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THE QUINTESENCE OF BUDDHIST RIGHTNESS: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF *BODHIPAKKHIYĀ* *DHAMMĀ*

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The Buddha in his last admonishment directed that 37 factors of Enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma*) are the teachings that should be learned, cultivated, developed, and practiced concomitantly for long endurance and welfare of the multitude of the world. These 37 factors (Dhamma) in 7 sets are the epitome of Buddhist Rightness in both *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna*. Among these factors, the most crucial to learn, cultivate, develop, and practice simultaneously is mindfulness. With developed mindfulness, one regards the essential as ‘essential’ and unessential as ‘unessential’ (*sāraṇ ca sārato ṇātvā, asāraṇca asārato*); which is the core of Buddhist philosophy- see things as they truly are (*yathā- bhūta dassana*). This philosophy was later supported by the Mahayana Buddhist schools as perception is imagination - free and errorless (*kalpanāpoḍhambhrāntam pratyakṣam*). By practicing these 37 factors one can truly realise the central theme of Buddhist moral philosophy – abandon the arisen defilements, prevent the un-risen defilements, develop the un-risen righteousness, and maintain the arisen righteousness. This paper attempts to analyse these 37 factors from the perspective of Buddhist moral philosophy using both *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* sources.

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