

A Map of the 8th Jhana

The Preliminaries: From the 1st to the 7th Jhanas:

1-4 Jhanas: Metta – Joy arises, followed by Contentment, and then Equanimity.

5th Jhana: Karuna – Compassion with an expanding, quieter mind.

6th Jhana: Mudita – Appreciative Joy, experiencing joy from others' happiness.

7th Jhana: Base of Nothingness - Upekkha. Here, you radiate Equanimity and experience the base of nothingness.

Entering the 8th Jhana: Base of Neither Perception nor Non-Perception

- **QUIET MIND STATE:**

- Equanimity Feeling Stops: In the 7th Jhana of nothingness, the radiating equanimity ceases. Any attempt to radiate it causes a slight tension; it can't be done anymore. The mind prefers stillness.

You transition from the Brahmavihara practice of the four Brahmaviharas, moving to a silent, still mind. Here, you merely REST in MIND, releasing whatever arises. This marks the shift from Samatha (calm) to Vipassana (insight), making it a Samatha-Vipassana practice.

- **1st Stage - Dreamy:** This is a surreal, dream-like state, where you might feel both asleep and aware simultaneously. You may encounter fragmented thoughts, peculiar narratives, forms, patterns, or visuals. These are hard to understand or make sense of. When you emerge from this state, you'll recall its dreamy nature. Your awareness is limited, so you may not realize you were there – hence the name "Neither Perception nor Non-Perception." You may oscillate through this dream-like state multiple times, each exit making your mind calmer.

- **Quiet Mind:** After the dream-like state, your mind becomes alert, silent, and awake. Your energy may surge, but it's a balanced energy. Any movement or arising should be observed and relaxed promptly. The mind still moves, but devoid of thoughts.
- **Still Mind:** Eventually, you'll perceive no movement, marking the STILL MIND. It's so profound that your mind might feel two-dimensional. The mind's inactivity is so dominant that any attempt to provoke it proves futile. Extended periods of stillness are possible. However, during both the Quiet Mind and Still Mind phases, boredom might creep in due to the lack of happenings. You must balance awakening factors, like relaxation against attention, to maintain this stillness. Continue to observe.
- **Disenchantment Arises:** A point arrives when the mind becomes disenchanted with every arising phenomenon. Recognizing their incessant nature and your inability to control them, you relinquish the desire to interfere or engage. A realization dawns that there's no controller.
- **Doorway to the Signless:** You might perceive a doorway to a state devoid of concepts or cravings. Everything might seem grey, or you might feel as if you're watching static on a TV or observing a wall of lights. Not everyone notices this state, but if you do, it signifies your progressing towards the signless state. Your mind may also feel as if it's descending.
- **Signless:** Here, there's only pure, objectless awareness. The moment a vibration is observed, it dissipates. Any interaction beyond mere observation instigates further movement. The key is to let the vibration cease naturally. This stage marks the realization and release of the "I, me, myself" concept. Recognizing this notion as a form of craving, which is inherently painful, you let go of the "self."
- **Dispassion Arises:** A profound understanding settles in – there's nothing you can do about the continuous emergence of phenomena except let them be. They no longer hold your interest. Your mind is on the cusp of relinquishing everything.
- **Cessation:** After dwelling in deep dispassion for some time, when least anticipated, the mental stream stops. All perceptions, feelings, and consciousness vanish. This marks the total cessation of all experiences – of all conditioned states.

Map of the 8th Jhana
Base of Nothingness with Equanimity
Radiating Stops
Preliminary Quiet Mind
NPNNP - dreamlike state
Quiet mind
Still Mind
Doorway to the Signless
Signless
Cessation of Feeling, Perception and Consciousness
Oh Wow! (Nibbana)