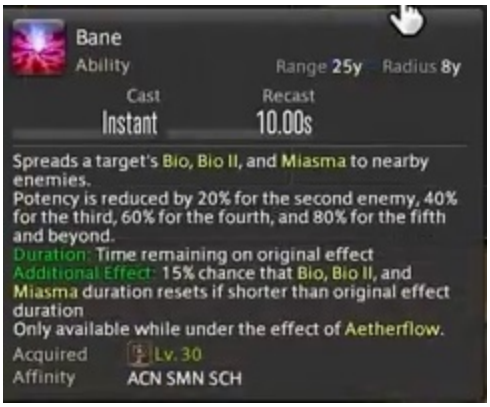
We really won't know which one it is until we get to Stormblood, but we can reasonably conclude that **Fester is not 200 potency. Fester has not been nerfed**.

Okay, now that we got Fester out of the way: Aetherflow has been nerfed to 10% from 20% according to the Japanese tooltips, but it doesn't really matter since Summoners also got Lucid Dreaming. Also, both Painflare and Fester now have a 5s cooldown instead of 10s.

Painflare's shortened cooldown means that it can be used 3 times in a 10 second timespan (one right away, one 5s later, the last 10s later). It seems that as a result of the Bane nerf and the reduced Painflare cooldown, Painflare will take priority for AoE damage. I touch upon this topic more in the Painflare vs. Bane section below.

And then we have… Bane.

Bane



4.0 Summoner Speculation Controversy #5: **Bane got gutted, RIP Summoner, time to jump ship to RDM, Summoner was supposed to be AOE king**

Uhhhhh… This is indeed a nerf. Quite a brutal one. Let's grab a table:

	1st Enemy	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
2.0 Bane	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%
3.0 Bane	100%	100%	100%	50%	50%	50%
4.0 Bane	100%	80%	60%	40%	20%	20%

So yes, 4.0 Bane in comparison to the 3.0 Bane is quite a nerf, but if we compare 4.0 Bane to 2.0 Bane, we see that it's still a little bit better. 2.0 Bane had a sharp cutoff at only 3 enemies affected, while 4.0 Bane will still apply DoTs to every enemy in the area.

It's very likely that Bane was completely overtuned for the entirety of Heavensward, and it is now being brought down to a more balanced state. But it is true that Bane is completely gutted.

The flipside is that Summoners will be getting more AoE power in other abilities, namely Enkindle and Summon Bahamut. It seems that Square Enix wanted to redirect more of the AoE damage into the pets, rather than the DoTs.

It seems that Painflare will be stronger than Bane in most situations now, which I'll go in a little detail next.

Painflare vs. Bane

Bane

Additional Targets Time	1	2	3	4	5	6
0s	0	0	0	0	0	0
3s	80	144	192	224	240	256
6s	160	288	384	448	480	496
9s	240	432	576	672	720	736
12s	320	576	768	896	960	976
15s	400	720	960	1120	1200	1216
18s	480	864	1152	1344	1440	1456

Painflare

Targets	2	3	4	5	6	7
Potency	400	600	800	1000	1200	1400

In general, since both DoTs last 30s, if you believe that 4+ targets will be alive for longer than 15 seconds, it's better to Bane than to Painflare. You should only have to Bane once, and your other two stacks should be used on Painflare. This will be especially relevant in dungeon content.

However, in the event that you have to burst down multiple targets quickly, using all 3 Aetherflow stacks on Painflare is the way to go, assuming the mobs don't survive longer than 15 seconds.

For less than 4 enemies, it'll be better to use Painflare and hardcast Bio 3 and Miasma 3 on the additional targets.

It *is* important to note that Bane has a much larger reach than Painflare. This is especially relevant in situations where you have multiple, extremely large targets or spread out immobile targets, where Bane will hit all targets while Painflare won't.

Aetherflow, Aethertrail and DWT Interaction



With the addition of the Summoner UI element, the way that Aetherflow, Aethertrail and Dreadwyrm Trance interact has changed dramatically. Also, note that Dreadwyrm Trance now lasts 16 seconds instead of 15, making it a little easier to get 6 GCDs inside of a single DWT.

The UI bar has a total of 3 slots, and the slots can have one of 3 settings:

1. Empty
2. Aetherflow (Pink Glow)
3. Aethertrail (Blue Bahamut Glow)

The UI bar initially starts out as "Empty." Using Aetherflow will fill all 3 slots with Aetherflow stacks. At this point, Aetherflow stacks **must** be converted into Aethertrail stacks by correctly using Aetherflow abilities.



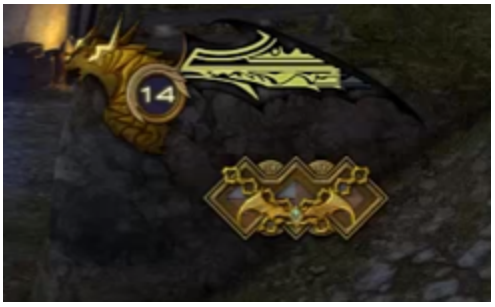
Once an Aethertrail stack is acquired, it is locked into the slot.

In the event that you whiff an Aetherflow ability by either

1. Using Bane on a target with no DoTs
2. Having Bane not hitting any additional targets
3. Using Fester on a target with no DoTs
4. Using any Aetherflow ability on an invulnerable target

It empties out an Aetherflow slot.

Picture now that you're in the situation where you have 2 Aethertrail stacks and 0 Aetherflow. If you use Aetherflow, **you will only obtain one Aetherflow stack**, since the 2 Aethertrail stacks are locked. Likewise, if you have 3 Aethertrail stacks and you're ready to DWT, and you decide to Aetherflow, **you will obtain zero Aetherflow stacks**.



This is a very fundamental difference from the 3.0 Summoner in that you were able to have 3 of both stacks at the same time.

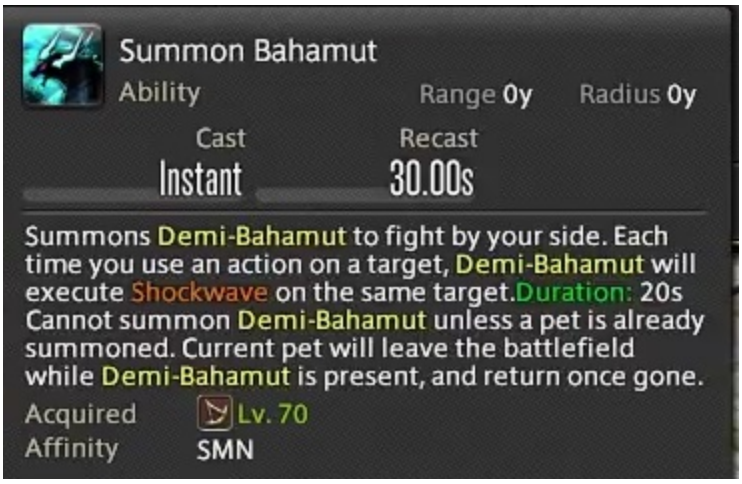
The only way to empty the Aethertrail stacks is to enter Dreadwyrm Trance. Once you enter Dreadwyrm Trance, the slots empty and then lock for the duration of DWT. You cannot use Aetherflow inside of DWT.

After exiting DWT using Deathflare, the empty slots unlock and can be refilled using Aetherflow.

Basically, there's no more juggling Aetherflow inside of DWT. It's very simple: Aetherflow must be used after exiting Dreadwyrm Trance. If you whiff any of your Aetherflow abilities, you're punished much more harshly than you were before.

Pets

Summon Bahamut





So what we have here is quite the intriguing synergy between Aetherflow, Dreadwyrm Trance and Pets, effectively tying them all together. After using and exiting DWT twice, you will gain the ability to use Summon Bahamut, which you can see in the UI when the Bahamut icon lights up bright blue.

Summon Bahamut will replace your current pet with a Demi-Bahamut, which has effectively two abilities:







Shockwave is the equivalent of Demi-Bahamut's autoattacks. It deals 160 potency to a single target and he will only execute it on a target whenever you use an action on said target. This seems to include all targeted GCDs and targeted oGCDs. Shadow Flare is not included as an action that triggers Shockwave.

Enkindle Bahamut will go on your hotbar, and it is the command to order your Demi-Bahamut pet to execute Akh Morn. Note that Demi-Bahamut is alive for 20 seconds and Enkindle Bahamut has a 13s cooldown, which means you should be able to use Enkindle Bahamut twice during the time Demi-Bahamut is alive.

Akh Morn is the strongest potency attack given to Summoners to date at 680 on the first target. Bahamut seems to use Garuda's scaling when it come potencies (as in, Bahamut's potencies are only about 80% of your own potency), which means that it's slightly weaker than a Summoner's potency. Akh Morn decreases in potency by 10% per target after the first. So, tables!

Akh Morn	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Potency	680	612	544	476	408	340

Even if you only end up Akh Morn-ing a single target, this ability is still Summoner's hardest hitting ability, and you get to use it twice in a 13s timespan! However, since it's gated behind two DWT uses, you'll only be able to use Summon Bahamut once every two minutes. In raid scenarios, it'll be important to plan your Summon Bahamut usage around party buffs.

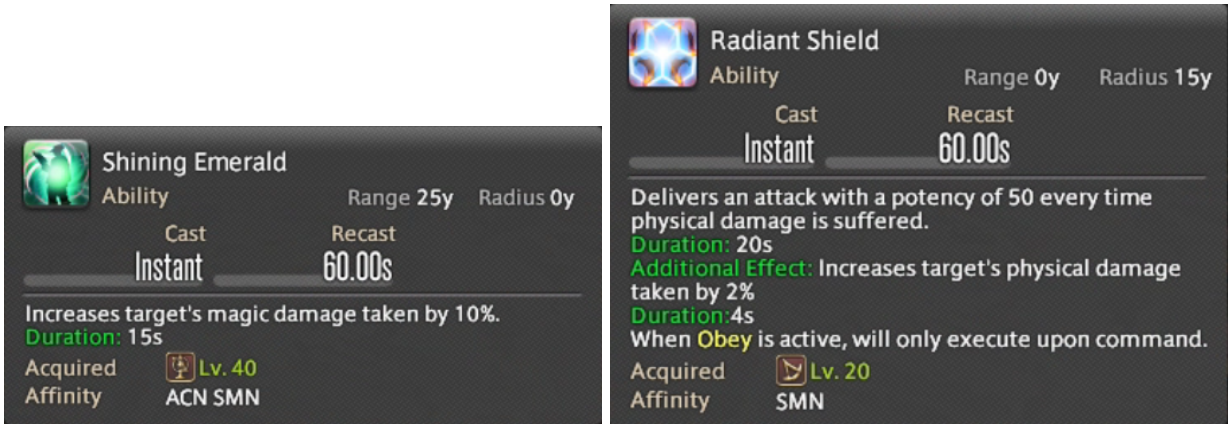
After 20 seconds, Demi-Bahamut will disappear and your old pet will return.

Enkindle



It seems that Square Enix wanted to buff pet damage in more than one way. The **Enhanced Enkindle** trait will reduce Enkindle's recast time, which starts at 180s, by 10 seconds every time Ruin Mastery upgrades Ruin 1 or Ruin 3 to Ruin 4. It's a direct buff to the pet's AoE damage in being able to pump out more Enkindles in the span of a fight. This will definitely mess up Rouse stacking with Enkindle, but it should overall be a potency gain.

Contagion / Radiant Shield Changes



Contagion's iconic ability to extend DoTs has be changed entirely. Whenever you use Contagion (Shining Emerald) now, Garuda places a debuff on the enemy that increases magic damage taken by 10% for 15s and has a 60s recast time. This means that summoners essentially have access to a 25% uptime Foe's Requiem. The new Contagion will create some interesting synergy with other casters and healers; it really depends on how much healer DPS is hurt by the expansion. If healer DPS is still significant, Contagion will be really strong as a raid tool. Obviously, it will always be useful as a means of improving your own DPS.

Ifrit's Radiant Shield, on the other hand, places a party-wide buff on allies that, when attacked, will place a debuff on the attacker that will increase physical damage taken by 2% for 4 seconds. Radiant Shield lasts 20s on your allies and has a 60s cooldown. As long as the main tank is getting attacked constantly during its duration, the 2% increase in physical damage taken debuff can be on the target for up to 24 seconds. While it's certainly not 10% damage increase, it has longer uptime and will be more useful than Contagion for a 3 physical DPS party.

We may finally be at the day where you choose Ifrit or Garuda based on your team composition, and not just Garuda all the time.

While we're here, we can address 4.0 Summoner Speculation Controversy #6: **Contagion was such a great ability, and I'm so mad they changed it! They ruined everything Summoner is about!**

Well, okay, yes, Contagion was one of Summoner's most iconic abilities… But it was also one of the driving reasons behind why Garuda was used over Ifrit. There was never a real reason to take Ifrit over Garuda because Contagion was such a good ability; Garuda also had the added benefit of being ranged. Look at the situation now: Garuda and Ifrit can both be used depending on the raid composition. I believe they'll both be completely viable, and that's how it should be.

Furthermore, summoners no longer need Contagion. Contagion was all about extending super-buffed DoTs to maximize our DPS and potentially saving MP in the long run. Summoners no longer have access to Raging Strikes and will be able to Tri-Disaster 3 out of 4 DoT refreshes. Yes, it does hurt to no longer have access to those sweet extended Trick Attacked + Battle Voice Foe's + Intelligence Potion'd + Raging Strikes + DWT DoTs, but that power has been allocated elsewhere. Yes, losing Contagion was a nerf, but it was necessary step in improving Summoner as a pet class, not just a DoT class.

Aetherpact and Devotion



Aetherpact is an ability on your hotbar that orders your pet to execute Devotion and is on a 90s cooldown.
Devotion increases attack potency (assumably both magic and physical, since it doesn't specify) and healing magic potency of all party members within range by 5%. It also reduces damage taken by those party members by 5%.

The English tooltip contradicts the Japanese one pretty significantly. In the Japanese tooltip of Devotion, only one party member receives the buff. It's highly probable that the Japanese tooltip is the correct one. If that's the case, then Devotion is significantly weaker than the English tooltip makes it out to be, but it will still be powerful. We also don't know how long the buff lasts on the target.

Regardless, this ability, in combination with either Contagion or Radiant Shield, provide great raid utility and it's possible to see a Summoner dominant meta come 4.0.

To touch on that, the best raid compositions have always been about damage synergy: Ninja+Dragoon dominated the entirety of the Heavensward raid scene because of their fantastic party buffs. If we use that as a basis for a prediction, and compare what Summoner has in comparison to Red Mage and Black Mage, well…

Black Mage has absolutely zero raid utility, but they tend to boast extremely high numbers.
We don't really know about the effectiveness of Red Mage, but they have a raw damage increase in Embolden, which also has a 120 second cooldown.
Summoner, meanwhile, has high uptime raid buffs which both increase damage done and mitigation.

It's clear that Summoners will be strong contenders for the caster spot come 4.0.

The Removal of Sustain and Spur

Square Enix decided to remove both Spur and Sustain from the game, likely as a way to cut down on button bloat. The removal of Sustain, in particular, leads us to 4.0 Summoner Speculation Controversy #7: **Sustain got removed? How am I supposed to keep my pet alive?**

Well, first off, if you're ever in a situation where your pet requires Sustain, it was either Shiva Extreme or you just have your pet in really bad situations all the time. Learning to micro your pet and moving it away from, say, sitting in front of the boss and eating massive tank busters is the first step to keeping your pet alive. In general, your pet should always be in range of the healers: pets also receive all party-wide heals. Healers should never have to single target heal your pets either. You have the ability to move your pet, so you should take advantage of it and keep it out of dangerous situations.

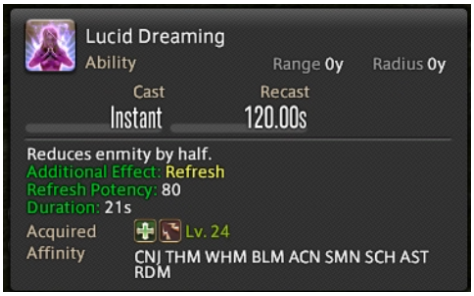
The removal the Sustain does hamper solo content. However, since healers are having their damage scaled off of mind and Red Mages have a heal, Vercure, that scales off of intelligence, there is a chance that Physick will end up scaling off of intelligence. If that's the case, then Physick will replace Sustain easily, as well as being a useful general heal.

Regarding the removal of Spur, it does hurt losing a significant pet damage buff. Like Sustain, Square Enix removed it to cut down on the button bloat, which I can agree with. Summoner has some of the worst button bloat in the game. I believe they reallocated the damage that came from Spur into Enkindle using the Enkindle trait, as well as the high potency abilities that come from using Summon Bahamut.

Role Actions

There's not much to say here, but I'll go ahead and throw in all of the cross class abilities (now called Role Actions) Summoner will have access to in 4.0.





















In terms of what I think will be taken on summoner, in priority order:

1. Lucid Dreaming, Swiftcast, Diversion are absolute necessities.
2. I'm gonna make a strong prediction that Surecast will be an absolute necessity in raid fights.
3. Apocatastasis and Addle for any fights with magic damage.
4. Erase and Mana Shift situationally.
5. Break and Drain pretty much never, unless there's a fight that calls for Break's Heavy +40%.

Opener Talk

So, let's talk about what we want to do in our opener. Well, let's see…
Summon Bahamut requires two uses of DWT to use.
We have effectively 6 Aetherflow stacks (3 already obtained, 3 sitting in an unused Aetherflow) on pull.
So the obvious answer seems to be to get Bahamut out as fast we can.

It'll probably be something like this:

Time	**GCD**	**oGCD**
		Prepull Rouse
0s	Ruin 2	Tri-Disaster + Painflare
2.5s	Ruin 2	Fester + Energy Drain
5s	Ruin 2	Swiftcast + Aetherpact + Dreadwyrm Trance
7.5s	Ruin 3	Enkindle
10s	Ruin 3	
12.5s	Ruin 3	
15s	Ruin 3	
17.5s	Ruin 3	
20s	Ruin 2	Tri-Disaster + Deathflare
22.5s	Ruin 2	Aetherflow + Painflare
25s	Ruin 2	Energy Drain + Fester
27.5s	Ruin 2	Dreadwyrm Trance
30s	Ruin 3	
32.5s	Ruin 3	
35s	Ruin 3	
37.5s	Ruin 3	
40s	Ruin 3	
42.5s	Ruin 2	Deathflare + Summon Bahamut
50s	Ruin 2	Enkindle Bahamut

We *could* technically get Demi-Bahamut out as soon as 25s but that would mean entering and exiting two DWTs instantly, which sounds like a terrible idea.

Once again, I would like to emphasize that this is just some makeshift opener I threw together to generate ideas - we obviously won't be able to optimize an opener for Summoner until we get to Stormblood.

Conclusion

Once again, I want to emphasize that this is a **speculation** piece. None of these theories or predictions are set in stone.

However, given the information we do have - which is prone to change - we can stimulate discussion about the future of Summoner and how it's going to be played.

If you felt this was a worthwhile piece, please feel free to share it with others who might be interested.

Credit for some image tooltips goes to /u/Saeris from this album on this reddit thread. I also pulled some tooltips from /u/reseph from here.

For all Japanese tooltips, I used famitsu. This article also explained the Aetherflow/Aethertrail changes as well as Devotion only targeting a single player.

A bunch of credit for a lot of screencaps goes to MrHappy's FFXIV Stormblood: Summoner Complete 4.0 Ability Reveal video, which I recommend you watch if you want to see footage of the 4.0 Summoner.

Thanks to Kiona Lynaer and Sfia Pirion of Elysium for reviewing and contributing several details to this piece.

Thank you once more for having the interest and taking the time to read through my work. I really appreciate it.

Hai Hai