

Four Right Efforts

Insight Meditation South Bay

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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.