

Four Noble Truths

Key Ideas:

- These are the Truths that the Buddha awakened to when he became enlightened
- The Four Noble Truths were the subject of the Buddha’s first dharma talk, and are the foundation of the teachings
- “Noble” (*ariya*) can mean universal or standard—i.e., different from personal truth. Or it can imply that these are “the truths of the Noble Ones”, or “ennobling truths”.

The Four Noble Truths	Associated Action	Notes
1. There is suffering (<i>dukkha</i>)	Suffering is to be <i>comprehended, known, or fully understood</i>	<p>“Life is suffering” is a misstatement of this Truth, which simply points to the existence of suffering. <i>Dukkha</i> means physical and mental stress: Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair; association with the unloved; separation from the loved; and not getting what one wants. More subtly, <i>dukkha</i> is the overall <i>unsatisfactoriness</i> of conditioned phenomena (the Five Aggregates) because they do not provide lasting happiness. Comprehending suffering is accomplished by observing it in a nonjudgmental, nonreactive way.</p>
2. The cause of suffering is craving (<i>taṇhā</i>)	The cause of suffering is to be <i>abandoned</i>	<p>Craving has three aspects: Craving for sensual pleasure, for becoming (continued existence), and for non-becoming (annihilation). Craving for becoming means the desire for the formation of states that are not currently happening, while craving for non-becoming means the desire for the destruction or halting of any states that are already occurring.</p> <p>Craving is fueled by ignorance (<i>avijjā</i>)—blindness to suffering, to its cause and possible release, to the link between action and results, and especially to the construction of a self whose craving is to be satisfied.</p> <p>Craving is the fuel that feeds the defilements (<i>kilesa</i>) of greed (<i>lobha</i>), hatred (<i>dosa</i>), and delusion (<i>moha</i>), which drive unskillful actions leading to more suffering. The Buddha’s teaching on dependent origination (<i>paṭicca samuppāda</i>) is the most detailed explanation of the interlinked causal chain from ignorance to suffering.</p>

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The Four Noble Truths	Associated Action	Notes
3. There is an end to suffering	The end of suffering is to be <i>realized</i>	<p>Each time the mind lets go of some activity of clinging, the associated suffering ends.</p> <p>The causes of suffering are unraveled by knowing and seeing the arising and passing away of the Five Aggregates: “Such is form, such its origination, such its disappearance. ...feeling, ... perception, ... fabrications/formations... Such is consciousness, such its origination, such its disappearance.” (<i>Samyutta Nikāya</i> 12.23)</p> <p>The cessation of suffering is the realization of <i>Nibbāna</i>, also called the Deathless, or the unconditioned. “This is peace, this is exquisite — the stilling of all fabrications, the relinquishment of all acquisitions, the ending of craving, dispassion, cessation, <i>Nibbāna</i>.” (<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i> 64)</p> <p>Literally <i>Nibbāna</i> means “blowing out” or extinguishing,” although Buddhist writings like to present it as “the absence of craving.” The Pali and Sanskrit idiom characteristically appears in a verb form—“s/he nirvana-s,” indicating that nirvana is not a “thing,” but a process or experience: the experience of extinguishing the three fires of greed, hatred, and delusion.</p>
4. The way leading to the end of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path	The path is to be <i>developed</i>	<p>The eight “steps” of the path are developed integrally, not in a linear sequence. However, they are arranged in a supportive order: The initial wisdom of seeking freedom from suffering (Right View and Intention) leads to moral discipline and behavior (Right Speech, Action, and Livelihood), which support the development of meditation (Right Effort, Mindfulness, and Concentration). This hones the mind to achieve a penetrative understanding of the Four Noble Truths (Right View).</p> <p>The Buddha offers many approaches to developing the path factors, suitable for many kinds of minds.</p>

Noble Eightfold Path

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The Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-magga*)

Key Ideas

- Rather than eight stages to be completed one before the other, the eight components of the path are presented as eight significant dimensions of one’s behavior—mental, spoken, and bodily—that are regarded as operating in dependence on each other and as defining a complete way of living.
- Ordinarily the eight aspects of one’s life may be either “right” or “appropriate” (*sammā*) or “wrong” and “inappropriate” (*micchā*). By means of Buddhist practice the eight dimensions are gradually and collectively transformed and cultivated.
- The one who has established these eight qualities—a noble one (*ariya*)—has, in fact, found a way to the cessation of suffering. But the ordinary person who is still plagued by greed, hatred, and delusion must first negotiate the mix of one’s views, behavior, and emotions in order to find the eight qualities. Much of the Buddhist path is therefore concerned with *finding* the noble eightfold path rather than *walking* it. Once on the path, one may further perfect the eight qualities and follow the path to the complete cessation of suffering.

Noble Eightfold Path	Notes	Threefold Division of the Path
1. Right View (<i>sammā diṭṭhi</i>)	Includes the cognitive aspects of wisdom which can be categorized as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law of Karma: Understanding that every action will have karmic results. Wholesome and unwholesome actions will produce corresponding results and effects. • Impermanence: Understanding the nature of impermanence (<i>anicca</i>); everything that arises will perish. Leading on from the perception of impermanence is the understanding that what is impermanent is not a reliable basis for our happiness (<i>dukkha</i>) and is not a stable foundation for self (<i>anatta</i>). • Suffering: The Four Noble Truths: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suffering must be fully understood. 2. The origin of suffering is attachment, which is to be abandoned. 3. The end to suffering is realized through the end of attachment. 4. The Eightfold Path is to be developed to end suffering. 	Wisdom (<i>Paññā</i>)
2. Right Intention (<i>sammā sankappa</i>)	Refers to volition and the commitment to ethical and mental development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intention of renunciation: “Letting go”, generosity • Intention of non-ill will: metta/loving kindness, refraining from anger and aversion • Intention of non-cruelty: refraining from cruelty and aggression, cultivation of compassion 	

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Noble Eightfold Path	Notes	Threefold Division of the Path
3. Right Speech (<i>sammā vācā</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refraining from false speech: No deliberate lies or deceitful speech • Refraining from slanderous speech: No malicious words designed to create disharmony or discord • Refraining from harsh speech: No words designed to hurt others • Refraining from idle chatter: Refrain from speech with no purpose 	Ethical Conduct (<i>Sīla</i>)
4. Right Action (<i>sammā kammanta</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refraining from killing other beings • Refraining from taking that which is not given • Refraining from sexual misconduct 	
5. Right Livelihood (<i>ājīva</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not dealing in weapons • Not dealing in living beings: Slavery, raising animals for slaughter, prostitution • Not working in meat production or butchery • Not making or selling intoxicants or poisons • Abstaining from any mode of livelihood that breaks the precepts 	
6. Right Effort (<i>vāyāma</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid and prevent the arising of unwholesome states which have not yet arisen. • Abandon unwholesome states which have already arisen. • Cultivate and bring forth wholesome states which have not yet arisen. • Maintain and develop wholesome states which have already arisen. 	Mental Discipline (<i>Samādhi</i>)
7. Right Mindfulness (<i>satī</i>)	<p>Clear perception of the interaction of the Five Aggregates, expressed in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemplations of the body: Mindful breathing, body postures, clear comprehension of physical activity, repulsiveness of the body, etc • Contemplations of feeling: Feeling tones of pleasantness, unpleasantness and neutral feeling • Contemplations of the states of mind (consciousness): Attention to how consciousness is affected by various mental factors • Contemplation of phenomena (mental objects): Attention to the occurrence, context and function of mental objects 	
8. Right Concentration (<i>samādhi</i>)	<p>One-pointedness of mind: a state in which all mental faculties are unified and directed toward an object of consciousness</p>	

Five Hindrances

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Five Hindrances (*nīvaranas*)

Key Ideas

- The five hindrances are mental states that impede progress in meditation, reducing opportunities for insight, wisdom, and enlightenment.
- These are conditioned mental factors, not personal failures. Understanding them thoroughly, skillfully working with them, and overcoming their influence are the challenges and opportunities of practice.
- The Buddha taught five practical ways to investigate hindrances (*Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya* 10.36)
 1. Recognize when a hindrance is present
 2. Recognize when a hindrance is absent
 3. Understand the conditions that cause a hindrance to arise
 4. Understand the conditions that cause a hindrance to cease
 5. Explore how to prevent it from arising again in the future
- The Buddha offered several vivid similes for the hindrances. "... [W]hen these five hindrances are not abandoned in himself, the monk regards it as a debt, a sickness, a prison, slavery, a road through desolate country. But when these five hindrances are abandoned in himself, he regards it as unindebtedness, good health, release from prison, freedom, a place of security." (*Samaññaphala Sutta, "The Fruits of the Contemplative Life", Dīgha Nikāya* 2)

English Term	Pali Term	Characteristics	<i>Jhāna</i> factor which overcomes each hindrance
Sensual desire	<i>kāma-chanda</i>	Thoughts in favor; craving, especially sensual pleasure	<i>Ekaggatā</i> – One-pointedness, concentration, collectedness
Aversion or ill-will	<i>byāpāda, vyāpāda</i>	Thoughts against; judgment, censure, disliking, malice toward others	<i>Pīti</i> – Rapture, delight, pleasure
Sloth and torpor	<i>thīna-middha</i>	Dullness, boredom, lack of energy, sluggishness and weakness of consciousness and mental factors, may manifest as sleepiness	<i>Vitakka</i> – Applied thought, initial attention
Restlessness and anxiety	<i>uddhacca-kukkucca</i>	Distracting thoughts that inhibit calmness, remorse, worry	<i>Sukha</i> – Happiness, joy, contentment
Doubt	<i>vicikicchā</i>	Absence of trust or confidence; lack of faith; unwise skepticism	<i>Vicāra</i> – Sustained thought, examination

Four Foundations of Mindfulness

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Four Foundations of Mindfulness

Key points

- These four foundations (body, feeling, mind, and physical and mental processes) are also called four frames of reference or four establishments of awareness. These four arenas for mindfulness are frequently applied in conjunction with breath meditation, and any experience of the breath includes all four foundations.
- The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (MN 10) and *Mahā-Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (DN 22) offer multiple ways of contemplating and practicing with the four foundations that can lead directly to liberating insight. For each foundation, there are three general modes of practice:
 1. Remaining focused “internally on the body (feeling, mind, physical and mental processes) in and of itself, or externally on the body in and of itself, or both internally and externally on the body in and of itself.”
 2. Remaining focused on “the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body (feeling, mind, physical and mental processes), on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, or on the phenomenon of origination and passing away with regard to the body.”
 3. Maintaining mindfulness “that ‘There is a body (feeling, mind, physical and mental processes)’ [simply] to the extent of knowledge and recollection.”
- Developing the four foundations removes conceptual constructs until the meditator sees things as they actually are, namely, impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self.

The Four Foundations	Notes (see also <i>The Noble Eightfold Path</i> list under Right Mindfulness)	Contemplations from the <i>Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta</i>
1. Body— <i>kāya</i>	This foundation centers on the experience of the body and frequently includes the physical breath.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-and-out breathing (<i>ānāpānasati</i>) • The four postures (sitting, standing, walking, lying down) • Bodily activities • The 32 parts • The four elements (earth, water, fire, air) • The nine cemetery contemplations (corpses in decay)
2. Feeling— <i>vedanā</i>	<p><i>Vedanā</i> refers specifically to the quality of a sensory experience as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral (neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant). <i>Vedanā</i> does not refer to emotions, but highlights the rudimentary feeling tone associated with all mental and physical experiences.</p> <p>This foundation of mindfulness is especially important because it correlates with a relatively weak link in the twelve-fold chain of dependent co-arising (between feeling (<i>vedanā</i>) and craving (<i>taṇhā</i>)), thereby presenting an opportunity to intervene in the cycle of suffering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings that may arise with bodily, mental, carnal, sublime, or supramundane experience.

Four Foundations of Mindfulness

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The Four Foundations	Notes (see also <i>The Noble Eightfold Path</i> list under Right Mindfulness)	Contemplations from the <i>Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta</i>
3. Mind— <i>citta</i>	<p>This foundation concerns watching one’s general mental state, focusing on the ethical qualities of the mind – whether the mind contains any degrees of lust (<i>rāga</i>)/greed (<i>lobha</i>), hatred (<i>dosa</i>), or delusion (<i>moha</i>).</p>	<p>Is the mind...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constricted • Scattered • Developed • Undeveloped • Surpassed • Unsurpassed • Concentrated • Not concentrated • Released • Not released
4. Physical and mental processes— <i>dharmas</i>	<p>This stage integrates the previous three stages so that finally one watches the totality of physical and mental processes. This final stage is equivalent to watching the five aggregates, so that one’s world is seen as consisting in the interplay of five groups of physical and mental processes.</p> <p><i>Dhammas</i> are the physical and mental processes and events that constitute sentient experience, and in this sense one’s “world.” They continually arise and pass away in conjunction with each other and subject to multiple causes and conditions. At the most fundamental level, <i>dharmas</i> are all that there is. Thus, to understand the Buddha’s teaching/s (<i>Dhamma</i>) is to see things in terms of <i>dharmas</i>.</p> <p>As the meditator contemplates the world of <i>dharmas</i> one’s mind eventually settles in a state of concentration that involves an initial direct seeing of the four truths. In practice, then, this foundation encompasses the contemplation of functions, interactions, and causes related to various other lists, categories, models, or frameworks developed throughout the teachings. It points the meditator toward a direct experience of the nature of reality (another meaning of the term <i>dhamma</i>).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Five Hindrances — understanding their presence, absence and how they arise, cease, and are prevented from arising again in the mind • The Five Aggregates – understanding their origination and disappearance • The Six Sense Media – understanding how clinging arises and ceases for each sense base and its object • The Seven Factors of Awakening – understanding their presence, absence, and how they arise, cease, and are fulfilled by development • The Four Noble Truths

Seven Factors of Enlightenment

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Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*bojjhaṅgā*)

Key Ideas:

- These seven factors flow in a progression from one to the other as a path leading toward enlightenment. *Mindfulness* naturally opens to *investigation*, allowing awareness to expand. *Energy* develops from this deeper awareness, followed by *joy* arising from new insights into reality. Joyful insight brings confidence in the *dhamma*, and stability, encouraging the mind to rest in *tranquility*. The calm mind allows *concentration* to build, and finally, the result is *equanimity*, a balanced acceptance of each present moment experience, without clinging or resistance.
- *Mindfulness* enables one to remain aware of each energizing and calming factor and the relationships among all of them. Specifically, each pair is balanced as follows:
 - Investigation and Tranquility
 - Energy and Concentration
 - Joy and Equanimity
- When they are out of balance, mindfulness is needed to discern whether energy or calming is needed, and then which factor should receive more or less emphasis.

Factor Type	Factors in English	Factors in Pali	Notes
Neutral	Mindfulness	<i>sati</i>	
Energizing	Investigation—literally “discrimination of <i>dhammas</i> ”	<i>dhammavicaya</i>	This awakening factor is concerned with discernment of the psycho-physical events (<i>dhammas</i>) that constitute one’s experiential world. This factor is therefore directly related to wisdom, to understanding the Buddha’s teaching, the <i>Dhamma</i> . To understand the nature and interaction of the various groupings of <i>dhammas</i> that make up one’s experiential world is to understand the Buddha’s Teaching, <i>Dhamma</i> .
	Energy	<i>vīriya</i>	
	Joy (rapture)	<i>pīti</i>	
Calming	Tranquility	<i>passaddhi</i>	
	Concentration	<i>samādhi</i>	
	Equanimity	<i>upekkhā</i>	

Five Aggregates

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Five Aggregates (*khandha*)

Key Ideas

- The five *khandha* represent the five components of all conscious experience. They are not what we are made of, but how we operate: the psycho-physical process by which one is having one's experience. And it is this process one needs to understand.
- The teachings of not-self (*anatta*) and of the five *khandha* are not focused on what one is or is not. That one is is neither *the* question nor *in* question. Rather, the question which the teachings answer is *how* one works in a dependently originated world of experience.
- Through meditation, we see the rise and fall of these aggregates; we see them as impermanent, unsatisfying, and empty.
- The term *khandha* refers to the fire metaphor (SN III 71), so that the five processes that constitute our experience are being compared to burning bundles of firewood to feed either the fire of our suffering or the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion. When these three fires are extinguished we still have the five *khandha*, that which we experience, so we still have a residue of fuel; however, it is no longer burning. When the five *khandha* cease to exist, i.e., when we die enlightened, we have no more potential for experience; we have run out of fuel.

Aggregate	Notes
Material Form (<i>Rūpa</i>)	<p>Includes the whole of physical nature, any kind of matter or material form whatsoever, either internal or external. Includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Great Four Elements: Refers to both internal and external elements<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earth Element (Solidity): Internal elements include hair, teeth, bones, organs, etc.• Water (Fluidity): Internal elements include bile, blood, urine, etc.• Fire (heat): Internal elements include bodily mechanisms that produce warmth (digestion)• Air (motion): Internal elements include breathing, winds in the bowel, etc.2. Derivatives of The Great Four Elements: sensitivity of the faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body and their corresponding objects (color, sound, odor, taste and touchable objects), plus related material properties such as femininity, masculinity, space, nutriment, material basis of consciousness, malleability, growth, aging, impermanence etc. The <i>Abhidhamma</i> lists 28 kinds of materiality.
Feeling Tone (<i>Vedanā</i>)	<p>Refers to the particular quality of every sense experience which has the quality of pleasantness, unpleasantness or neutrality. Sounds, tastes, emotions, sights, sensations, odors, thoughts—each has an associated feeling tone. Feeling is produced by contact which arises with the concurrence of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Eye (sensitivity) with visible forms (object) and eye-consciousness.2. Ear (sensitivity) with sounds (object) and ear-consciousness.3. Nose (sensitivity) with odor (object) and nose-consciousness.4. Tongue (sensitivity) with taste (object) and tongue-consciousness.5. Body (sensitivity) with physical objects (object) and body-consciousness.6. Mind (sensitivity) with thoughts and ideas (object) and mind-consciousness.

Five Aggregates

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Aggregate	Notes
Perception (<i>Saññā</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The activity of recognition, identification, and classification. Conversion of an indefinite or vague experience into categories of things that are interpreted through features, signs, and qualities that we recognize and have experienced. Perception can be problematic because the process of classification encourages us to see things as 'permanent' when in fact they constantly change.• <i>Saññā</i> would better be translated as apperception, because it includes both perceiving and identifying what is perceived.
Mental Formations (<i>Sankhāra</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Sankhāra</i> as a <i>khandha</i>, might be translated as the "volitional constituent" of human experience in this life. It is defined as six groups of volitional activity (SN III 60-87) and functions according to the way one has been formed. It is what we may call the operative aspect of karma. This meaning of <i>sankhāra</i> is different from its meaning as the second link in the chain of dependent origination, the formative activities, what forms human experience for this life, which we may call the creative aspect of karma. Being cyclical, though, the operative karma of this life will (unless it is neutral) become the creative karma of a future life, so that one's volitions are the instrumental factor in the coming-to-be of the human being.• The <i>Abhidhamma</i> lists 52 mental formations including conceit, ignorance, hate, concentration, desire, effort, attention, will, etc. which may produce either wholesome or unwholesome karmic effects.
Consciousness (<i>Viññāṇa</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Viññāṇa</i> is the process of being conscious. Integral to the cognitive process, it provides subjective awareness at all stages of the changing experiences and insights that accompany spiritual progress. Because consciousness functions throughout the series of lives of an individual in the cycles of <i>saṃsāra</i>, it provides a sense of continuity both within a single life and also from life to life. Such continuity is likened to a stream.• Consciousness is the knowing of an object that has one of the six faculties (ear, eye, nose, tongue, body, mind) as its basis and cognizes one of the six corresponding objects. Consciousness does not recognize an object; perception recognizes the object. When the eye comes in contact with colors (white and brown, for example), consciousness brings an awareness only, but no specific recognition of what the object is. Perception associated with mental formations, (above) classifies the color into a pattern and identifies it as a "white dog with brown spots".

Five Faculties

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Five Faculties (*indriyas*)

Key ideas

- The Five Faculties (*indriya*) exert a controlling influence on the mind in two ways:
 1. Keeping it balanced. Faith and Wisdom balance each other; Energy and Concentration balance each other; the strength of Mindfulness determines the refinement of the balance.
 2. Keeping it from falling prey to the opposites of the faculties: faithlessness, indolence, heedlessness, agitation, and ignorance.
- When developed to the point of becoming “unshakeable” in light of their opposites, these same qualities are called *The Five Powers (bala)*.
- Heedfulness underlies the development of the Five Faculties.
- These Five Faculties are sometimes called Controlling Faculties or Spiritual Faculties.
- The Five Faculties are developed at every stage of the practice and lead to enlightenment.

The Five Faculties	Balancing View	Developmental View	Function on the Path
Faith (<i>saddhā</i>) Also translated as conviction, trust, or confidence	Excessive faith leads to credulity; it is balanced by wisdom	Conviction in the efficacy of the practice and teachings of the Buddha, confidence in the worthiness of the goal. Trust in the lawful unfolding of cause and effect. <i>This leads to...</i>	<p>Initial impetus to practice (Right View)</p>
Energy (<i>virīya</i>) Also translated as effort, strength	Excessive energy leads to restlessness; it is balanced by concentration	Putting effort into practice. Skillful effort is neither too lax nor too rigid. <i>This leads to...</i>	
Mindfulness (<i>satī</i>)	Mindfulness balances the development of all the faculties and harmonizes their integration	Clear awareness. The capacity to be aware of what is present without distorting interpretations. <i>This leads to...</i>	
Concentration (<i>samādhi</i>)	Excessive concentration leads to dullness; it is balanced by energy	Undistracted focus and unification of mind. <i>This leads to...</i>	
Wisdom (<i>paññā</i>) Also translated as discrimination, discernment	Excessive wisdom makes the mind cunning and skeptical; it is balanced by faith	Direct discernment of things as they are actually occurring; attainment of the goal	

Five *Jhāna* Factors

Key Ideas

- Also called Intensifying Factors, Five Factors of Absorption, or Strength-givers
- They intensify attention to enable absorption in *jhāna*.
- These five factors arise prior to the attainment of *jhāna* and characterize the first absorption.
- Progression through the four *jhāna* states occurs as these *jhāna* factors are first strongly developed, and then systematically relinquished. This is a process of mental refinement, whereby a meditator is able to attain states of concentration by simply adverting to the object of meditation and maintaining a state of purified equanimity and balance.
- Each *jhāna* state is distinguished by a particular cluster of *jhāna* factors.

Factors in English	Factors in Pali	Hindrances it overcomes	Function	Notes
Applied thought, initial attention	<i>Vitakka</i>	Sloth and torpor	To apply the mind to its object with special clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of the mind to its object, directing attention, confronting the object.
Sustained thought, examination	<i>Vicāra</i>	Doubt	To keep associated mental factors occupied with the object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The anchoring of the mind on the object, maintaining continuous pressure on the object, examining and discerning its unique qualities.
Rapture, delight, pleasure	<i>Pīti</i>	Aversion	To refresh and invigorate consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gladdening of mind and joyous interest that arises with the meditation object. • It is not general or sensual rapture, but refers to the specific delight that arises in relationship to a consistent knowing of the meditation object; the mind is enlivened by its facility in the task at hand. • Classified as a mental factor or mental formation, not as a feeling.
Happiness, joy, contentment	<i>Sukha</i>	Restlessness	To gratify and intensify associated states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signifies the pleasant feeling, joy, or contentment that arises with the knowing of the meditation object. • Classified as a feeling—enjoyment of the taste of what is acquired.
One-pointedness, concentration, collectedness	<i>Ekaggatā</i>	Sensual desire	To conglomerate or unify associated factors with the object; to eliminate distractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to the single pointed focus on an object, non-distraction, non-wavering. • In the practice of meditation, the mind ceases to seek out new objects of consciousness and becomes unified, resting on one object of consciousness without tendency to move. • Manifests as peace, quiet, and calm.

Four Bases of Success

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Four Bases of Success (*Iddhi-pādā*)

Key ideas:

- Referred to as the *Iddhi-pādā* in the Pali Canon, the four bases of success represent particular skills in meditation attainment that are to be developed through a set of four dominant mental facilities, each fortified by energetic striving.
- The term *iddhi* is derived from the verb *ijjhati*, which means to prosper, succeed, or flourish. Within the context of Buddhist practice, it has the special nuance of referring to spiritual success or spiritual power.
- This list is sometimes referred to as “Four roads to success”, or “Four bases of power”.
- The bases of success support the eradication of the five higher fetters and the attainment of supra-normal powers and awakening.
- The Pali Canon preserves an analysis of the stock formula of the *Iddhi-pādās* in the *Iddhi-pādā-samyutta* (*Samyutta Nikāya*, ch 51.20/ S V 268-9).
- This analysis makes it clear that a “basis of success” is conceived of as the interplay of three basic components in consolidating and furthering the process of meditational attainment:
 1. meditative concentration;
 2. forces of endeavor;
 3. the particular means by which meditative concentration is attained, namely, the desire to act (*chanda*), strength or energy (*virīya*), mind (*citta*), and investigation or inspection (*vīmaṃsā*).

An *iddhi-pādā* is not so much any of these three things in particular as the interaction between them.

The Four Bases of Success	Notes
1. Concentration gained by means of desire to act (<i>Chanda-samādhi</i>)	Concentration is consolidated through a powerful desire directed toward the goal of awakening, the eradication of the higher fetters, or the attainment of spiritual power. This desire is not the craving that is described as the cause of suffering, nor is it a hindrance to concentration. This desire serves as a valuable impetus for practice.
2. Concentration gained by means of strength (<i>Virīya-samādhi</i>)	Concentration is gained through an exertion of effort and energy to achieve the goal of practice. Skillful and diligent effort is applied consistently and appropriately, neither too forceful nor too lax. This balancing act of sustained and dedicated effort overcomes obstacles, cultivates wholesome factors, and maintains our achievements.
3. Concentration gained by means of mind (<i>Citta-samādhi</i>)	Concentration is achieved through a natural purity of consciousness that is unified and undistracted in its orientation toward the goal.
4. Concentration gained by means of investigation (<i>Vīmaṃsā-samādhi</i>)	Concentration is obtained by sustained and penetrative investigation that discerns mental and physical phenomena as they are actually occurring. This concentration arises by contemplating the changing, unsatisfactory, foul, or empty nature of things, or through the careful examination of causes and effects. We can reflect before, during, and after our actions to discern patterns that may indicate how conditions function to produce effects.

Four Right Efforts

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Four Right Efforts (*sammāppadhāna*)

Key Ideas:

- The Four Right Efforts (also translated as “right endeavors” or “right strivings”) provide specific instruction on how to apply the mind toward liberation.
- For each of the four right efforts, one generates the desire by making an effort, arousing energy, applying the mind and striving. These exertions set and support one's intention toward a wholesome state of mind. When the application of our intention is strong and skillful, wholesome mind states arise and continue easily, and unwholesome states weaken and fall away. But when the intention is weak, wholesome mind states are feeble or never develop, and unwholesome states can obsess the mind.
- These four specific endeavors delineate the detailed understanding of the factor of Right Effort, the sixth factor of the Noble Eight Fold Path. Similarly, the same formula is also used to explain the faculty of strength (*viriyindriya*).
- Canonical References: *Samyutta Nikāya* 45:8 V8-10; *Anguttara Nikāya* II 74.

The Four Right Efforts	Primary Function	Explanation
Restraint (<i>samvara</i>)	Generating the desire for the non-arising of unwholesome states.	Avoiding and preventing the arising of unwholesome states and unskillful thoughts which have not yet arisen.
Abandoning (<i>pahāna</i>)	Generating the desire for abandoning arisen unwholesome states.	Abandoning unwholesome states and unskillful thoughts which have already arisen.
Developing (<i>bhāvanā</i>)	Generating the desire for the arising of wholesome states.	Cultivating, developing and bringing forth wholesome states and skillful thoughts which have not yet arisen.
Protecting (<i>anurakkhanā</i>)	Generating the desire for continuing arisen wholesome states.	Maintaining and sustaining wholesome states and skillful thoughts which have already arisen.

Twelve Links of Dependent Arising (*Paṭicca-samuppāda*)

Key Ideas

- Dependent Arising depicts the complex web of processes that perpetuate suffering and bind beings to the cycle of existence.
- There are twelve “factors”, each of which is considered a representative, significant causal condition for the succeeding factor (not a single sufficient cause):
“When this is, that is. From the arising of this comes the arising of that.”
 And, as all the conditioned processes and events are unstable and impermanent, so also:
“When this isn't, that isn't. From the cessation of this comes the cessation of that”
(Middle Length Discourses Sutta 115, Many Kinds Of Elements)
- The twelve links form a continuous chain of events with no specific beginning or ending.
- The process of conditioning is not necessarily a linear progression through the twelve links, but is a complex web of possibilities and interactions amongst causal factors.
- The traditional twelvefold formula below is the most representative one, but there are numerous canonical variations on it.
- The Buddha redefined the contemporary concept of action (*kamma*) as a particular kind of mentality—one’s act of will or intention (*cetanā*). This ethicized sense of *kamma* is fundamental to the doctrine of dependent arising, for the Pali texts portray *kamma* as the key conditioning factor in the causal chain (*Connected Discourses* II 65).

	Factors	Pali	Notes
1	Ignorance	<i>avijjā</i>	Ignorance refers to the absence of Right View (i.e. not realizing the Four Noble Truths).
2	Volitional Formations	<i>sankhāra</i>	Volition and intention shape states of body and mind and produce formations.
3	Consciousness	<i>viññāṇa</i>	The six classes of consciousness consist of consciousness associated with the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and intellect.
4	Materiality and Mentality	<i>nāmā rūpa</i>	The category of <i>nāmā rūpa</i> includes all material elements and mental factors.
5	Six sense media	<i>saḷāyatana</i>	This item highlights the material sensitivity of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and intellect.
6	Contact	<i>phassa</i>	Contact occurs with the meeting of a sense organ, object, and consciousness. It is characterized as touching, but does not require physical impact.
7	Feeling-Tone	<i>vedenā</i>	<i>Vedanā</i> may be pleasant, unpleasant or neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant (neutral). It is a basic feeling tone, not a complex sensation or emotion.

Twelve Links of Dependent Arising
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	Factors	Pali	Notes
8	Craving	<i>taṇhā</i>	<i>Taṇhā</i> is literally translated as “thirst.” There are three kinds of craving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Craving for sensual pleasure 2. Craving to assume an identity in a world of experience 3. Craving for the end of an identity in a world of experience
9	Clinging	<i>upādāna</i>	Clinging is the result of passion and delight focused on the five aggregates. Four kinds of clinging include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. clinging to sensual pleasures 2. clinging to rituals and practices 3. clinging to views and opinions 4. clinging to the concept of self
10	Becoming	<i>bhava</i>	Becoming refers to the force that is required for a new formation to arise. It is generated by action.
11	Birth	<i>jāti</i>	Birth occurs with the formation of an existence or identity. With birth, a formation is consigned to a particular state of existence.
12	Aging and death	<i>jarā-maraṇa</i>	Aging and death describe the dissolution of identity, vanishing of youth, decay, and ending of the formation in a particular state of existence.

Four *Jhānas*

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Four *Jhānas*

Key points

- The four *jhānas* are a defining feature of Right Concentration in the Buddhist Tradition.
- *Jhānas* are states of deep meditative absorption in which attention is unified with a fixed meditation object, the mind is secluded from sensory engagements, and all unwholesome states have been abandoned.
- Each level of absorption is characterized by a particular cluster of intensifying factors.
- Besides the four *jhānas*, there are two other sets of states commonly related to the four *jhānas*:
 1. Access to *Jhāna*
 - At the threshold to *jhāna* the five hindrances have been abandoned and the five *jhāna* factors have arisen.
 - Access to *jhāna* and first *jhāna* share the same five basic factors, but are more refined and stable in absorption.
 - A meditator in access to *jhāna* may maintain awareness of changing sensory objects.
 2. Four immaterial *jhānas* are commonly listed after the four *jhānas*
 1. The base of infinite space
 2. The base of infinite consciousness
 3. The base of nothingness
 4. The base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception

More details and practical instructions are included in *Focused And Fearless: A Meditator's Guide to States of Deep Joy, Calm, And Clarity*, by Shaila Catherine, published by Wisdom Publications, 2008.

<i>Jhānas</i>	Factors abandoned	Factors acquired or intensified	Notes
The first <i>jhāna</i>	Five hindrances: 1. Sloth and torpor 2. Doubt 3. Ill will / aversion 4. Restlessness 5. Greed / sensual desire	Five <i>Jhāna</i> factors: 1. Applied thought 2. Sustained thought 3. Rapture 4. Happiness 5. One-pointedness of the mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five hindrances are opposed to the five <i>jhāna</i> factors. • Characterized by rapture and happiness born of seclusion • Commentarial teachings and just a few <i>suttas</i> specifically list one-pointedness as a feature of first <i>jhāna</i>; <i>many suttas</i> omit explicit reference to the factor one-pointedness.
The second <i>jhāna</i>	1. Applied thought 2. Sustained thought	1. Rapture 2. Happiness 3. One-pointedness of the mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappearance of applied and sustained thought • Characterized by delight and happiness born of concentration
The third <i>jhāna</i>	Rapture	1. Subtle happiness 2. One-pointedness of the mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapture fades, revealing a quiet, subtle, and pervasive happiness. • Characterized by the subtle enjoyment of a mind that is mindful and equanimous
The fourth <i>jhāna</i>	Happiness	1. One-pointedness of the mind 2. Equanimity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness is replaced by equanimity. The mind is profoundly stable, still, and equanimous. • Mindfulness is purified by equanimity.

Four Stages of Enlightenment

Key points

- Four Stages of Enlightenment are also referred to as the Supramundane *Jhānas* or Four Paths.
- The four stages/paths of enlightenment represent a gradual purification in which the ten fetters are reduced and eradicated.
- Entry into the stream of the *Dhamma* happens when consciousness takes *Nibbāna* as object.
- All four paths/stages take *Nibbāna* as the object of consciousness

Stages/Paths	Pali names	Fetters removed or reduced	Maximum number of lifetimes between this stage & final liberation
The path of stream-entry	<i>Sotapatti</i>	Removes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the erroneous view of self 2. doubt regarding the efficacy of Buddha's teaching 3. belief that purification comes through performing rites and rituals 	Has maximum of seven rebirths into happy realms of human or heavenly worlds before final deliverance
The path of the once-returner	<i>Sakadagami</i>	Does not cut off any fetters completely, but greatly reduces sensual desires and ill will	May return to this world only one more time before reaching final liberation
The path of the non-returner	<i>Anagami</i>	Completely cuts off sense desire and ill will	Will never again take rebirth in the sense-sphere before attaining final liberation
The path of arahantship	<i>Arahant</i>	Removes the remaining five fetters: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. desire for existence in the fine-material sphere 2. desire for existence in the immaterial spheres 3. conceit 4. restlessness 5. ignorance 	This final stage concludes the round of rebirths and puts an end to the cycle of suffering

Five Precepts

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Five Precepts

Precept in English	Precept in Pali	Notes
1. I undertake to keep the precept of refraining from killing any living being.	<i>Pānātipātā Veramanī-Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi</i>	In respect to the lives of others, one must not deliberately kill any living creature. By observing the first precept, one cultivates the attitude of loving kindness by wishing other beings be free from harm.
2. I undertake to keep the precept of refraining from stealing or taking what is not given.	<i>Adinnādānā Veramanī-Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi</i>	In respect to others, one should practice generosity, and not take the property of others through force, theft, trickery, or fraud.
3. I undertake to keep the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct.	<i>Kamasu Micchaccara Veramanī-Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi</i>	One abstains from sexual behavior that causes pain, suffering or injury to others, including sexual activity that is damaging to relationships.
4. I undertake to keep the precept of refraining from wrongful speech.	<i>Musāvādā Veramanī-Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi</i>	One abstains from speech that conveys lies, half-truths, idle gossip, slander, negativity, that is mean-spirited, malicious, harsh, or promotes disharmony. Speech that is encouraged is true, timely, useful, and motivated by kindness.
5. I undertake to keep the precept of refraining from intoxicants that cloud the mind or cause heedlessness.	<i>Surā-Meraya-Majjapamādatthānā Veramanī-Sikkhāpadam Samādiyāmi</i>	Ingestion of intoxicants that cloud the mind, such as drugs, or alcohol, neither promotes mindful behavior nor enables the development of awareness. Breaching this precept weakens our resolve and facilitates the breaking of the other precepts.
I undertake these five precepts	<i>Imam Pañcha Sīlam Samādiyāmi</i>	The precepts are not intended as moralistic commandments, but rather as a support for living in concord and as guidelines for training ourselves in virtue, clarity, and ethical conduct.

Three Characteristics

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Three Characteristics

Key points

- These three qualities are what meditators contemplate in insight (*vipassanā*) meditation. Seeing experience in terms of these three characteristics is seeing things as they actually are—impermanent, unsatisfactory, and devoid of fixed essence (self).
- The clear perception of the impermanence (*anicca*) of phenomena leads to insights into the unsatisfactory and empty nature of things.

Three Characteristics	Notes (See also <i>The Noble Eightfold Path—Right View</i>)	Detailed contemplation (See the <i>Visuddhimagga</i> , Chapter XX, 18-20)
1. <i>Anicca</i> — impermanence	All conditioned phenomena (<i>sankhāra</i>) are impermanent, momentary, and ever-changing. In meditation, we observe the ceaseless arising and passing away of the Five Aggregates (<i>khandha</i>) of form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.	10 terms: impermanence, disintegrating, fickle, perishable, unenduring, of a changing nature, coreless, extinguishable, of a mortal nature, formed
2. <i>Dukkha</i> — unsatisfactoriness	Usually translated as “suffering” or “distress,” <i>dukkha</i> refers to both the gross and subtle unsatisfactoriness of the Five Aggregates. Mental and physical processes do not provide lasting happiness. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Dukkha-dukkha</i>—Ordinary suffering; physical pain and mental stress. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair; association with the unloved; separation from the loved; and not getting what one wants.2. <i>Vipariṇāma-dukkha</i>—Suffering as produced by change. Even pleasant phenomena are bound to change or end; this suffering is our reaction to the ending of pleasant phenomena, and the stress of uncertainty as things change.3. <i>Sankhārā-dukkha</i>—Suffering as conditions; also described as suffering inherent in the nature of our existence itself, or the suffering of constructions. Associated with the creation of self, this aspect of <i>dukkha</i> often manifests through the mind’s tendency to establish concepts and construct a storyline obscuring the incessantly changing, and empty nature of all conditioned phenomena. To grasp this dimension of <i>dukkha</i> is to realize that we are part of a world compounded of unstable conditions, in which pain and pleasure, happiness and suffering are all bound up together in various ways.	25 terms: suffering, a disease, a misery, a tumor, a dart, an affliction, a disaster, a fearsome thing, a plague, a menace, no protection, no shelter, no refuge, murderous, the root of calamity, a danger, tainted, Mara’s bait, of a born nature, of an ageing nature, of an ailing nature, of a sorrowful nature, of a lamentable nature, of a despairing nature, of a defiled nature

Three Characteristics

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Three Characteristics	Notes <i>(See also The Noble Eightfold Path—Right View)</i>	Detailed contemplation <i>(See the Visuddhimagga, Chapter XX, 18-20)</i>
3. <i>Anatta</i> —not-self	<p>To qualify as a “self” (soul, essence, atman, etc), something must have a permanent, fixed quality and be under the control of a person. The insight into <i>anicca</i> denies both of these factors – all elements of experience are impermanent and ever-shifting. There is nowhere to stand, and nothing that can claim to ultimately be I, me, or mine.</p> <p>While <i>anicca</i> and <i>dukkha</i> apply to conditioned phenomena (<i>sankhāra</i>), <i>anatta</i> applies to <i>all</i> phenomena (<i>dhammas</i>) – that is, even <i>Nibbāna</i>, although unchanging, is devoid of self.</p>	5 terms: not-self, void, alien, empty, in vain.

Three Refuges

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Three Refuges

Key Ideas:

- These are also referred to in Buddhist scripture as Threefold Refuge, Three Jewels, Triple Treasure, Triple Gem, emphasizing that the refuges are precious, beautiful resources. It is a common practice to “take the Refuges” as part of many Buddhist ceremonies.
- The act of taking refuge in the three “jewels” is the traditional expression of one’s commitment to or one’s faith in the Buddhist path. Faith here operates in its affective mode, as a positive emotional response to someone or something one has heard or learned. It is confidence that there is a path leading to the cessation of suffering and that this path has been realized by the Buddha and his followers. This is significantly different from “belief,” which is a matter of intellectual assent to certain propositions or statements about the world, of which one does not, or cannot, have direct knowledge.

Refuges in English	Refuges in Pali	Notes
1. I go for refuge in the <i>Buddha</i> .	<i>Buddham saranam gacchāmi</i>	The Buddha is not seen as a deity whose presence provides refuge. Instead one finds inspiration in the fact that the Buddha, a human like ourselves, became enlightened by developing his own qualities. One may take refuge in following that same path. Refuge may be found when one observes the growth of wisdom and compassion that accompanies steady practice of the Buddha’s teachings. Refuge might also be found in the awakened mind, which arises from insight into reality. Taking refuge in the Buddha is taking refuge in the possibility of awakening.
2. I go for refuge in the <i>Dhamma</i> .	<i>Dhammam saranam gacchāmi</i>	<i>Dhamma</i> has many meanings, but often refers to the teachings of the Buddha. Understanding of <i>dhamma</i> comes from listening to talks, reading books, and attending retreats. <i>Dhamma</i> becomes a refuge when we direct our actions to accord with Buddha’s teachings and observe that our suffering lessens. <i>Dhamma</i> can also refer to reality, the way things are. A steady practice of the Buddha’s teachings enables one to see more clearly the reality underlying experience.
3. I go for refuge in the <i>Sangha</i> .	<i>Sangham saranam gacchāmi</i>	<i>Sangha</i> originally referred to the enlightened community of men and women awakened through the Buddha’s teachings. It is a term traditionally applied to communities devoted to living according to the Buddha’s teachings, both monastic and lay. Current usage enlarges the understanding of <i>sangha</i> to include all people who study the Buddha’s path and guide their lives by his teachings. Refuge can be found in the knowledge and support one finds among these teachers and fellow practitioners.

Four Divine Abodes (*Brahma-vihāras*)

Key points

- The *Brahma-vihāras* (“divine abidings”) are also called the Four Immeasurables or Four Boundless Qualities.
- They form one group of ancient meditation practices that the Theravada meditation manuals accommodate to the scheme of the *jhānas*, but it has been argued that they were originally conceived as a path to awakening in their own right.
- They are noble altruistic attitudes toward living beings and wholesome states of mind.

English	Pali	Defining Feature	Near Enemy: <i>A deceptively similar quality mistaken for the original</i>	Far Enemy: <i>The opposite quality</i>	Notes	Highest Level of <i>Jhāna</i>
Loving-kindness	<i>Mettā</i>	Intention of good will; the wish for the welfare and happiness of all beings.	Attachment, greed	Hatred, ill will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counters aversion • Appreciates things as they are 	Suitable object for first, second and third <i>jhānas</i>
Compassion	<i>Karuṇā</i>	Wish to alleviate suffering	Pity, grief	Cruelty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counters fear, ignorance • Accepts things as they are 	Suitable object for first, second and third <i>jhānas</i>
Sympathetic or Altruistic Joy	<i>Muditā</i>	Rejoicing in the success of others; appreciation, joy at others good fortune	Joy tinged with insincerity or personal identification; forms of joy that are excessive such as elation, exuberance	Envy, jealousy, aversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counters comparison, and boredom • Enjoys things as they are 	Suitable object for first, second and third <i>jhānas</i>
Equanimity	<i>Upekkhā</i>	Seeing equality in beings, balanced, non-reactive, non-partial, awareness; quieting of resentment and approval	Indifference, foolish unknowing	Greed, taking of sides, partiality, resentment, reactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counters indifference, anxiety, and pride • Sees things as they are 	Suitable object for fourth <i>jhāna</i>

Suitable Phrases

- ***Mettā***: May you be free from danger and harm. May you be happy, free from mental distress. May you be healthy, free from illness and pain. May you live with ease.
- ***Karuṇā***: May you be free from suffering. May you be at peace.
- ***Muditā***: May your good fortune and success continue. May your happiness never end.
- ***Upekkhā***: All beings are the heirs of their own action. Their happiness and unhappiness depends upon their actions, not my wishes for them.