

THE SEVEN

❧ ENLIGHTENMENT FACTORS ❧

“Satta Bojjanga Dhamma”

Bodhi – Enlightenment or one who seeks the enlightenment;

Aṅga – The factor or the entrance to enlightenment

“These seven factors of enlightenment, are being rightly expounded by me; when developed and cultivated, they lead to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.”

-- Chapter II: Ill, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

The seven enlightenment factors help us to cross the river, breaking the cycle of Samsāra to attain enlightenment. These seven factors include the enlightenment factor of **mindfulness**, the enlightenment factor of **investigation of Dhamma**, the enlightenment factor of **energy**, the enlightenment factor of **rapture**, the enlightenment factor of **tranquility**, the enlightenment factor of **concentration**, and the enlightenment factor of **equanimity**.

Our journey is filled with dark and destructive forces, but the seven enlightenment factors bring a great light to dispel the darkness. By developing these seven enlightenment factors, the light we will bring gives us clarity that leads us to Nibbāna.

Some destructive forces for the attainment of Nibbāna include: a contracted mind (laziness and sleepiness), a scattered mind (remorse and confusion), corruptions and defilements that bind us in the Samsāra (lust, hate, and ignorance), wholesome and unwholesome actions that keep in the Samsāra, self-indulgence, self-motification, annihilism, and eternalism.

#1 – ENLIGHTENMENT FACTOR OF MINDFULNESS

(SATI SAMBOJJANGA)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of mindfulness and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of mindfulness? There are, bhikkhus, things that are the basis for the enlightenment factor of mindfulness: frequently giving careful attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen enlightenment factor of mindfulness and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of mindfulness.”

Chapter II: The Body, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

“Move in your own resort, bhikkhus, in your own ancestral domain. Māra will not gain access to those who move in their own resort, in their own ancestral domain; Māra will not get a hold on them. And what is a bhikkhus resort, his own ancestral domain? It is the four establishments of mindfulness.”

-- Chapter III: The Hawk, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

“Bhikkhus, if one were to say of anything “a heap of unwholesome,” it is about the five hindrances that one could rightly say this. For this is a complete heap of the unwholesome, that is, the five hindrances. What five? The hindrance of sensual desire, the hindrance of ill will, the hindrance of sloth and torpor; the hindrance of restlessness and remorse; and the hindrance of doubt.”

-- Chapter III: The Heap of Unwholesome, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

The enlightenment factor of mindfulness maintains the yogi’s mind on the wholesome path, not allowing it to fall onto the unwholesome path. The enlightenment factor of mindfulness should be developed on the four foundations of mindfulness: **mindfulness of body, mindfulness of sensation, mindfulness of consciousness, and mindfulness of phenomena (mind objects).**

The Conditions for mindfulness:

- Having clear comprehension

“Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full

awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.”

¹⁰ Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness, Middle Length Discourses

- Avoiding those who are not mindful
- Associating with mindful people
- Having a mind that is bent toward developing mindfulness

#2 - ENLIGHTENMENT FACTOR OF THE INVESTIGATION OF DHAMMA (DHAMMA VICAYA SAMBOJJANGA)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of investigation of Dhamma and for the fulfillment of the arisen enlightenment factor of investigation of Dhamma? There are, bhikkhus, wholesome and unwholesome states, blamable and blameless states, inferior and superior states, dark and bright states with their counterparts: frequently giving careful attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen investigation of Dhamma and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of investigation of Dhamma.”

Chapter II: The Body, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

Sharp knowledge that is able to break through the conventional truth and realize the ultimate truth -- this is the investigation of Dhamma. Yogis can investigate Dhamma in many different ways, including investigation in accordance with the **four great elements**, the **five aggregates**, **six faculties**, **cause and effect**, and the **three characteristics of conditioned phenomena**.

The Conditions for Investigation of Dhamma:

- Frequent questioning of elements, faculties, and so on
- Cleansing of the physical bases, such as keeping a clean environment surrounding the physical body, having clean clothing, using proper personal hygiene, and maintaining a healthy digestive system
- Keeping the five faculties in balance (faculties of confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom)
- Avoiding those who are not knowledgeable of Dhamma
- Associating with those who are knowledgeable of Dhamma
- Reflecting on profound Dhammas, such as elements and faculties
- Having a mind bent toward the investigation of Dhamma

#3 - THE ENLIGHTENMENT FACTOR OF ENERGY (VIRIYA SAMBOJJANGA)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of energy and for the fulfillment by the development of the unarisen enlightenment factor of energy? There are, Bhikkhus, the element of arousal, the element of endeavor, the element of exertion: frequently giving careful attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen energy and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of energy.”

Chapter II: The Body, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

Energy is a practice against laziness and sleepiness. One needs to have strong energy, because weak energy does not help one attain a higher level. Those who have energy can attain all of the things that they want. When one reflects in this way, it is called **attending wisely to the element of energy**. However, if one is **attending unwisely to the element of energy**, he or she thinks in this way: “In this time, path and fruitions are not attainable, in this time effort is useless, in this lifetime to attain Nibbāna we don’t have wholesome results; therefore, in the future, Buddha sārsana we can attain path and fruitions and no need to make effort to attain them in this very lifetime.” Therefore, one must be sure to attend wisely to the element of energy for proper development of this enlightenment factor. The three types of elements of energy include:

- 1) The element of initiation (arousal)
- 2) The element of maintenance (endeavor)
- 3) The element of completion (exertion)

The Conditions for Energy:

- Reflecting on the suffering of the lower existences
- Pondering the constructive consequences of effort
- Reflecting on the Buddhas, silent Buddhas, great disciples who aroused energy for the attainment of Nibbāna
- Giving respect to food offered by laypeople
- Reflecting over the immeasurable value of the inheritance of the Dhamma

- Reflecting over the immeasurable value of the teacher
- Reflecting over the immeasurable value of this human birth
- Reflecting over the immeasurable value of practicing the Dhamma with others
- Avoiding those who are not arousing energy to practice the Dhamma
- Associating with those who have aroused energy to practice the Dhamma
- Having a mind bent toward the development of effort

#4 - THE ENLIGHTENMENT FACTOR OF RAPTURE (PITI SAMBOJJANGA)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of rapture and for the fulfilment by the development of the arisen enlightenment factor of rapture? There are, Bhikkhus, things that are the basis for the enlightenment factor of rapture: frequently giving careful attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of rapture and for the fulfillment by Development of the arisen enlightenment factor of rapture.”

Chapter II: The Body, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

Rapture is a pleasant experience for all living beings. Once a person has experienced rapture, he or she will begin to seek that rapture again and again. Rapture is two-fold: There is a worldly, pleasant feeling which is experienced in material things, such as children, wealth, knowledge, titles, etc. There is also an unworldly, pleasant feeling that is not dependent on the possession of worldly things. It is rapture that is experienced in reflecting on the Buddha, or by reflecting on generosity, for example.

Rapture pleases both yogis mind and body during the practice. When a yogi does not receive sufficient food, he or she can still live happily due to this rapture. Due to the lack of development of this enlightenment factor, some yogis may give up their practice. Yogis may experience the rapture in five different ways:

- 1) **The lesser rapture** - The lesser rapture is only able to raise the hairs of the body.
- 2) **The momentary rapture** - The momentary rapture is like the production of lightening moment by moment.
- 3) **The flooding rapture** - The flooding rapture is like waves breaking on the seashore. The flooding rapture descends repeatedly on the body and then breaks.

- 4) **The transporting rapture** - The transporting rapture is strong, and lifts the body up to the extent of launching it into the air.
- 5) **The all-pervading rapture** - The all-pervading rapture causes the whole body to be completely surcharged, blown like a full bladder, or like a mountain cavern pouring forth a mighty flood of water.

The Conditions for Rapture:

- Recollecting the nine qualities of the Buddha
- Recollecting the seven qualities of the Dhamma
- Recollecting the nine qualities of the Sangha
- Recollecting on one's own virtues and good qualities
- Recollecting on one's own acts of generosity and charity
- Reflecting on qualities that lead to being born in the celestial realm
- Reflecting on appeased defilements
- Avoiding those who are not joyful
- Associating with those who are joyful
- Studying suttas that arouse happiness
- Having a mind bent toward the development of rapture

#5 - THE ENLIGHTENMENT FACTOR OF TRANQUILITY

(PASSADDI SAMBOJJANGA)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of tranquility and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of tranquility? There are, bhikkhus, tranquility of body, tranquility of mind: frequently giving careful attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of unarisen enlightenment factor of tranquility and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of tranquility.”

Chapter II: The Body, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

Tranquility is the factor that pleases both body and mind. When the yogis sit in the same body posture for a long period of time, physical bodily pain will arise. When we focus on the same object, for example on the breath, then mental pain will arise. Both mental and physical tiredness is appeased by this enlightenment factor. When appeased, mental

concentration is easily attained and that concentration is strengthened due to the enlightenment factor of tranquility.

“When he is glad, rapture is born in him; in one who is rapturous, the body become tranquil; one whose body is tranquil feels pleasure; in one who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated.”

7, The Simile of the Cloth, Middle Length Discourses

The Conditions for Tranquility:

- Having nutritious and delicious food
- Living in a place where suitable weather conditions exist
- Practicing meditation using the most comfortable posture
- Considering that when both fortunate or unfortunate things happen to oneself and others, that these things occur in accordance with kamma
- Avoiding those who practice cruelty, as cruelty prevents the enjoyment of tranquility
- Associating with those who are tranquil
- Having a mind bent toward the practice of tranquility

#6 - THE ENLIGHTENMENT FACTOR OF CONCENTRATION (SAMĀDI SAMBOJJANGA)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of concentration and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of concentration? There are, bhikkhus, the sign of serenity, the sign of nondispersal: frequently giving careful attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of concentration and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of concentration.”

Chapter II: The Body, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

The Sign of Serenity (Samatha Nimitta) – Concentration; mind can stay with one object without distraction

The Sign of Nondispersal (Abyagga Nimitta)– Also means concentration; mind is not scattered by being attached to many objects at once

As a yogi attains to the same object of meditation again and again, he or she is able to temporarily eradicate the five hindrances. Due to the disappearance of the hindrances, he

or she is able to enjoy concentration. Just as we cannot see clearly into the muddy water; we cannot see clearly when the mind is not settled. When the water is clear, we can see into it clearly. In the same way, when the mind is concentrated, we can see very clearly.

“Bhikkhus, develop concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands things as they really are. And what does he understand as it really is? The origin and passing away of form; the origin and passing away of feeling; the origin and passing away of perception;

the origin and passing away of volitional formations; the origin and passing away of concentration.”

5 Concentration, Connected Discourses on the Aggregates, Connected Discourses, Division I: The Root Fifty

When people come to meditation, they need concentration. When they get a moment of concentration, they are often excited by it. They think that this is the goal of meditation. But a yogi should clearly understand that the goal of meditation is wisdom, for only wisdom can eradicate defilements. Concentration is not for pleasure, but is needed for wisdom. Use it as a ground for the development of wisdom; and develop that concentration to use as a bridge to cross the river.

The Conditions for Concentration:

- Cleansing of the physical bases, such as keeping a clean environment surrounding the physical body, having clean clothing, using proper personal hygiene, and maintaining a healthy digestive system
- Keeping the five faculties in balance (faculties of confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom)
- Having skill in the sign in of meditation
- Encouraging and upholding the mind, especially when the mind is contracted
- Producing effort when it is needed, especially when the mind is scattered
- Gladdening the dissatisfied mind by means of wisdom. Generosity is the closest condition to non-greediness, lovingkindness is the closest condition of virtues, and wisdom is the closest condition of meditation. It is very important to reflect on the eight sources of emotions in order to gladden the dissatisfied mind: birth, sickness, old age, death, suffering in the lower states of existence, the misery of the past rooted in the cycle of rebirth, the misery of the future rooted in the cycle of rebirth, and the misery of the present rooted in the search after food.
- Having equanimity, or moderation, is important when the mind is firm and stable on the meditation object. As an example, a charioteer gives equal attention to the team of horses in front of him; he does not give special attention to either horse.

We must use the same moderation in our concentration, having calm confidence in our concentrated mind.

- Avoiding those who have not developed concentration
- Associating with those who are concentrated
- Recollecting on absorption (jhāna), Path (magga), and fruitions (phala)
- Having a mind bent toward concentration

#7 - THE ENLIGHTENMENT FACTOR OF EQUANIMITY (UPEKKHA SAMBOJJANGA)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of equanimity and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of equanimity? There are, bhikkhus, things that are the basis for the enlightenment factor of equanimity: frequently giving careful attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of equanimity and for the fulfillment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of equanimity.”

Chapter II: The Body, Connected Discourses, V. The Great Book

It is important to have moderation in conditioned phenomenon (formations) such as pleasant and unpleasant feelings, scattered and contracted mind, mind wandering in the past and future, desire for sensual pleasure, and hatred. When the yogi is moderated in these conditioned phenomenon, he or she can practice meditation easily. Also, when whatever difficulties arise, the yogi’s mind is not excited or upset. Yogis can sit long and are able to attain to the meditation object without interruption. At this point, the yogi should realize that the enlightenment factor of equanimity is being developed within.

The Conditions for Equanimity:

- Having equanimity of beings; attachment and aversion should be eliminated towards beings
- Having moderation in worldly necessities such as attaining wealth, money, properties, and accommodations
- Avoiding persons who are possessive of beings and worldly things
- Associating with those who are moderate in beings and worldly things
- Having a mind bent toward the development of equanimity

APPROPRIATE TIME AND INAPPROPRIATE TIME FOR PRACTICING AND NOT PRACTICING ENLIGHTENMENT FACTORS

There are times when it is appropriate to practice, and times when it is not appropriate to practice the enlightenment factors. They include:

- 1) When the mind is contracted, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity should not be practiced. If practiced, the mind can become even more lazy and sleepy.
- 2) When the mind is contracted, it is appropriate to practice investigation of Dhamma, effort, and rapture. Then it is easy to overcome laziness and sleepiness.
- 3) If the mind is not concentrated, investigation of Dhamma, effort, and rapture should not be practiced. If practiced, the mind can become even more scattered, as if you are adding more fuel to the fire.
- 4) When mind is scattered, it is appropriate to practice tranquility, concentration, and equanimity. If practiced, then the mind will become calm and concentrated, like using water to put out a flame.
- 5) Mindfulness is needed at all times.

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