

Thirty-Seven Aspects of the Path to Enlightenment

The thirty-seven aspects of the path to enlightenment are divided into seven groups. They provide *a general structure of the entire Buddhist path*.

In fact, the thirty-seven aspects are an integral framework for anyone who is studying Buddhism, since they clearly show what is needed, and at what stage, on the journey to enlightenment.

Starting from the first group, the four mindfulnesses, up to the last group, the noble eightfold path, everything about the thirty-seven aspects is related to the four noble truths, and the practices associated with each of the thirty-seven aspects are tools that can take us from where we are now all the way up to enlightenment.

The thirty-seven aspects of the Path to Enlightenment are:

- Four mindfulnesses
- Four complete abandonments
- Four factors of miraculous powers
- Five faculties
- Five powers
- Seven branches of the path to enlightenment
- The noble eightfold path

In some Buddhist traditions, it may seem on the surface that these practices are not essential, as they may not be emphasized in the particular tradition. But in reality, they are vital. *They are the basic structure of any Buddhist practice.*

The six perfections, and the four means of drawing students to the Dharma, are advanced and are in addition to these thirty-seven aspects, not substitutes for them.

The six perfections (Skt. *paramitas*) are:

- Generosity
- Ethics
- Patience
- Joyous effort
- Concentration
- Wisdom (realizing emptiness)

The four means of drawing sentient beings are:

- Giving (Dharma, resources, protection from harm, loving kindness)
- Speaking kind words
- Teaching according to the level of the student
- Practicing what you teach

Source: Tsering, Geshe Tashi. *Relative Truth, Ultimate Truth* (The Foundation of Buddhist Thought, Volume 2). Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2008. (Pages 39-40.)