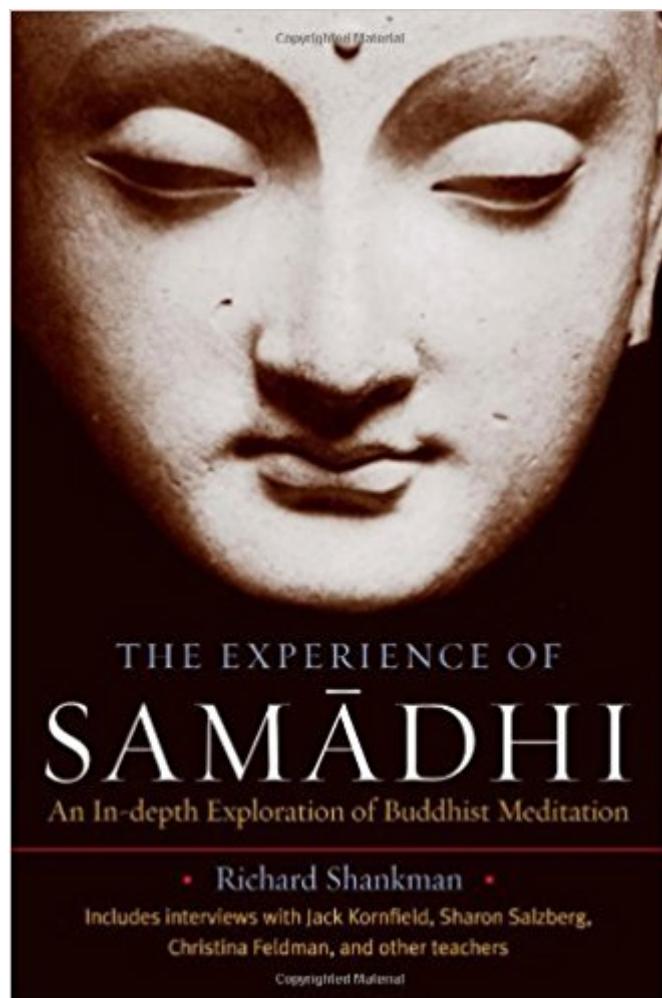


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The Experience Of Samadhi: An In-depth Exploration Of Buddhist Meditation



Synopsis

Dharma practice comprises a wide range of wise instructions and skillful means. As a result, meditators may be exposed to a diversity of approaches to the core teachings and the meditative path--and that can be confusing at times. In this clear and accessible exploration, Dharma teacher and longtime meditator Richard Shankman unravels the mix of differing, sometimes conflicting, views and traditional teachings on how samadhi (concentration) is understood and taught. In part one, Richard Shankman explores the range of teachings and views about samadhi in the Theravada Pali tradition, examines different approaches, and considers how they can inform and enrich our meditation practice. Part two consists of a series of interviews with prominent contemporary Theravada and Vipassana (Insight) Buddhist teachers. These discussions focus on the practical experience of samadhi, bringing the theoretical to life and offering a range of applications of the different meditation techniques.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

What is jhana? Are there conflicting definitions in the Buddhists texts? Do the original sources in the Pali canon agree with later commentaries? How is samadhi (concentration) taught in the West? Do modern Vipassana teachers and monastics agree on the fundamental definitions and methods? These are the key questions Richard Shankman addresses in this clearly written, superbly organized study of samadhi. The book begins with a detailed explanation of samadhi and jhana in the Pali canon, complete with references to key suttas, then moves to a thorough examination of

jhana in the Visuddhimaga. Next it highlights the core controversies surrounding samadhi. In a wonderfully helpful section, Shankman presents the text of interviews he conducted with four monastics and four senior Vipassana dharma instructors to show the areas of agreement and disagreement on this subject. Shankman's style is direct, lucid, and impartial, giving all sides of the argument equal time. A must-read for practitioners who want a deeper understanding of the eighth principle of the Eight-Fold Path.

I would recommend this book to anyone who meditates and has questions like "What is samadhi, what is jhana, who teaches in accordance with the discourses of the Buddha and who teaches more in line with the Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)? It is a very helpful reference book. I first read a copy from the library and decided to buy a copy.

One of the best books about Jhanas available. Mr. Shankman explains the difference between meditation as practised in the Sutras and as practiced in the various commentaries to the Sutras. There are several controversies going on here, and he sets them out lucidly. He includes many interviews with meditation instructors of various Buddhist persuasions. A useful and intelligent book. Required reading if you have any historical or personal interest in deep meditative experience.

I have been attached to Buddhism for 15 years but am not a well trained Buddhist scholar. Though some of his points were above my level of understanding I am really happy I read this book. I came a way with a deeper understanding of Samadhi than I had before. His interviews at the end are worth the price of the book alone.

The interviews with the Buddhist teachers in the second half of the book really make this a must buy. It almost as if Richard Shankman just spent the first half proving that he knows what he's talking about and then uses his knowledge to interview skilled monks to bring out some true insight into religious experience.

Defining samadhi and jhana has been a massive struggle for me because of all the debate and the author of this book cleared it up mostly and then got the opinion of a slough of experts in the form of interviews as well. This book put most of my questions to bed finally! I am so thankful someone did this!!!

Samatha is part of the Buddhist meditation despite differing opinions whether it's necessary to practice Samatha along with Vipassana (sometimes referred as 'gradual-step training') versus the promoters of only-Vipassana-matters (dry insight practice). As there are many traditions so there are many approaches to Samatha; yet it does not necessarily mean that this or that approach is the best method. I'd say, use this book as a road map, find a trustworthy teacher and sit to find out which technique works for you.

Very in depth view of Samadhi. The author is extremely thorough and the book is anything, but a primer.

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