The seven sets

1. The contemplation of the body (kāyānupassanā);
2. The contemplation of feeling (vedanā'nupassanā);
3. The contemplation of mind (cittānupassanā);
4. The contemplation of phenomena (dhammānupassanā).

The four right efforts (samma-paṭipadā) [SD 10.2]
[5] 1. the effort to prevent unarisen evil states from arising (sāmīvara paṭipadā);
[6] 2. the effort to abandon arisen evil states (pahāna paṭipadā);
[7] 3. the effort to cultivate unarisen wholesome states (bhāvanā paṭipadā); and
[8] 4. the effort to maintain arisen wholesome states (anurakkhaṇā paṭipadā).

The four paths to spiritual power (iddhi, pāda) [SD 10.3]
[9] 1. the desire to act (chanda);
[10] 2. effort (viriya);
[11] 3. mind or consciousness (citta); and

The five spiritual faculties (pañc'indriya) [SD 10.4]
[13] 1. faith (saddh'indriya);
[14] 2. effort (viriya 'indriya);
[15] 3. mindfulness (sati 'indriya i);
[16] 4. concentration (samādhi); and
[17] 5. wisdom (paññ'indriya).

The five spiritual powers (pañca, bala) [SD 10.5]
[18] 1. faith (saddhā bala);
[19] 2. effort (viriya bala);
[20] 3. mindfulness (sati bala);
[21] 4. concentration (samādhi bala); and
[22] 5. wisdom (paññā bala).

The seven awakening factors (satta bojjha) [SD 10.15]
[23] 1. mindfulness (sati sambojjhaṇa);
[24] 2. investigation of states (dhamma,vicaya sambojjhaṇa);
[25] 3. effort (viriya sambojjhaṇa);
[26] 4. zest (joyful interest) (pīti sambojjhaṇa);
[27] 5. tranquillity (passaddhi sambojjhaṇa); and
[28] 6. concentration (samādhi sambojjhaṇa); and
[29] 7. equanimity (upekkhā sambojjhaṇa).

The noble eightfold path (ariyo atth'angika magga) [SD 6.10]
[30] 1. right view (sammā diṭṭhi);
[31] 2. right thought (sammā sankappa);
[32] 3. right speech (sammā vācā);
[33] 4. right action (sammā kammantā);
[34] 5. right livelihood (sammā ajīva);
[35] 6. right effort (sammā vāyāma);
[36] 7. right mindfulness (sammā saṭṭi); and
[37] 8. right concentration (sammā samādhi).

This section is a revised version of §§10bc of Mahāparinibbāna S (D 16) = SD 9 & Intro to Mahā Sakul'udāyi S (M 77.15-21) = SD 6.18 Intro. The latter sutta lists the 7 sets.
1.1 THE SEVEN SETS IN THE NIKĀYAS. Although Buddhism today has evolved into a religion of the book, like all the other world religions today, early Buddhism, however, is founded on the oral tradition, that has two vital features, namely, a direct teacher-pupil communication of teachings and experiences, and the precedence of personal insight over textual tradition. This is not to say that the text (here, the Pali Canon, for example) has no role in the spiritual life, but that the dead letters only become living word only through some level of inner calm and insight.

In theoretical terms, that is, in terms of doctrines, the essence of the early Buddhist teachings are found in what are today known as “the seven sets,” that collectively comprise what are known as the 37 limbs of awakening (bodhi, pakkhiya, dhammā) [2]. This set of teachings forms the heart of Buddhist doctrine as found in the Nikāyas. The 37 factors leading to awakening in the form of a set of seven teachings as tools in the preservation of the Teaching are also found in a number of other suttas, such as

the Sāmpasādaniya Sutta (D 28/3:99-116),
the Pāsādika Sutta (D 29/3:117-141),
the Kin,ti Sutta (M 103/2:238-243), and
the Sāmaġāma Sutta (M 104/2:243-251).

Rupert Gethin’s The Buddhist Path to Awakening (2001) is a monograph on the 37 factors leading to awakening and he discusses them by way of these “seven sets” of teachings. The best known text that mentions the seven sets is the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (D 16), which recounts how the Buddha, staying at the Hall of the Gabled House (kāṭāṅgāra, sāḷā) in the Great Wood, mentions the seven sets.

3.50a Then the Blessed One, along with the venerable Ānanda, went to the Hall of the Gabled House in the Great Wood. Having reached there, he sat down on the prepared seat. Thus seated down, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

3.50b “For this reason, monks, whatever teachings that have been shown to you by me through direct knowledge, you should learn them well, associate with them, cultivate them, develop them, so that the holy life will last long, so that it will stand long, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans!

What are the teachings that have been shown to you by me through direct knowledge, you should learn them well, associate with them, cultivate them, develop them, so that the holy life will last long, so that it will stand long, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans?

They [the teachings] are as follows:
the four focusses of mindfulness (cattāro satipaṭṭhānā).
the four right efforts (samma-pādānā).
the four paths to spiritual power (iddhi, pādā).
the five spiritual faculties (pañca indriyānī).
the five spiritual powers (pañca balāṇī).

3 See SD 9.10d below & Gethin 2001:232-240 for a useful discussion.
4 D 16.3.50/2:119 f.
5 On this mūrīkā (matrix) of the seven sets, see SD 9.10bc.
7 See V 1:22; D 2:120; M 3:296, 2:96; A 2:74, 15 f. See SD 10.2.
8 See D 2:213, 221; M 1:103 = 2:11; A 1:39, 297, 2:256, 3:82; Vbh 213. See SD 10.3.
9 See M 1:295; S 3:46; 225, 4:168; A 2:151. See foll n & SD 10.4.
10 See D 2:120, 239; M 2:12, 3:296; S 3:96, 153, 4:366; A 3:10, 12; Vbh 342. See SD 10.5.

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The limbs of awakening

The seven awakening factors (satta bojjhāṅgā).11
the noble eightfold path (ariyo āṭṭh’ angiko maggo).12

These, monks, are the teachings that have been shown to you by me through direct knowledge, you should learn them well, associate with them, cultivate them, develop them, so that the holy life will last long, so that it will stand long, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and humans.”13 (D 16.3.50/2:119 f)

1.2 THE SEVEN SETS IN THE MAHĀPARINIRVĀṆA SŪTRAS. The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta and its Sanskrit versions, including its Chinese and Tibetan translations,14 “apparently include a version of the present incident, namely, a summary of the Buddha’s teaching based on the seven sets and given by the Buddha in the context of the announcement of his imminent parinirvāṇa” (Gethin 2001:231). Gethin goes on to set out the Mūlasarvāstivādin version to show both a basic correspondence with the Pāli version as well as interesting variations in details as follows:

Then the Blessed One went to the meeting hall. Having reached there, he sat down on the prepared seat before the order of monks. Seated thus, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Impermanent are all formations [conditions], monks, they are unstable, uncertain, their nature is to change. To that extent, monks, enough with the forming of all formations, one should let go (of them). Therefore, monks, those dharmas which conduce to good and happiness here and now, to good and happiness in the future—having grasped and mastered them, monks should thus preserve them, give instruction in them, teach them, so that the holy life might endure long; this will be for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, good and happiness of devas and humans. And what are those dharmas...? Just these, the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right efforts [abandonings?], the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, the noble eightfold path.”15

Gethin notes that the opening formula of this Mūlasarvāstivādin version “seems to parallel in spirit what comes at the close of the Pāli passage” (2001:232).16 The above Mūlasarvāstivādin excerpt is also found in another context, namely, that of the Buddha’s first illness and his remarking about the closed first of the teacher [2.23-25]. Gethin mentions that the lacuna in the Sanskrit manuscript here and quotes Snellgrove’s translation from the Tibetan to fill this gap:

Ananda, I do not have the idea that the order of monks is mine, that I must cleave to the order and lead it, so how should I have a last exhortation, even a slight one, with which to instruct...

12 See D 1:256 f, 165, 312; M 1:61, 118, 3:251; It 18; Sn 1130; Vbh 235.
13 On the central importance of these 7 sets, see Intro (10c) above.
14 André Bareau [5 above] has given a detailed analysis of the various Parinirvāna traditions.
16 He also notes that two other sections of this excerpt are found to parallel two passages in other parts of the Pāli Canon. He notes that this is rare. (Gethin 2002:232)
the order? Whatever teachings I have had which were relevant to the order of monks, I have already taught them as the principles which must be practised, namely, [the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, the noble eightfold path]. As Buddha I do not have the closed-fistedness of a teacher who thinks he must conceal things as unsuitable to others.

(Snellgrove, BSOAS 36, 1973:401)

1.3 The Seven Sets and the Great References. As a tool for settling doctrinal disputes and preserving the Teaching, the seven sets are at the heart of the “great references” (mahāpadesā). The oldest set of the great references serving as quality control in the transmission of the Dharma is evidently that found in the Pāśādika Sutta (D 3:128) of the Dīgha Nikāya. The Sutta opens immediately after the death of “Nigāṇṭha Nātaputta,” when quarrels and disagreement split the Jain community. In this connection, the Buddha exhorts Cunda Samaṇḍuddesa18 thus:

Cunda, one would be speaking rightly to say thus of this [life and Dharma]:19 “The holy life is well proclaimed—accomplished and complete in every respect, without deficiency, without excess, well taught, whole and complete.” Therefore, Cunda, all of you to whom I have taught these truths that I have directly known should gather together and recite them, comparing meaning with meaning, comparing text with text [comparing spirit with spirit, letter with letter], without dissension [without quarrelling], so that this holy life might endure and stand for a long time for the profit of the many, the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, and for the benefit, profit and happiness of devas and humans.

And what are the things that you should recite together? They are [the 37 factors leading to awakening], namely, [the seven sets:]20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the four focusses of mindfulness</td>
<td>(cattāro satipaṭṭhānā).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the four right efforts</td>
<td>(samma-papadhānā).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the four paths to spiritual power</td>
<td>(iddhi-pādā).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the five spiritual faculties</td>
<td>(pañc’indriyāni).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the five spiritual powers</td>
<td>(pañca-balānī).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the seven awakening factors</td>
<td>(satta bojjhangā).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the noble eightfold path</td>
<td>(ariyo atṭh’angiko maggo).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(D 29.16-18/3:127 f).

The emphasis here is on avoiding dispute and reaching clear agreement: the monks should not quarrel, and should not allow the teaching to be distorted.21 Paralleling the four great references, the procedure laid out by the Pāśādika Sutta is as follows:

22 And, Cunda, having assembled in harmony and without dissension, you should train yourselves thus—

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17 See Mahāparinibbāna S (D 16) = SD 9.11b.
18 The younger brother of Sāriputta.
19 Amplification following DA 3:911.
20 These seven sets are given in full in Sakul’udāyi S (M 77.15-21/2:11 f) = SD 6.18 (2004) and as practised by various monks, in Ānāpāna,sati S (M 118.13/3:81) = SD 7.13.
22 Tesañ ca vo Cunda samaggānaṁ sammodamānaṁ avivadamānaṁ sīkkhitabbāni, aṭṭhataro sabrahmacārī sanghe dhammaṁ bhāseyya. Tatra ca tumhākaṁ evam assa—1. atthaṁ c’eva miccaṁ gaṁhāti, vyaṁjanāni ca miccaṁ ropeṭi ti…; 2. atthaṁ hi kho miccaṁ gaṁhāti, vyaṁjanāni ca miccaṁ ropeṭi ti…; 3. atthaṁ hi kho sammā
1. If, Cunda, some other colleague in the holy life were to speak Dharma in the assembly, if you should think that he has both grasped the sense wrongly and worded it wrongly, you should neither approve of it nor reject it, but should say to him: “Regarding this sense, friend, this word or that is more appropriate? Regarding this wording, this sense or that sense is more appropriate?”

2. … he has grasped the sense wrongly but has worded it rightly,…

3. … he has grasped the sense rightly but has worded it wrongly,— you should explain the correct meaning and wording to him carefully.

4. … but if you think that he has both grasped the sense rightly and worded it rightly, you should approve of his word, rejoice in it, saying, “Sadhu! [Excellent!]” Having approved of his word, having rejoiced in it, you should applaud and rejoice in him, saying, “It is a fortune for us, friend, a great fortune for us, friend, that we see such a venerable companion in the holy life who is well versed in both the spirit and the letter!” (D 29.18-21/3:129; abridged)

1.4 THE SEVEN SETS IN THE SĀMAGĀMA SUTTA. The Sāmagāma Sutta (M 104) is a sort of Majjhima Nikāya version of the Pāsādika Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya. Both Suttas open with mentioning the Buddha dwelling among the Sakyas, immediately after the death of the Jain leader, Nigantha Nātaputta (or Mahāvīra), when quarrels and disagreement split the Jain community. In both Suttas, both Cunda and Ānanda mention the incident to the Buddha. In the Sāmagāma Sutta, however, Ānanda concludes with a more specific point, and the Buddha responds:

[Ānanda:] “This occurs to me, venerable sir: Let not a dispute arise in the Sangha after the passing away of the Blessed One. Such a dispute would be to the detriment of the many, the unhappiness of the many, the loss, detriment and suffering of devas and humans.”

[The Buddha:] “What do you think, Ānanda? Those things that I have directly known and taught you, namely, the four focusses of mindfulness…the noble eightfold path—Ānanda, do you see any two monks who have differing opinions regarding them?” (M 104.4/2:245)

Ānanda replies no but suggests that after the Buddha’s passing those who live taking him as their refuge might become involved in dispute “in connection with livelihood” (ajjhājīva) and “in connection with the code of discipline” (adhipātimokkha), and that this would be to the disadvantage of the many. The Buddha, however, replies:

“Ānanda, a dispute about livelihood or about the Pātimokkha would be trifling. But, Ānanda, should there arise in the Sangha a dispute about the path or the way, such a dispute would be to the detriment of the many, the unhappiness of the many, the loss, detriment and suffering of devas and humans!” (M 104.5/2:245)
1.5 THE SEVEN SETS IN THE KIN’TI SUTTA. Similarly, the Kin’ti Sutta (M 103/2:238-243), focussing on the centrality of the seven sets forming the 37 “factors leading to awakening,” teaches ways of overcoming any disagreement regarding the spirit and the letter of the Dharma. The Sutta opens with the Buddha declaring:

Monks, what do you think of me? That the recluse Gotama teaches Dharma for the sake of robes? Or, that the recluse Gotama teaches Dharma for the sake of almsfood? Or, that the recluse Gotama teaches Dharma for the sake of lodgings? Or, that the recluse Gotama teaches Dharma for the sake of this or that existence [different states of being]? (M 103.2/2:238)

The monks reply that the Buddha “is compassionate, one seeks after our good; he teaches the Dharma out of compassion.”

“Therefore, monks, those things that I have directly known and taught you, namely, the four focusses of mindfulness…the noble eightfold path—in these things you should all train yourself in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing.

While you are training yourselves in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, let not any two monks differ in opinions regarding the Dharma (abhidhamme).” (M 103.3-4/2:239)

The Buddha then shows how to deal with possible areas of discord: where there is disagreement about the meaning (attha) and the wording (vyāñjana), that is, both together and each separately; where a monk commits some offence (āpatti) or transgression (vīkkama); where argument and ill feeling exist between groups (M 103.5-7/2:239-243).

As the 37 “actors leading to awakening,” the seven sets constitute the “path cultivation” (magga-bhāvanā) (V 3:93, 4:126), a fact also reflected in the Abhidharma,kośa Bhāṣya. It is clear, therefore, as Gethin wisely observes (referring to “the Dharma Mirror”), that the appeal to the seven sets of teachings,

is not an appeal to dhammas as “teachings” or “doctrines”—at least not in the limited sense of a body of teachings or doctrines that can exist apart from the actual path and way. The nature of the appeal to the seven sets is a matter of appeal to practice and experience rather than an appeal to theory and scripture. The appeal ultimately rests on the fact that the seven sets embrace dhammas that the bhikkhu [or practitioner] can gain personal direct knowledge of, they constitute dhamma that is “to be known by the wise each one for himself” (paccattāni veditabbo viññāhi). (Gethin 2001:236)

Gethin follows with an instructive discussion on the seven sets which should be fully read (2001:236-263).

This important list of dharmas forms the matrix (māṭikā/māṭrākā), defined thus in the Dictionary of Buddhism:

a rubric or tabulated summary of contents used in the philosophical sections of the books of the Abhidharma Piṭaka. Originally a Vinaya term, used in the singular (Pāli, māṭikā), it meant a keyword. Used in the plural (also māṭikā), it means the keywords for a topic, and hence a list.

In other words, they are the living essence of the Buddha’s Teaching. The Abhidharma,kośa Bhāṣya refers these dharmas as that aspect of the True Teaching (saddharma) pertaining to realization (adhi-gama). The teachings of the Sūtra, the Vinaya and the Abhidharma, on the other hand are the “tradi-

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28 D 16.2.9/ 2:93; also Nm 1:132.
The 37 limbs of awakening

2 The 37 limbs of awakening

2.1 The “limbs” in the Pali Canon. The Pali term bodhi, pakkhyā, dhammā literally means “states on the side of awakening,” that is, they are conducive to spiritual development and help one to gain awakening. Although the phrase is very rare in the Suttas, it is a common term for the 37 factors, which is a comprehensive list of the Buddha’s teaching in terms of doctrine, found in a number of early Sūtras and Vinaya texts. These factors are sometimes translated as “requisites of awakening” because they conduce to the attainment of awakening, that is, the knowledge of the four supramundane paths (stream-winning, once-return, non-return, arhathood). These 37 factors are divided into 7 sets, which we will look at in this study.

The 37 limbs of awakening (sattatīni bodhi, pakkhyā dhammā) are mentioned as a set some 74 times in the Vinaya Pitaka and the Nikāyas, representing some 27 distinct occasions when these 7 sets of teachings are cited. In the Mahā Sakul’udāyī Sutta (M 77), five reasons are given why the Buddha’s disciples esteem and rely on him (M 77.10/2:9). The fifth of these reasons is that the Buddha explains to his disciples the various spiritual paths. The first 7 sections [§§15-21] of this teaching deal with wholesome states that are as a set is known as “the limbs of awakening,” but not so mention-
ed there. These limbs are explained in the Visuddhi,magga as comprising the following seven sets of dhammas [1].34

2.2 Importance of the “7 Sets” Formula. As mentioned earlier, the list of the 7 sets are found in a number of early Buddhist Sūtras and Vinaya texts [1.1]. These 7 sets in fact form the Buddha’s teaching in a nutshell, his central teachings common to all the early schools.35 Johannes Bronkhorst goes on to note that

It seems clear that this is an early, perhaps the earliest, list of the type that came to be called mātraka/ mātikā and formed the basis for the later Abhidharma works. The connexion between this list and Abhidharma seems confirmed by a passage in the Kinti Sutta (M 2:239) which speaks of monks who have been trained in the items of this list and then disagree about Abhidharma.36 (Bronkhorst, “Dharma and Abhidharma,” 1985:305)

The Kinti Sutta (M 103) records that the Buddha, after listing the 7 sets, declares to the monks (and all practitioners) that

in these things you should all train in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing.

While you are training in concord, with mutual appreciation, without disputing, two monks might make different assertions with regard to the Dharma (abhidhamme)…

(M 103.3-4/2:239 f)

The Buddha goes on to point out how the monks should settle any differences regarding the spirit [meaning] (attha) or the letter [phrasing] (vyañjana) of the teaching by amicably reasoning them out. The Majjhima Commentary glosses abhidhamme as referring to the 7 sets (MA 4:29). This important passage on the resolution of doctrinal problems is a good example of early Buddhist hermeneutics is found in a slightly expanded version in the Pāsādika Sutta (D 29).38

The Four Focusses of Mindfulness are:

1. the contemplation of the body (kāyānupassanā);
2. the contemplation of feeling (vedanā'nupassanā);
3. the contemplation of mind (cittānupassanā) and
4. the contemplation of phenomena (dhammānupassana).

The four focusses of mindfulness form a complete system of mindfulness (“meditation”) practice for the development of calm and insight. The method is given at length in the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna

3 Satipaṭṭhāna

Satipaṭṭhāna is properly resolved as sati (mindfulness) + upaṭṭhāna (application), although pat-thāna (setting up, foundation), too, gives it a similar sense. In practical terms, the word “focus” best describes both the actions and the results when satipaṭṭhāna is applied. The four focusses of mindfulness are:

34 Vism 22.33-43/678-682. For a study of these sets, see SD 10. The mnemonic for memorizing this set of 7 is “Triple 4, double 5, 7-8”.
36 “Perhaps abhi-dhamme in this passage must be understood as two words, ‘as regards the dhamma’; cf CPD sv abhidhamma.” (Bronkhorst’s fn)
37 M 103.5-8/2:239-241.
38 D 29.18-21/3:128 f. Another famous early hermeneutical tool are the four “great references” (mahāpadesa), of which there are two, the Vinaya version (V 1:250, 2:118) and the Sutta version (D 16.4.7-11/2:123 f; A 4.180/2:167-170). See Mahā Parinibbāna S (D 16) = SD 9 Intro (11).
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Sutta (D 22) and the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (M 10), and mentioned in a collection of short suttas forming the Satipaṭṭhāna Saṁyutta (S 47). 39

4 Padhāna

Padhāna is a synonym of vāyāma, both meaning “effort” (viriya). 40 While the former, as samma-p.padhāna, is used for the four right (or “supreme”) efforts as an independent set (as in the Mahā Sakul’udāyi Sutta, M 77), the latter, sammā,vāyāma is applied only as a subset (the sixth factor) of the noble eightfold path. It is actually only one mental factor, effort (viriya), but performs four functions. The four right efforts or endeavours are:

[5] 1. the effort to prevent unarisen evil states from arising (saṁvara padhāna);
[6] 2. the effort to abandon arisen evil states (pahāna padhāna);
[7] 3. the effort to cultivate unarisen wholesome states (bhāvanā padhāna); and
[8] 4. the effort to maintain the arisen wholesome states (anurakkhanā padhāna).

The commentarial listing inverts the first two efforts. 41

The 4 right endeavours are explained in the Samma-p.padhāna Vibhaṅga 42 and fully commented on in its Commentary. 43

5 Iddhi, pāda

The word iddhi here signifies all spiritual and supramundane states that one needs to master in the practice of the Buddha’s teaching. The main method of mastering the Buddha’s teaching is called the bases of spiritual success (iddhi, pāda), also variously translated as “the means of accomplishment” and “the path to spiritual power.” 46 The four bases of spiritual success are:

[9] 1. the desire to act (chanda);
[10] 2. effort (viriya);
[11] 3. mind or consciousness (citta); and

In post-canonical Buddhist psychology, they are also called “the four predominants” (cattāro adhipati), that is, factors that dominate their conascent states (that arise together) in undertaking and accomplishing difficult or important tasks. A predominant has total control of the whole citta (mind-moment), while a faculty (indriya) [5] controls only in its respective sphere. As such, several faculties may be present in a single citta, but only one predominant can be present at any time. 47

The iddhi, pāda exists on both mundane and supramundane states. 48 On a more worldly level, the iddhi, pāda are the “steps to success.” First step to success is a proactive attitude, the desire to act. This


40 This dharma is discussed further in SD 10.2.

41 Eg Abhs 7.6 = Abhs:SR 179 = Abhs:BRS 279. For the Pāli, see §16n below.

42 Vbh ch 8/208-215.

43 VbhA 288-302.

44 MA 3:243 ff.

45 A 2.1/1:47-49; AA 2:93.

46 This dharma is discussed further in SD 10.3.

47 The four predominants (adhipati) are the mental concomitants (cetasika) desire (chanda, the desire to act), effort (viriya), consciousness (citta), and investigation (vīmānsā, ie wisdom). See A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma (Abhs:BRS) 274 ff for other details.

should be followed up with the proper effort, and the perseverance of a mind fixed on the goal. As the effort progress, one should examine one’s progress and adjust one strategy and energy according to the investigation.

The 4 bases of spiritual success are explained in the *Iddhi,pāda Vibhaṅga* and its Commentary (VbhA 303-308), and briefly commented on in the Commentary to the *Ceto,khila Sutta* (M 16; MA 2:69).

### 6 Indriya

The faculties (*indriya*) and the powers (*bala*) comprise the same five factors, but they function differently:

1. faith (*saddh'indriya*),
2. effort (*viriy'indriya*),
3. mindfulness (*sat'indriya*),
4. concentration (*samādh'indriya*), and
5. wisdom (*paññ'indriya*).

While the “faculties” control their respective sphere, the same “powers” are unshakable by their opposites. As such, the five faculties exercise control in their respective spheres of resolution (*adhimokkha*), exertion (*paggaha*), awareness (*upaṭṭhāna*), non-distraction (*avikkhepa*) and discernment [vision] (*dassana*), which help to overcome their respective opposites of indecision, laziness, heedlessness, agitation and delusion.

In the cultivation of the faculties, that is, in spiritual practice, faith and wisdom are to be balanced so as to avoid blind belief and mere intellectual cleverness; effort and concentration are to be balanced to avoid mental restlessness and sluggishness. Mindfulness is the key factor that keeps all the other factors in balance and harmony.

The 5 spiritual faculties often appear in the Canon but are not explained in detail in the Nikāyas or the Abhidhamma Commentaries and only briefly explained in the *Visuddhi,magga* (Vism 22.35, 37/679).

### 7 Bala

The 5 spiritual powers, like the spiritual faculties, are not dealt with in detail in the Nikāyas or the Abhidhamma Commentaries, and only briefly explained in the *Visuddhi,magga*. Although there is no detailed mention of the spiritual faculties and the spiritual powers in the Vinaya and Nikāyas, they actually constitute some of the most basic Buddhist doctrines as evident from the table in the Introduction above. While a faculty (*indriya*) is essentially active but a power (*bala*) passive, the latter is “unshakable and unassailable by its opposite” (Gethin 2001:145). The five powers are:

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50 This dharma is discussed further in SD 10.4.
51 This dharma is discussed further in SD 10.5.
52 Gethin 2001:355 f (App) gives the occurrences of the spiritual faculties (3/4/5 etc) thus: V 1:294; D 3:239, 278, 284; M 1:19 f, 164, 479; S 5:193-204, 219-243; A 1:42-44, 118 f, 2:141, 149-152, 3:277 f, 281 f, 4:225, 264-266, 5:56; Tha 352, 437, 595, 672, 1114; Thi 170 f. Nm 115, 233; Pm 1-34. Dhs passim; Vbh 122-34; Kvu 589-592; Yam: *Indriya*,yamaka; *Paṭṭika*; Peṭk 37, 41, [48, 51 f, 69.] 71 f, 88, 97 f, 128 f, 171, 183, 185 f; Nett 7, 19, 28, 100 f; Miln 33 ff, 43. Corrections and additions are given within square brackets.
53 Gethin 2001:356 (App) gives the occurrences of the spiritual powers (2/4/5/7 etc) thus: V 1:294; D 3:213, 229, 253; S 5:249-253; A 2:141, 3:10-12, 245, 277 f, 281 f, 4:3 f. Tha 352, 437, 494, 672, 1114; [Thī] 170 f; Nm 14, 151; Pm 2:166-176; Peṭk 37, 79, 179, 189; Nett 100 f. Corrections and additions are given within square brackets.
54 This dharma is discussed further in SD 10.4.
55 Vism 22.36 f/679.
56 On the ubiquity of the spiritual faculties, see Gethin 2001:138-140.
57 See Gethin 2001:140-145.
1. faith (saddhā bala),
2. effort (viriya bala),
3. mindfulness (sati bala),
4. concentration (samādhi bala), and
5. wisdom (paññā bala).

8 Bojjhānga
The 7 awakening factors\(^{58}\) are

1. mindfulness (sati sambojjha);
2. investigation of states (dhamma, vicaya sambojjha);
3. effort (viriya sambojjha);
4. zest (joyful interest) (pīti sambojjha);
5. tranquillity (passaddhi sambojjha); and
6. concentration (samādhi sambojjha); and
7. equanimity (upekkhā sambojjha).

They are explained in the Commentary to the Mūla, pariyāya Sutta (MA 1:82-84). Of the seven factors, “investigation of states” (dhamma, vicaya), that is, insight into material and mental states as they really are, is a designation for wisdom (paññā). “Tranquillity” (passaddhi) means calm both of consciousness (citta, passaddhi) and of the mental body (kāya, passaddhi).\(^{59}\) Equanimity (upekkhā) here means equipoise or mental neutrality (tatra, majjhattatā), one of the universal beautiful (sobhana) cetasikas, and not worldly neutral feeling.

The three factors of investigation (dhamma, vicaya), effort (viriya) and zest (pīti) counteract torpor. The three factors of tranquillity (passaddhi), concentration (samādhi) and equanimity (upekkhā) counteract mental agitation. Mindfulness (sati) keeps the two sets of factors in a harmonious balance.

9 Magga
The noble eightfold path comprises the following factors:

1. right view (sammā diṭṭhi);
2. right thought (sammā saṅkappa);
3. right speech (sammā vācā);
4. right action (sammā kammāntā);
5. right livelihood (sammā ajīva);
6. right effort (sammā vāyāma);
7. right mindfulness (sammā sati); and
8. right concentration (sammā samādhi).

The Mahā Cattārīsaka S (M 117) says that right view (sammā, diṭṭhi) comes first because it underlies each and every other factor, without which, the factor cannot be “right” (sammā), that is, contributive to the going up the path to liberation.\(^{60}\) Right view is also the cetasika of wisdom effecting the proper understanding of the four noble truths. Right thought (or intention) (sammā, saṅkappa) is the cetasika of initial application (vitakka) directed towards renunciation, lovingkindness and non-violence.

Path factors (3)-(5) are identical with the three abstinences (vīrati), that is,

1. Natural abstinence (sampatta, vīrati). This is the abstinence from evil when the opportunity arises to do so, in terms of one social position, age, educational level, etc. For example, one refrains from theft out of the concern that one’s reputation would be hurt if one is caught.

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\(^{58}\) See Gethin 2001:146-189 (ch 5).
\(^{59}\) See Abhs:BRS 85-88, 281.
\(^{60}\) See SD 6.10 (2004).
(2) Abstinence by undertaking (samādāna, virati). This is the abstinence from evil when one has undertaken the precepts, such as the five precepts of abstaining against killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and intoxication.

(3) Abstinence by eradication (samuccheda, virati). This is the abstinence associated with the supramundane path consciousness that arises destroying the disposition towards evil. While the previous two are mundane, this is supramundane.

Each level of abstinence are effected in three ways, that is, by right speech (samma, vācā), right action (samma kammantā), and right livelihood (samma ājīva).

Right effort (samma vāyāma) is the same as the four endeavours (padhāna) [3], also called the four endeavours (samma-p, padhāna). Right mindfulness (samma sati) is the same as the four focusses of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna) [2]. Right concentration (samma samādhi) is defined in terms of the four dhyanas (jhāna) (eg D 22/2:313).

The noble eightfold path is commented on in the Mūla,pariyāya Sutta Commentary (MA 1:105) and very briefly explained from a different angle in the Magga Vibhaṅga Commentary (VbhA 319).

An authoritative monograph on the limbs of awakening is The Buddhist Path to Awakening by Rupert Gethin (2001 esp chs 7-9).

10 The 5 spiritual faculties and the factors of the 7 sets

Thānissaro Bhikkhu, in The Wings of Awakening, presents a table of references for the 7 sets classed under the 5 spiritual faculties (1996:xii), the names of which have been standardized following those used in this series:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty (saddhā)</th>
<th>Right speech</th>
<th>(Noble eightfold path)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right action</td>
<td>Right livelihood</td>
<td>(Noble eightfold path)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeal (desire or will-power)</td>
<td>Right effort</td>
<td>(Noble eightfold path)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort (viriya)</th>
<th>Right effort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four right endeavours</td>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>(Base of spiritual power)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mindfulness (sati)</th>
<th>The 4 focusses of mindfulness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mind (consciousness)</td>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concentration (samādhi)</th>
<th>The 4 bases of spiritual power</th>
<th>(Noble eightfold path)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right concentration</td>
<td>Zest</td>
<td>(Awakening factor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tranquillity</td>
<td>Concentration</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equanimity</td>
<td>Wisdom (paññā)</td>
<td>(Awakening factor)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wisdom (paññā)</th>
<th>Right view</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right thought (intention)</td>
<td>(Noble eightfold path)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Investigation of states
(Awakening factor)
Investigation
(Base of spiritual success)
Equanimity
(Awakening factor)

Bibliography
[See also SD 9 Bibliography.]

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Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu

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61 “Investigation of states,” or “Dharma-analysis.” “Dharma” here refers to physical and mental states.