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THE SEVEN FACTORS THAT CAN LEAD ATTAINING ENLIGHTENMENT

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ABSTRACT

There are several types of sentient beings in the world either visible or invisible mentioned in Buddhist literature. Among those beings, we can divide those beings into three from the Buddhist point of view: human beings, devas and Brahmas. Human beings can be classified into two; ordinary ones (*puthujana*) and noble persons (*ariya*). Buddhists believe that all living beings have been running in the circle of live so long as they have full of attachment called *Kilesa*, defilement in Pali. This is why, the Buddha said to His disciples: ‘*Nannatra bojjhatapasa, Nannatindriya samvara, Nannatra sabbanissagga, Sotthim passami paninam*’ which means ‘Not apart from Enlightenment and austerity, not apart from restrain of the sense of faculties, not apart from relinquishing all, do I see any safety for living beings.’ To be free from defilements and gain Enlightenment everyone must try to get rid of one’s unwholesome attachment that latent in one’s mind. The Buddha pointed out the Seven Factors that lead to

Enlightenment. Those factors can be called seven qualities of a noble person. They are mindfulness (sati), investigation (dhammavicaya), effort (viriyā), rapture (piti), calm (passaddhi), concentration (Samadhi) and equanimity (upekkha). The seven factors of a noble person will be focused in this paper.

KEYWORDS: Seven Factors, sentient beings, noble persons, and Enlightenment.

INTRODUCTION :

The term

The Pali term that reflects gaining Enlightenment in Buddhist literature is ‘*Bodhipakkhiyadhamma*’. The teachings of the Buddha are preserved in its original which is called ‘Pali language’ in Buddhist countries, especially Theravada Buddhist countries. The term should be defined first before giving any discussion about the topic.

One of the *Pali* words gaining popularity in Buddhist community is ‘*Bodhi*’ which is used in Theravadins and Mahayanists wherever and whenever occasion arises. Grammatically the word *Bodhi* is derived from √ *budh* ‘to know’, ‘to awaken’, ‘to understand’. When the suffix is as added to the √ *budh*, the radical vowel takes place its *Vuddhi (vrddhi)*, i.e. the radical vowel *u* becomes *o*. √ *budh* + *i* = (*u* > *o*). Originally the word *Bodhi* means Supreme knowledge, Awaken, Enlightenment.

The great commentators, the



Ven. *Buddhaghosa*, the Ven. *Buddhadatta* and the Ven. *Dhammapala* gave the definitions of *Bodhi* several meanings in their commentaries. And also the Ven. *Moggallana*, the author of Pali Dictionary known as *Abhidhanapdikā*, and the Ven. *Aggavamsa*, the author of *Saddanidhatumala*, gave the meaning of *Bodhi* in their treatises.

The types of Bodhi

There is threefold classification of Enlightenment as follow:

- The enlightenment of Noble Disciple (*Savaka-bodhi*)
- The enlightenment of an Independently Enlightened One (*Pacceka-bodhi*) and
- The Enlightenment of a Perfect Enlightened One (*Samma-sambodhi*)

Everyone may choose the three kinds of Enlightenment and aspire either to become a Buddha, a *Pacceka-Buddha*, or a Disciple. This conception of a choice among the three aspirations is found in present day Theravada Buddhist countries.

The enlightenment of the Buddha is called '*Samma-sambodhi*', Perfect Enlightenment. As components of the state of Enlightenment and contributory factors to its achievement, are mentioned in the texts. They are the seven factors of Enlightenment (*Bojjhanga*) and the thirty-seven things pertaining to Enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhi-yadhamma*).

Four Classes of Individuals

There are four classes of individuals mentioned in the *Puggalapanatti*, the book of classification of individuals in *Abhidhamma Pitaka* and *Anguttara-Nikaya*, of *Sutta Pitaka*. They are:

- *Ugghatitannu*, a person who encounters a Buddha in person, and who is capable of attaining the path and fruition (*maggaphala*) through mere hearing of a short concise discourse.
- *Vipancitannu*, a person has not the capability of attaining the Paths and Fruitions through the mere hearing of a short discourse but who yet is capable of attaining the Path and Fruitions when the short discourse is expounded to him at some length.
- *Neyya*, a person who has not the capability of attaining the Paths and Fruitions through the hearing of a short discourse but he can study and take careful note of the sermon and the exposition and then practice the provisions contained therein for days, months and years in order that he may attain the Paths and Fruitions.
- *Padaparama*, a person who, even though he puts forth the utmost possible effort in both the study and practice of the Dhamma, cannot attain the Paths and Fruitions within this lifetime. All that he can do is to accumulate habits and potentials.

Bodhipakkhiyadhamma

Things pertaining to Enlightenment are called *Bodhipakkhiyadhamma*. There are thirty-seven factors in number associated with the attainment of enlightenment. They are as follow in brief:

The four foundations of mindfulness are – (1) the foundation of mindfulness in contemplation of the body, (2) the foundation of mindfulness in contemplation of feeling, (3) the foundation of mindfulness in contemplation of consciousness, and (4) the foundation of mindfulness in contemplation of mental objects.

The four supreme efforts are – (1) the effort to discard evil states that have arisen, (2) the effort to prevent the arising of un-arisen evil states, (3) the effort to development arisen wholesome states and (4) the effort to augment arisen wholesome states.

The four bases of psychic potency are – the base of psychic potency of (1) desire, (2) , energy, (3) consciousness and (4) investigation.

The five faculties are – the faculty of (1) faith, (2) energy, (3) mindfulness, (4) concentration, and (5) wisdom.

The five powers are – the power of (1) faith, (2) energy, (3) mindfulness, (4) concentration, and (5) wisdom.

The seven Enlightenment Factors (*sattabojjhanga*) are- Mindfulness, investigation of dhamma, energy, zest, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity.

The eight constituents of the Path (*magganga*) are- right view, right thinking, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Among the Thirty-Seven factors of Enlightenment, in this paper, I will focus on only seven factors, *bojjhanga*.

Bojjhanga

The word *bojjhanga* in Pali is the combination word of *bodhi* and *anga*. When the two words are joined together, firstly the vowel *i* of *bodhi* changed to *y* and then *dhy* changed to *jhh* by means of assimilation. Sometimes the word *bojjhanga* is used with the prefix *sam*. *Sambojjhanga* is the synonym of *bojjhanga*. The meaning of *bojjhanga* or *sambojjhanga* is “Enlightenment factor” As mentioned earlier, there are seven Enlightenment Factors (*sattabo-jjhanga*). They are:

1. Enlightenment Factor of Mindfulness (*satisambojjhanga*)
2. Enlightenment Factor of investigation of dhamma (*dhammavicaya-sambojjhanga*)
3. Enlightenment Factor of energy (*viriyasambojjhanga*)
4. Enlightenment Factor of zest (*pitiasambojjhanga*)
5. Enlightenment Factor of tranquility (*passaddhisambojjhanga*)
6. Enlightenment Factor of concentration (*samadhisambojjhanga*)
7. Enlightenment Factor of equanimity (*upekkhasambojjhanga*)

Becoming a Noble Person

One does not become enlightened by merely gazing into the sky. One does not become enlightened by reading or studying the scriptures, or by thinking, or by wishing for the enlightened state to burst into one’s mind. There are certain prerequisites which cause enlightenment to arise. In *Pali* these are known as the *Bojjhngas*. These factors are qualities of a noble person. One can develop these factors by means of *Satipatthana* meditation. If the four foundations of mindfulness are practiced persistently and repeatedly, the seven factors of *Bojjhngas* will be automatically and fully developed.

1. Enlightenment Factor of Mindfulness (*satisambojjhanga*)

Practicing the four foundations of mindfulness does not mean studying them, thinking of them, listening to discourses about them, nor discussing them. What we must do is to be directly and experientially aware of the four foundations of mindfulness, the four bases on which mindfulness can be established.

Mindfulness as a factor for the attainment of Path Knowledge (*magga-nana*) is called Enlightenment Factor of Mindfulness (*satisambojjhanga*). Constant noting of motion both physical and mental, such as moving forward, moving backward, and so on; eliminating unawareness, dissociating from the negligent, associating with the mindful; these are the conditions for the making of the Enlightenment Factor of Mindfulness (*Satisambojjhanga*). Mindfulness can be well understood by

examining its three characteristic, function and manifestation. These three aspects are used in the *Abhidha-mma* to describe factors of mind in detail.

2. Enlightenment Factor of investigation (*dhammavicaya-sambojjhanga*)

Investigative knowledge as a factor for the attainment of Path Knowledge (*magganana*) is called Enlightenment Factor of Investigation of *dhamma* (*dhammavi-cayasambojjhanga*). Generally, when we say “dhamma” we mean phenomena, mind and matter. We also mean the laws that govern the behavior of phenomena. The characteristic of investigation is the ability to know the true nature of dhammas. The function of investigation is to dispel darkness and the manifestation of investigation is the dissipation of confusion. Repeated question on the body, sense-faculties, etc., cleanliness of the body, balance between conviction and wisdom and also between effort and concentration, dissociation from the foolish, association with the wise, contemplating the sense-faculties and Elements, including the mind towards investigative knowledge; these are the conditions for the making of the Enlightenment Factor of Investigation of *dhamma* (*dhammavicayasambojjhanga*)

3. Enlightenment Factor of energy (*viriyasambojjhanga*)

People who are hardworking and industrious have the capacity to be heroic in whatever they do. It is effort itself that gives them a heroic quality. The characteristic of effort is an enduring patience in the face of suffering or difficulty. Effort as a factor for the attainment of Path Knowledge (*magganana*) is called Enlightenment Factor of energy (*viriyasambojjhanga*). Contemplating the dangers of the woeful states of existence (*apayabhaya*), keeping in the mind the benefits of energy, contemplating the need to follow the path of the virtuous, considering the greatness of Path and Fruition, contemplating greatness of the Buddha and co-residents, dissociating from the indolent, associating with the industrious and inclining the mind towards Effort; these are the conditions for the making of the Enlightenment Factor of energy (*viriyasambojjhanga*).

4. Enlightenment Factor of zest (*pitisambojjhanga*)

Delightful satisfaction as a condition for the attainment of Path Knowledge (*magganana*) is called Enlightenment Factor of Delightful Satisfaction (*pitisambo-jjhanga*). The characteristic of rapture is happiness, delight and satisfaction. It is in itself a mental state possessing these characteristics. When rapture occurs, coarse and uncomfortable sensations are replaced with something very soft and gentle, velvet smooth and light.

Recollection of the attributes of the Buddha, of the Dhamma, of the Sangha, the fruits of alms-giving and morality, recollection of the way celestial beings perform acts of merit and the Perfect Peace of Nibbana, dissociation from the unbelievers, association with the believers, recitation and contemplation of the teachings of the Buddha including the mind toward delightful satisfaction. These are the condition for the making of Enlightenment Factor of Delightful Satisfaction (*Pitisambojjhanga*)

5. Enlightenment Factor of tranquility (*passaddhisambojjhanga*)

Most of the people’s minds are in a state of agitation all the time. Their minds run here and there, flapping like flags in a strong wind, scattering like a pile of ashes into which a stone is tossed. There is no coolness, no silence, and no peace. This restlessness of the mind might properly be called the waves of mind. When the mind is scattered, it is difficult to control our behavior. We begin to act according to our whims and fancies without considering properly whether an action is wholesome or not. In the world today, people feel a lot of mental suffering. Many resort to drugs, tranquilizers and sleeping pills to bring calm and enjoyment to their minds.

The tranquil peace that comes from meditation is far superior to anything drugs. Tranquility as a factor for the attainment of Path Knowledge (*magganana*) is called “Enlightenment Factor of Tranquility”. The characteristic of *passaddhi* is to calm the mind and body, to silence and tranquilize

agitation. Its function is to extract the heat of the mind which arises due to restlessness. The manifestation of *passaddhi* is non-agitation of body and mind. Having wholesome food, agreeable weather conditions, comfortable postures, contemplation of Law of *kamma* (i.e. that *kamma* alone is one's possession), having good company and inclining the mind towards tranquility: these are the conditions for the making of the Enlightenment Factor of Tranquility (*passa-ddhisanbojjhanga*).

6. Enlightenment Factor of concentration (*samadhisambojjhanga*)

Concentration as a factor for the attainment of Path Knowledge (*magganana*) is called Enlightenment Factor of Concentration. The characteristic of Samadhi is non-dispersal, non-dissipation, non-scatteredness. Maintaining personal hygiene, maintaining a balance between conviction and wisdom, between effort and concentration, skill regarding the object of the meditation, stimulating the flagging mind, suppressing the restless mind, maintaining cheerfulness, maintaining a level of equanimity without effort, dissociating from the flurried, associating with the steadfast and inclining the mind towards concentration: these are the conditions for making of the Enlightenment Factor of Concentration (*sammadisambojjhanga*). Concentration is the proximate cause for the unfolding of wisdom. This fact is very important. Once the mind is quiet and still, there is space for wisdom to arise. There can be comprehension of the true nature of mind and matter. Step by step, wisdom will penetrate into more and more profound levels of truth.

7. Enlightenment Factor of equanimity (*upekkhasambojjhanga*)

The mind that is balanced is like a carriage being pulled by two horses of equal strength and stamina. When both are running, driving the carriage is easy. Similarly in meditation practice, at first there is no equilibrium among mental states. Equanimity as a factor for the attainment of Path Knowledge (*magganana*) is called "Enlightenment Factor of Equanimity" (*upekkhasam-bojjhanga*). Maintaining a balance between loving and hating by contemplating the fact that *kamma* alone is one's possession; dissociating from love one's and also from one's passions by contemplating the transitoriness of all conditioned things; inclining the mind towards equanimity; these are the conditions for making of the Enlightenment Factor of Equanimity (*upekkhasambojjhanga*). The characteristic of equanimity is the balancing of corresponding mental states so that one does not overwhelm the other. The function of equanimity as a factor of enlightenment is to fill in where there is a lack and to reduce where there is excess. According to the Buddha, the way to bring about equanimity is wise attention: to be continually mindful from moment to moment, without break, based on the intention to develop equanimity.

Mental disease is the disease of greed, hatred, delusion, jealousy, miserliness, conceit and so forth. When these forces arise, they make the mind unclear and clouded. This clouded mind will produce physical phenomena which reflect its clouded state. If you are energetically trying to activate a penetrative mindfulness from moment to moment on the object of observation, very naturally the mind will stay on this object without scattering. Concentration is present at this time. After a due period, the mind will be cleansed of the hindrances or negative tendencies. When insights arise, the mind becomes even purer, as if it were breathing clean air again after returning from the hustle and bustle of a city.

Mindfulness, energy and investigation lead to concentration and insights which arise in successive stages. Each new insight is like another breath of fresh air to the mind. The stage of insight into the arising and passing away of phenomena is the beginning of good, deep practice. The factor of equanimity begins to stabilize the mind, and mindfulness becomes deeper and deeper. The arising and passing away of objects will be perfectly clear, and there will be no doubt about the true nature of what can be directly experienced.

CONCLUSION

The way of being a noble person is nothing but practicing the Seven Factors of Enlightenment. The most important of all is the first factor, enlightenment of mindfulness because insight cannot arise without it. It is fundamental, main and most essential factor for awakening. There is no other way than the repetitive mindfulness practice. Its benefit would be understood as the sole condition for the protecting of clear vision and deliverance. Anyone who wanted to become a noble person, he or she has to follow the above mentioned factors. By following the step by step of the seven factors one can gain enlightenment.

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