

The Eight Realizations Sutra
By Thich Nhat Hanh

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THE FIRST REALIZATION is the awareness that the world is impermanent. All political regimes are subject to fall; all things composed of the four elements are empty and contain the seeds of suffering. Human beings are composed of five *skandhas*, aggregates, and are without a separate self. They are always in the process of change--constantly being born and constantly dying. They are empty of self, without sovereignty. The mind is the source of all confusion, and the body is the forest of all impure actions. If we meditate on these facts, we can gradually be released from *samsara*, the round of birth and death. [Home](#)

THE SECOND REALIZATION is the awareness that more desire brings more suffering. All hardships in daily life arise from greed and desire. Those with little desire and ambition can relax, their bodies and minds free from entanglement. [Home](#)

THE THIRD REALIZATION is that the human mind is always searching for possessions and never feels fulfilled. This causes impure actions to ever increase. Bodhisattvas however, always remember the principle of having few desires. They live a simple life in peace in order to practice the Way, and consider the realization of perfect understanding as their only career. [Home](#)

THE FOURTH REALIZATION is the awareness that laziness is the cause of all setbacks. For this reason, we must practice diligently- destroying the unwholesome mental factors, which bind us, conquering the four kinds of Mara, and freeing ourselves from the prisons of the five aggregates and the three worlds. [Home](#)

THE FIFTH REALIZATION is the awareness that ignorance is the cause of the endless round of birth and death. Therefore, bodhisattvas always remember to listen and learn in order to develop their understanding and eloquence. This enables them to educate living beings and bring them to the realm of great joy. [Home](#)

THE SIXTH REALIZATION is the awareness that poverty creates more hatred and anger, which in turn creates more evil. When practicing generosity, bodhisattvas consider everyone, friends, and enemies alike, as equal. They do not condemn anyone's past wrongdoings, nor do they hate even those who are presently doing evil. [Home](#)

THE SEVENTH REALIZATION is that the five categories of desire all lead to difficulties. Although we are in the world, we should try not to be caught up in worldly matters. A monk, for example, has in his possession only three robes and one bowl. He lives simply in order to practice the Way. His precepts keep him above attachment to worldly things, and he treats everyone equally and with compassion. [Home](#)

THE EIGHTH REALIZATION is the awareness that the fire of birth and death is raging, causing endless suffering everywhere. We should take the Great Vow to help everyone, to suffer along with everyone, and to help all beings arrive at the realm of great joy. [Home](#)

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