

Samadhi (55) Peace in Third Jhana

Gil Fronsdal

2025-04-18

Keywords:

third jhāna, samadhi, equanimity, peace, happiness, meditation, Dharma practice, flavors of peace, fourth jhāna, selflessness

Hello, and welcome to this fifth talk on the third *jhāna* as part of this *samadhi* series. And sometimes I've thought that the third *jhāna* is my favorite of the *jhānas*, maybe because it certainly has a degree of... wonderful degree of peace, but it also has kind of very satisfying, comforting or deep feeling of well-being that's part of it, that seems to fill the whole body. And so, but one of the, so I want to read again, the ancient description of the third *jhāna* as part of completing this week, with the fading of joy. A practitioner abides equanimous, aware, and with clear recognition, and experiences the happiness of the body. The practitioner enters and abides in the third genre, of which the noble ones declare, equanimous and aware when abides in happiness.

The practitioner pervades... purveyed, saturates, permeates this body with happiness that is freed of joy so that no part of the body is not touched by the happiness. So one of the characteristics of this third John is equanimity, and that's a form of peace. There's something peaceful about not reacting, about not reacting, being caught and being for and against or preferences, partly because there's no reason for it, but partly because even in this third genre where the experience is just predominantly or only pleasant, that we don't lean into it, we're not grabbing it, we're not involved in any kind of reactivity, positive reactivity towards it, We're equanimous, we're peaceful about it, because it's allowing something deep in our mind, deep in our psyche, to relax, to let go, to not have to be constantly chronically active, doing, making, wanting, protecting, figuring out, responding to every little thing that happens.

There's something peaceful about not reacting, about not reacting, being caught and being for and against or preferences, partly because there's no reason for it, but partly because even in this third genre where the experience is just predominantly or only pleasant, that we don't lean into it, we're not grabbing it, we're not involved in any kind of reactivity, positive reactivity towards it, We're equanimous, we're peaceful about it, because it's allowing something deep in our mind, deep in our psyche, to relax, to let go, to not have to be constantly chronically active, doing, making, wanting, protecting, figuring out, responding to every little thing that happens. The mind can have tremendous clarity. It's equanimous. It's aware. There's a clear knowing of what's happening.

But at the same time, everything is allowed to happen freely. And the classic metaphor, as I've said, is beautiful flowers, lotus flowers that are opened and just exquisitely pristine, perhaps, Lotus is considered somehow pure, and floating in water, underwater, peacefully, very peacefully. And everything that we experience is held in the water of the mind, the water of happiness, the water of peace, equanimity. And as we come to the end of this week on the third Janna, the word peace itself is not in the description of the Janna. But equanimity is a form of peace.

It's not, there's many flavors of peace. This is one of the great delights of meditation of Dharma practice. Maybe one of the delights of human life is to be able to appreciate the flavors of peace, the many flavors that we can experience. Maybe one of the delights of human life is to be able to appreciate the flavors of peace, the many flavors that we can experience. And if you've never heard of this idea, that peace can have many flavors, many experience many different ways, there's different characteristics.

You might want to make a study of that. Maybe over this weekend, before we start again, you might give yourself an opportunity to experience peace. Maybe there's places you can go that you can experience it. Maybe there's some kind of... cathedral, church, new neighborhood that's very peaceful inside. Maybe a park with a grove of trees.

Maybe there's a peaceful bank of a river that you can go sit by. Maybe it's a corner of your home that may be looking out the window or maybe with setting up a certain kind of context, maybe when you're alone at home. You just allow yourself the chance to not do anything except begin to sense and feel peace in the different ways peace can be experienced. Maybe you find yourself in situations that are quite agitating and difficult, but with an assignment to feel the different flavors of peace, maybe ask yourself in a way maybe you've never done before in a trying situation. Where is the peace here?

Where's the peace while people are arguing? Where's the peace when there's a difficult tension in the room? Is there any? And there always will be somewhere. And at minimum, it can be found in the calm mindfulness, the calm awareness that searches for it.

And there always will be somewhere. And at minimum, it can be found in the calm mindfulness, the calm awareness that searches for it. And so in this third, John, there's a degree of peace. And that piece feels not personal exactly. It can feel almost like it expands beyond the edges of the body or beyond the edges certainly of any ways that we usually define ourselves or want to be.

And there's all kinds of lessons around this in the third John. And one of them is that any appropriation, any kind of movement towards making it mine or this is me having this experience, can be seen as creating agitation on the surface of the lake. It can feel like it's unnecessary. It actually detracts from the richness of the experience. And so to begin kind of appreciating the peace, feeling what peace is here, and becoming a connoisseur of peace.

Yeah. And the reason for this is that in the fourth genre, the equanimity becomes stronger and more peaceful. And so being able to kind of sense and have a better kind of registering of the qualities

characteristic of peace, characteristics of this happiness that's there. That's the means by which, or the condition by which our psychophysical system can move into the fourth *jhāna*. So it's one of the characteristics of this instructions in the four *jhānas* is to pervade, saturate, and pervade the body.

With the joy and happiness, with the happiness, with the peace. Partly so we can know it well, we can feel it well. With the joy and happiness, with the happiness, with the peace. Partly so we can know it well, we can feel it well. We can feel it in a deep way that it's almost like we are not feeling it because we're not appropriating it or measuring it against me, myself, and mine, or defining ourselves by it, or wanting more, wanting less, just really getting to know it on its own terms, how that is.

And this deeper familiarity So sometimes I've known people who go into the Jannas and are kind of in a hurry to go through it. They want to be masters of it. They want to be, somehow there's idea of being a good meditator or a successful practitioner. There might be a little bit conceit around going into these deep states. And this is rather unfortunate because the conceit gets in the way of the deeper lessons of these states.

And one of the deeper lessons is to take in the kind of the selfless experience of something profound going on, a profound movement, a profound opening, a profound quality of well-being and peace, that we want to really register and get to know well, without any interference, any kind of agitation or... that comes with trying to do something with or get more from it or speed along and just being very settled, very peaceful, and discovering the almost selfless quality of these deep states because we're not selfing around it. There's a deeper peace. So if you're at all inclined, I encourage you to spend this weekend getting to know the flavors of peace for you. So if you're at all inclined, I encourage you to spend this weekend getting to know the flavors of peace for you.

Search for it, look for it. Search it out where places you can go, what people you can be with, what ways of doing housework, what ways of being at home, that you can actually take time to begin exploring the different qualities, characteristics of how you experience peace. And then you'll be a little better prepared for next week when we do the fourth *jhāna*.

So thank you very much for being part of this, and I look forward to our continuation.