



37 factors of enlightenment or the Bodhi path

from Nagarjuna's work: *Maha-prajña-paramita-shastra*

compiled by Lama Tendar Olaf Hoeyer

There are 7 sets of factors, that in all contain 37 circumstances conducive to Enlightenment:

I) Four bases to fasten 'mindfulness' - skt.: *smṛityupasthana* - on to

Awake presence of simple awareness about the body, Skt.: *kayā-nupasthāna*
Awake presence of simple awareness about feelings, Skt.: *vedanā-nupasthāna*
Awake presence of simple awareness about minding or mental states,
Skt.: *citta-nupasthāna*
Awake presence of simple awareness about events or phenomena,
Skt.: *dharma-nupasthāna*

II) Four thorough exertions, skt.: *samyakprahāṇa*

Exertion for the preventing of unwholesome states to arise [Skt.: *anuppādāya*]
Exertion for the abandoning [Skt.: *pahānāya*] of the already arisen unwholesome states
Exertion for the arising [Skt.: *uppādāya*] of wholesome states
Exertion for the sustaining and increasing [Skt.: *ṭhitiyā*, care] of arisen wholesome states

III) Four bases of extraordinary inner wealth or magical power, skt.: *riddhipada*

[that you inherently and quite undeservedly possess as a human being]

Determination (will), Skt.: *chanda*
Inspiration or enthusiastic effort (or energy), Skt.: *virya*
Mindset, Skt.: *citta*
Examination, Skt.: *mimāṃsā*

IV) Five spiritual faculties, skt.: *indriyas*

[that you inherently and quite undeservedly possess as a human being]

Trust and devotion, Skt.: *śraddā*
Inspiration or enthusiastic effort (or energy), Skt.: *virya*
'Mindfulness' - Skt.: *smṛti*
Yoga trance (absorption of mind), Skt.: *samādhi*
Wisdom by the inherent clarity of the mind, Skt.: *prajñā*

V) Five strengths, skt.: *balas* [the 5 indriyas, when applied, become the 5 strengths]

The power of trust and devotion, Skt.: *śraddā*

The power of inspiration or enthusiastic effort (or energy), Skt.: *virya*

The power of 'mindfulness' - Skt.: *smṛti*

The power of yoga trance (or absorption of mind), Skt.: *samādhi*

The power of wisdom by the inherent clarity of the mind, Skt.: *prajñā*

VI) Seven factors of Enlightenment, skt.: *bodhyanga*

'Mindfulness' - Skt.: *smṛti*

Investigation, Skt.: *dharmapraṇicaya*

Inspiration or enthusiastic effort (or energy), Skt.: *virya*

Spontaneous joy, Skt.: *prīti*

Tranquillity or calm, Skt.: *praśrabdhi*

Yoga trance (or absorption of mind), Skt.: *samādhi*

Equanimity and equality, Skt.: *upekṣā* [upekṣā]

VII) Noble Eightfold Path, skt.: *astrangamarga*

Right comprehension or view, Skt.: *samyak-dṛṣṭi*

Correct analysis (the cause) and right intention (the effect), Skt.: *samyak-saṃkalpa*

Right speech, Skt.: *samyak-vāk*

Correct action, Skt.: *samyak-karmānta*

Right livelihood, Skt.: *samyak-ājīva*

Correct enthusiastic effort or inspirational energy, Skt.: *samyak-vyāyāma*

Right 'mindfulness', Skt.: *samyak-smṛti*

Correct yoga trance (or absorption of mind), Skt.: *samyak-samādhi*.

The first twelve factors (or aspects) concern themselves about the first *Dharma path*: the path of accumulation of merits, Skt.: *punyas*, and experiences of wisdom by inherent clarity in the mind, Skt.: *prajñā*.

The next ten factors are about the *Dharma path* of preparation or application.

The next seven factors belongs to the *Dharma path* of insight.

The last eight are about the *Dharma path* of meditation, Skt.: *dhyana*, mastery of meditation or samadhi.

(This division has been described by *Tulku Thondrup Rinpoche* in his book: *Buddhist Civilisation in Tibet*, page: 101.)

'Mindfulness' or 'awake presence of simple awareness' - is explained in detail by *Shamar Rinpoche's* paper: 4 Bases to fasten 'mindfulness.'

The subject of the 37 factors is described in context by K. Venkata Ramanan in his book: *Nagarjuna's Philosophy*, as presented in the *Maha-Prajñāparamita-Sastras*, published by *Motilal Barnarsidass* in Delhi, India, 1978.

Description of the 37 factors is found on page: 290.

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