



# An Analytical Study of The Seven Factors of Enlightenment in Bojjhaṅga Sutta as a Protection Against Sickness in Theravāda Buddhist Perspective

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## Abstract

This article aims to promote understanding of the meanings and types of the seven factors of enlightenment (*sattabojjhaṅga*), how we contemplate these factors according to the teachings of the Enlightened One, how they cure all sickness according to the Pāli Canon, and why they can cure the sickness in Theravāda Buddhist perspective.

From this study, it is found that the term *Bojjhaṅga* is derived from two words: *bodhi* and *anga*. *Bodhi* means enlightenment or insight of the realization of the Four Noble Truths: the Noble Truth of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. *Aṅga* means factors or limbs. Therefore *Bojjhaṅga* means the factors of enlightenment. The development of the factors of enlightenment causes the knowledge leading to wisdom and peace to arise. So these factors are called the factors of perfected knowledge. If a monk cultivates and develops the seven factors of enlightenment, he inclines to *Nibbāna*, tends to *Nibbāna* and walks towards *Nibbāna*.

Firstly, the findings show the meaning of the seven factors of enlightenment and the types of the seven factors of enlightenment. Secondly, the research examined the application of these factors by contemplation of the seven factors of enlightenment. Finally, the article touched upon two kinds of sickness, two kinds of medicines, and *bojjhaṅgas* as the medical healing applied by the development of these factors. Therefore the seven factors of enlightenment are one of the categories of spiritual qualities frequently mentioned by the Buddha as very beneficial for spiritual development.

**Keywords:** Bojjhaṅga, Sickness, Theravāda, Buddhist Scripture.

## Introduction

The Enlightened One expounded the seven factors of enlightenment (*sattabojjhaṅga*) specifically under the title of *Bojjhaṅga Saṃyutta* in *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. In this section there are three discourses regarding the seven factors of enlightenment, namely the *Bojjhaṅga sutta*, the *Mahākassapa Bojjhaṅga sutta*, the *Mahāmoggalāna Bojjhaṅga sutta*, and the *Mahācunda Bojjhaṅga sutta*. These suttas have been recited by Buddhists since the time of the Buddha as a protection (*paritta*) against pain, disease and adversity.

The development of the factors of enlightenment causes the knowledge leading to wisdom and peace to arise. So these factors are called the factors of perfected knowledge. If a monk cultivates and develops the seven factors of enlightenment, he inclines to *Nibbāna*, tends to *Nibbāna* and walks towards *Nibbāna*. These seven factors are:

1. Mindfulness (*sati*)
2. Investigation of the Dhamma (*dhammavicaya*)
3. Energy (*vīriya*)
4. Rapture (*pīti*)
5. Calm or Tranquillity (*passaddhi*)
6. Concentration (*samādhi*)
7. Equanimity (*upekkhā*)<sup>1-</sup>

Nowadays, most of the Buddhists recite the *Bojjhaṅga sutta* as a protection (*paritta*) against pain, disease and adversity. It is very difficult to understand the meaning of the *Bojjhaṅga sutta* and the seven factors of enlightenment. We cannot understand easily why we recite the *Bojjhaṅga sutta* as a protection (*paritta*) against pain, disease and adversity.

Indeed, the Enlightened One's *sāsanā* is like a hospital, He is like a skilled physician, these factors are like medicine, and the meditators are like the patients.<sup>2-</sup> If someone reflects upon these factors practically, he can protect himself from physical pain because of developing these factors and especially because of tranquility (*passaddhi*).<sup>3-</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Piyadassi Thera, 1960-1980, **The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (Satta Bojjhaṅga)**, (Sri Lanka, Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society), p.5.

<sup>2</sup>Chanmyay, Myaing Sayadaw, 2008, **The Bojjhaṅga: Medicine That Makes All Diseases Disappear**, tr. by Ven. Ariya Nānī, (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)2008), p.1.

<sup>3</sup>Thapyaekan, Sayataw, 2005, **The Great Teaching of Satta Bojjhaṅga**, (2<sup>nd</sup>), (Burmese Script, Yangon, Myanmar) p. 190.

## Objectives of the Research

There are three objectives of this research: (1) to study the context and origin of *Bojjhaṅga sutta*, (2) to study the concept of the seven factors of enlightenment in *Bojjhaṅga sutta* in *Theravāda* Buddhist scriptures and (3) to analyze the seven factors of enlightenment in *Bojjhaṅga sutta* as a protection against physical sickness in *Theravāda* Buddhist perspective.

## Research Methodology

This is textual study that applies documentary research methodology. The research methodology can be described in the following steps:

1. Collecting data from primary sources of English translations of Nikāya and Pāli canon in order to explore the body of knowledge of the seven factors of enlightenment as well as secondary sources of commentaries, sub-commentaries, books written and composed by famous Buddhist scholars.
2. Analyzing the raw data as well as systematizing the collected data in order to give a clear picture of the seven factors of enlightenment.
3. Constructing the entire outline of the work.
4. Discussing the problem encountered according to the significance of the studies.
5. Making a conclusion and giving suggestions for further study, recitation, and practice.

## Meaning of the Bojjhaṅgas

The term *Bojjhaṅga* is derived from two words: *Bodhi* and *Aṅga*. *Bodhi* means enlightenment or insight of the realization of the Four Noble Truths: the Noble Truth of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. *Aṅga* means factors or limbs. Therefore *Bojjhaṅga* means the factors of enlightenment.<sup>4-</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Piyadassi Thera, 1960-1980, **The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (Satta Bojjhanga)**, (Wheel Publication No. 1, Sri Lanka, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society), p.4.

The first *Sambojjhaṅga* is *Sati*, which means mindfulness. *Dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga* means investigation of the law and is the second factor of enlightenment. The third *Sambojjhaṅga*, *Vīriya* is derived from the *Pāli* word *Vīra*. *Vīra* means manly, mighty, heroic, a hero. The fourth *Sambojjhaṅga*, *Pīti* means happiness, rapture, zest and joy. *Passaddhisambojjhaṅga* means tranquility as a factor of enlightenment and consists in tranquility of mental factors (*kāyapassaddhi*) and tranquility of consciousness (*cittapassaddhi*). The sixth *Sambojjhaṅga*, *Samādhi* means concentration; a concentrated, self-collected, and intent state of mind and meditation, which, concomitant with right living, is a necessary condition to the attainment of higher wisdom and emancipation. The last one, *Upekkhā* means looking on and equanimity. It also means neutrality or indifference, zero point between joy and sorrow, disinterestedness, neutral feeling, equanimity.<sup>5</sup>–

## Types of Bojjhaṅgas

In the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*, mindfulness has the characteristic of not wobbling, that is not floating away from the object. Its function is absence of confusion or non-forgetfulness. It is manifested as guardianship, as the state of confronting an objective field. Its proximate cause is strong perception (*thirasaññā*) or the four foundations of mindfulness.<sup>6</sup>–

*Dhammavicaya Sambojjhaṅga* (investigation of the dhamma) is wisdom mental factor. The *Atthasālinī* stated that wisdom has the penetration of intrinsic nature, unfaltering penetration as its characteristic, like the penetration of an arrow shot by a skillful archer. And thus knowing should be regarded as the characteristic of wisdom. It has illumination of the object as its function, like it were a lamp. When darkness disappears because of the lamp's illumination, all the objects within the reach of the light can be seen clearly.<sup>7</sup>–

The factor of energy can be learned from the *Mahājanaka* story in the *Jātaka* section. *Vīriya* is the state of an energetic man, it is the action of the energetic, or it is that which should be carried out by method or suitable means. The enlightenment factor of energy

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<sup>5</sup>T. W. RHYS DAVIDS, 1925, **PALI-ENGLISH DICTIONARY**, (London, Pali Text Society), p.170.

<sup>6</sup>Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000, **A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhammā**, (Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka), p.86.

<sup>7</sup>Maung Tin, M.A (trs), 1920, **The Expositor (Atthasālinī)**, Vol.1, (Pali Text Society, London), p.162.

has the characteristic of supporting or upholding its concomitants. As a leaning old house supported by new pillars will not fall, the concomitants supported by energy will not fade away. Just as a strong reinforcement would help an army to hold on instead of retreating, even so energy upholds or uplifts its concomitants.<sup>8</sup>–

Rapture has satisfaction as its characteristic, and the thrilling of body and mind as function, and elation as manifestation, and its proximate cause is mind and matter. There are five types of rapture as explained in the commentary:

- (1) minor rapture (khuddaka pīti)
- (2) momentary rapture (khaṇika pīti)
- (3) showering or flood of rapture (okkantika pīti)
- (4) uplifting rapture (ubbega pīti)
- (5) pervading rapture (pharaṇa pīti)

Tranquility has the characteristic of pacifying the suffering of both mental factors and of consciousness, the function of crushing the suffering of both, and the manifestation of an unwavering and cool state of both. Its proximate cause is mental factors and consciousness. Its nature is tranquility and calmness. Tranquility is divided into two groups: (1) *Kāyapassaddhi* (tranquility of mental factors) and (2) *Cittapassaddhi* (tranquility of consciousness or mind). Tranquility as a factor of enlightenment can really be very calm and peaceful. It is a happiness that has no equal in ordinary worldly happiness.<sup>9</sup>–

Concentration has non-scattering of itself or non-distraction of associated states as its characteristic, the welding together of the co-existent states as function, as water knead bath-powder into a paste, and peace of mind or knowledge as manifestation. It is distinguished by having ease as proximate cause. Like the steadiness of the flame of a lamp in the absence of wind, so it should be understood as steadfastness of mind.<sup>10</sup>–

Equanimity has the characteristic of carrying on consciousness and mental properties equally, the function of checking deficiency and excess, or of cutting off partisanship. It has the manifestation of neutrality. By virtue of its indifference regarding consciousness and mental

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<sup>8</sup>Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, 2015, **The Essence of Buddha Abhidhammā**, (3<sup>rd</sup>) (Yangon, Myanmar), p.67.

<sup>9</sup>Chanmyay Myaing Sayadaw, 2008, **The Bojjhaṅgas: Medicine that Makes All Diseases Disappear**, tr. by Ven, Ariya Ñāṇī, (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), p.83.

<sup>10</sup>Maung Tin, M.A (trs), 1920, **The Expositor (Atthasālinī)**, Vol.1, (Pali Text Society, London), p.157.

properties, it should be regarded as a charioteer who treats with impartiality the well-trained horses he is driving. Its proximate cause is the non-desire of rapture.

## **The Seven Ways of Contemplation of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment The Contemplation of Mindfulness (*Satisambojjhaṅga*)**

In the *Visuddhimagga* commentary, the commentator said that Mindfulness (*sati*) is recollection (*anussati*) because it arises again and again; or alternatively, the mindfulness (*sati*) that is proper (*anurūpa*) for a clansman gone forth out of faith, since it occurs only in those instances where it should occur, is “recollection” (*anussati*).<sup>11–</sup>

There are ten recollections in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*<sup>12–</sup>. They are:

- (1) *Buddhānussati* (recollection of the *Buddha*)
- (2) *Dhammānussati* (recollection of the *Dhamma*)
- (3) *Sanḅhānussati* (recollection of the virtues of the *Sanḅha*)
- (4) *Silānussati* (recollection of the virtues of one’s morality)
- (5) *Cāgānussati* (recollection of the virtues of one’s offering)
- (6) *Devatānussati* (recollection of one’s virtues similar to deities’ virtues)
- (7) *Upasamānussati* (recollection of the virtues of *Nibbāna*)
- (8) *Maraḍānussati* (recollection of the nature of one’s death)
- (9) *Kāyagatāsati* (recollection of thirty two bodily parts) and
- (10) *Ānāpānassati* (mindfulness of breathing).<sup>13–</sup>

The scriptures outline many different ways of practice which lead to enlightenment, but mindfulness is the main one. The practice of mindfulness brings together all these factors: body, feeling tones, conditions of mind; all these categories, the five hindrances, the five aggregates, the six senses and sense objects, the seven factors of enlightenment, the four noble truths. It’s the primary way, the main way to the realization of enlightenment.<sup>14–</sup> Besides

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<sup>11</sup> Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, 1975, **The Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*)**, tr.by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (BPS, Kandy, Sri Lanka), p.547.

<sup>12</sup> Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000, **A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhammā**, (Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka), p.333.

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, 2015, **The Essence of Buddha Abhidhamma**, (3<sup>rd</sup>) (Yangon, Myanmar), pp.274-276.

<sup>14</sup> Ajahn Thiradhammo, 2012, **Contemplations on the Seven Factors of Awakening**, (Bolden Trade, Malaysia), p.35.

providing the foundation for the other factors, mindfulness is the one enlightenment factor whose development is beneficial at any time and on all occasions.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Contemplation of Investigation (*Dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga*)**

There are seven things that lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of investigation of the *dhamma*:

- (1) asking questions,
- (2) making the basis clean,
- (3) balancing the faculties,
- (4) avoidance of persons without understanding,
- (5) cultivation of persons with understanding,
- (6) reviewing the field for the exercise of profound knowledge and
- (7) resoluteness upon that investigation of *dhamma*.<sup>16</sup>

Investigation of *dhamma* can be understood as an investigation of subjective experience based on the discrimination gained through familiarity with the *dhamma*. Such discrimination refers in particular to the ability to distinguish between what is wholesome for progress on the path and what is unwholesome. This directly contrasts investigation of *dhamma* with the hindrance doubt (*vīcīkicchā*).<sup>17</sup> The investigation of *dhamma* involves having enough awareness to be able to observe without judging. This observation is not analyzing or thinking about anything; it is rather a clear, silent seeing of the *actual* condition of body and mind.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Anālayo, 2003, *Satipaṇṇhāna* (The Direct Path to Realization), (O.S.Printing House, Bangkok), p.235.

<sup>16</sup> Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, 1975, *The Path of Purification* (*Visuddhimagga*), tr. by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka), p.127.

<sup>17</sup> Anālayo, 2003, *Satipaṇṇhāna* (The Direct Path to Realization), (O.S.Printing House, Bangkok), p.235.

<sup>18</sup> Ajahn Thiradhammo, 2012, *Contemplations on the Seven Factors of Awakening*, (Bolden Trade, Malaysia), p.41.

## The Contemplation of Energy (*Vīriyasambojjhaṅga*)

There are eleven things lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of energy:

- (1) reviewing the fearfulness of the states of loss such as the hell realms, etc.,
- (2) seeing benefit in obtaining the mundane and supramundane distinctions dependent on energy,
- (3) reviewing the course of the journey thus: “the path taken by the *Buddhas*, *Pacceka Buddhas* and the great disciples has to be taken by me and it cannot be taken by an idler”,
- (4) being a credit to the alms food by producing great fruit for the givers,
- (5) reviewing the greatness of the Enlightened One,
- (6) reviewing the greatness of the heritage,
- (7) removing stiffness and torpor by attention to perception of light, change of postures, frequenting the open air, etc.,
- (8) avoidance of idle persons,
- (9) cultivation of energetic persons,
- (10) reviewing the right endeavors and
- (11) resoluteness upon that energy.<sup>19</sup>–

Meditators will come to realize the enlightenment factor of energy during their meditation practice. In order to be mindful, they have to make an effort, they have to try hard and they have to exert themselves.<sup>20</sup>– Each of factors of enlightenment cumulatively supports the development of the others. They form a cause and effect relationship. When mindful, a meditator discriminates and investigates to penetrate into the processes underlying physicality and mentality. While this occurs, if a meditator exerts the required level of energy, the enlightenment factor of energy is developed. An adequate level of energy is required for the fulfillment of learning.<sup>21</sup>–

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<sup>19</sup>Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, 1975, **The Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*)**, tr.by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka), p.127.

<sup>20</sup>Chanmyay, Myaing Sayadaw, 2008, **The *Bojjhaṅga*: Medicine That Makes All Diseases Disappear**\_, (Tr.by Ven. Ariya Ñān Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). p.57.

<sup>21</sup>Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajīva, **The Seven Factors of Enlightenment**, Sri Lanka, p.18.



### **The Contemplation of Rapture (*Pītisaṃbojjhaṅga*)**

There are eleven things lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of rapture:

- (1) the recollection of the *Buddha*,
- (2) the recollection of the *Dhamma*,
- (3) the recollection of the *Saṅgha*,
- (4) the recollection of virtue,
- (5) the recollection of generosity,
- (6) the recollection of deities,
- (7) the recollection of peace,
- (8) the avoidance of rough persons,
- (9) the cultivation of refined persons,
- (10) the reviewing encouraging discourses and
- (11) the resoluteness upon that happiness.<sup>22</sup>–

The man lacking in this quality cannot proceed along the path to enlightenment. There will arise in him sullen indifference to the *dhamma*, an aversion to the practice of meditation and morbid manifestations. It is very necessary that a man, striving to attain enlightenment and final deliverance from the fetters of *saṃsāra*, should endeavor to cultivate the all important factor of happiness.<sup>23</sup>–

### **The Contemplation of Tranquility (*Passadhisambojjhaṅga*)**

There are seven things that lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of tranquility:

- (1) using superior food,
- (2) living in a good climate,
- (3) maintaining a pleasant posture,
- (4) keeping to the middle,
- (5) avoidance of violent persons,
- (6) cultivation of persons tranquil in body, and

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<sup>22</sup>Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, 1975, **The Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*)**, tr.by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka), p.127.

<sup>23</sup>Piyadassi Thera, 1960-1980, **The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*Satta Bojjhanga*)**, (Wheel Publication No. 1, Sri Lanka, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society), p.26.

(7) resoluteness upon that tranquility.<sup>24–</sup>

There are many kinds of tranquility. If we observe the conditions of body and mind in terms of tranquility, at the end of a meditation for example, we may notice how the body has changed in the course of sitting. And we can recognize different degrees of tranquility. Some of them are perhaps not particularly helpful or supportive of meditation practice. Sometimes tranquility can be very heavy, close to sleepiness or dullness.<sup>25–</sup>

The man, who cultivates calm of the mind, does not get upset, confused or excited when confronted with the eight worldly conditions (*aṭṭha-lokadhamma*). He endeavors to see the rise and fall of all things conditioned, how things come into being and pass away. Free from anxiety and restlessness, he will see the fragility of the fragile.<sup>26–</sup>

## The Contemplation of Concentration (*Samādhisaṃbojjhaṅga*)

There are eleven things that lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of concentration:

- (1) making the basis clean,
- (2) skill in the sign,
- (3) balancing the faculties,
- (4) restraining the mind on occasion,
- (5) exerting the mind on occasion,
- (6) encouraging the listless mind by means of faith and a sense of urgency,
- (7) looking on with equanimity at what is occurring rightly,
- (8) avoidance of unconcentrated persons,
- (9) cultivation of concentrated persons,
- (10) reviewing of the *jhāna* and liberations and
- (11) resoluteness upon that concentration.<sup>27–</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, 1975, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, tr.by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka), p.128.

<sup>25</sup>Ajahn Thiradhammo, 2012, *Contemplations on the Seven Factors of Awakening*, (Bolden Trade, Malaysia), p.82.

<sup>26</sup>Piyadassi Thera, 1960-1980, *The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (Satta Bojjhanga)*, (Wheel Publication No. 1, Sri Lanka, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society), p.32.

<sup>27</sup>Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, 1975, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, tr.by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka), p.128.

Actually, concentration is the main point of all meritorious deeds. For example, the chief or the leader of all the soldiers, horses, elephants and chariots that are fighting on the battlefield is the king. All the soldiers have to carry out the orders of the king. In the same way, concentration is the main factor when performing any meritorious deed. The mind needs to be inclined towards concentration, only when concentration is present, does wholesomeness arise so that one will be successful. Therefore, we need to make an effort to arouse concentration.<sup>28</sup>–

### **The Contemplation of Equanimity (*Upekkhāsaṃbojjhaṅga*)**

There are five things that lead to the arising of the enlightenment factor of equanimity:

- (1) maintenance of neutrality towards living beings,
- (2) maintenance of neutrality towards formations (inanimate things),
- (3) avoidance of persons who show favoritism towards beings and formations,
- (4) cultivating of persons who maintain neutrality towards beings and formations and
- (5) resoluteness upon that equanimity.<sup>29</sup>–

In the context of the Factors of Awakening, equanimity follows and is thus supported by concentration, and before that is tranquility. Ultimately, however, perfect equanimity comes from wisdom, from clearly seeing the true nature of things. When one understands that all things are impermanent, always changing, ephemeral, what is there to get excited about? Everything is just changing phenomena, just flowing processes. Ultimately equanimity is that profound, dispassionate stillness where everything manifests but is not reacted to, just silently received.<sup>30</sup>–

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<sup>28</sup>Chanmyay, Myaing Sayadaw, 2008, *The Bojjhāṅga: Medicine That Makes All Diseases Disappear*, (Tr.by Ven. Ariya Ñān Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). p.90.

<sup>29</sup>Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, 1975, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, tr.by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka), p.128.

<sup>30</sup>Ajahn Thiradhammo, 2012, *Contemplations on the Seven Factors of Awakening*, (Bolden Trade, Malaysia), p.125.

## Two Kinds of Sickness and Two Kinds of Medicine

In the *Pali* Canon, there are various words used to describe what in English is called “illness,” “disease,” “sickness.” Among these, the most commonly used words are *roga*, *byādhī* and *ābādhā*. In the *Roga sutta*, the Enlightened One said that there is sickness of the body and sickness of the mind. In the *Abhidhammā* the mental defilements, which are states that afflict and defile the mind of beings, are globally included in the category of unwholesome states (*akusalā dhammā*).

The *Pali Nikāyas* differentiate between *dukkha* born of physical contact and *domanassa* born of mental contact. For example, the *Saccavibhaṅgasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* answers the question ‘what are *dukkha* and *domanassa*?’ Physical pain, physical discomfort, painful, uncomfortable feeling born of physical contact – this is called *dukkha*. Mental pain, mental discomfort, painful, uncomfortable feeling born of mental contact – this is called *domanassa*.

An analysis of Buddhist stories shows a clear picture of different types of mentally sick persons. The famous examples of psychopaths of violent type are *Devadatta*, *Ajātasattu* and *Āṅgulimāla*; and *Paṭācārī* and *Kisāgotamī* are the example of psychoses. *Paṭācārī*’s story is not told in the *Therīgāthā* but is provided by the commentaries.

Therefore, there are two kinds of sicknesses:

- (1) physical sickness and
- (2) mental sickness.

Physical sickness refers to the ninety-six diseases that can afflict the body. Mental sickness refers to the one thousand five hundred defilements (*kilesā*) that can afflict the mind.<sup>31</sup> Here, if there are two kinds of sickness, there will be two kinds of medicine. There was the famous doctor, named *Jīvaka*, in *Jīvaka sutta*, *Āṅguttara Nikāya*. He cured physical sickness by giving of medicine so that the patient was relieved from his sickness. Similarly The Enlightened One cured the mental sickness of *Kisāgotamī* with His teaching as *dhammabhesajja* in the *Kisāgotamī* story.

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<sup>31</sup>Chanmyay, Myaing Sayadaw, 2008, *The Bojjhaṅga: Medicine That Makes All Diseases Disappear*, (Tr. by Ven. Ariya Nān Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). p.2.

## The Medical Healer of the *Bojjhaṅga*

At the time of the Enlightened One, The Enlightened One recited the *Bojjhaṅga sutta* as *dhammabhesajja* in order to heal the physical sickness of *Mahākassapa Thera* and *Mahāmoggalāna Thera* in *Mahākassapa Bojjhaṅga sutta* and *Mahāmoggalāna Bojjhaṅga sutta*. Similarly, the Enlightened One himself listened to the reciting of *Mahācunda Thera* to heal from his sickness in *Mahācunda Bojjhaṅga sutta*.

The Enlightened one was asked by one of the monks what were the enlightenment factors and why they are called enlightenment factors. The Enlightened One answered that these factors lead to enlightenment, so they are called enlightenment factors.

These factors leading to enlightenment, *bojjhaṅgas*, need to be practiced and developed repeatedly. Then we can attain insight knowledge, path knowledge, fruition knowledge and *Nibbāna*. With the attainment of *Nibbāna*, we do not suffer from any sickness and we are free from all kinds of diseases. The Enlightened One attained *Buddhahood* because he took the medicine of the *bojjhaṅgas*.<sup>32</sup>

## How to Practice the Seven Factors of Enlightenment to Cure All Sickness

Firstly, if a person would like to cure physical sickness and mental sickness, he has to listen to the *Bojjhaṅga sutta*. Even if a person cannot understand the meaning of the seven factors of enlightenment, a person will free himself from his sickness because of the power of these factors, the power of the sound of a reciting person and his belief on these factors. If a person understands the meaning of the seven factors of enlightenment clearly, he can cure his sickness because of his rapture from listening to the *Bojjhaṅga sutta*, the volition of a reciting person towards him, and his tranquility from the understanding of the *dhamma*.<sup>33</sup>

Secondly, a meditator has to practice the seven factors of enlightenment for curing of physical sickness and also mental sickness. In *Ānāpānasati sutta*, the Enlightened One expounded how are the seven factors for enlightenment developed and pursued so as to

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<sup>32</sup>Chanmyay, Myaing Sayadaw, 2008, **The *Bojjhaṅga*: Medicine That Makes All Diseases Disappear**, (Tr. by Ven. Ariya Ñān Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). p.6.

<sup>33</sup>Thapyaekan Sayadaw, 2005, **The Great Teaching of Satta Bojjhaṅga**, (2nd), (Yangon, Myanmar), p.190.

bring clear knowing and to achieve their culmination. There is the case where a monk develops *mindfulness* as a factor for enlightenment dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in relinquishment. He develops analysis of qualities as a factor for enlightenment, persistence as a factor for enlightenment, rapture as a factor for enlightenment, serenity as a factor for enlightenment, concentration as a factor for enlightenment, equanimity as a factor for enlightenment, dependent on seclusion, dependent on dispassion, dependent on cessation, resulting in relinquishment.

## Conclusion

The objectives of this article were to study the meanings and types of the seven factors of enlightenment (*sattabojjhaṅga*), how we contemplate these factors according to the teachings of the Enlightened One, how they cure all sickness in the *Pāḷi* Canon, and why they can cure the sickness in *Theravāda* Buddhist Perspective.

Now, how do we put all these Seven Factors of Enlightenment together? In a practical sense, some of them are quite active, energetic qualities, and others are more calming. There are three active ones: investigation of *dharmma*, energy and joy. Three others are calming: tranquility, concentration and equanimity. And mindfulness watches over them all. First we become familiar with the whole range of these qualities. As you know, they are in the mind already and we all have some tranquility, some concentration, some investigation and so on. When we recognize what is truly tranquility and not just passivity, the difference between equanimity and indifference, we can learn how to cultivate those positive qualities. Recognizing them as Factors of Enlightenment, we give them some emphasis, some cultivation and development, so that they become prominent qualities for spiritual practice.

With mindfulness as guardian, we observe the particular condition of mind on any occasion and adapt the practice accordingly. It is not a good time to develop tranquility when the mind is in a dull state. A meditator has got enough ‘tranquility’ already. When the mind is sluggish and dull, it may be a good time to develop the more active qualities. If the mind is tired or low in energy, it may be time to develop the factor of energy. If the mind is depressed or down, maybe joy is the quality to develop. When the mind is dull, muddled and unclear, it may be appropriate to develop investigation of *dharmma*, the investigation of phenomena, and bring up reflective thinking so you can investigate the nature of things and clear the mind. Conversely, when the mind is active and excited, tranquility may be a good quality to help balance it.

When the mind is scattered or restless, perhaps that's a good time to develop concentration. Concentration provides a boundary, a focus. When the mind is worried or in doubt, equanimity is a good balance for it. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment come together in what we call *samatha-vipassana*, calm and insight meditation. That's what the Seven Factors actually create. Calm meditation is primarily energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity. Insight practice is primarily mindfulness and the investigation of *dhamma*. Thus what we call calm and insight meditation brings the Seven Factors of Enlightenment together, and this is how the Buddha defined Buddhist meditation: calm and insight, *samatha-vipassana*. Calm and insight meditation, the developing of the mind, is the fundamental meditation practice, leading to a clearer, more penetrative view of the true nature of reality, and culminating in the experience of full Enlightenment. Therefore these factors can cure physical and mental sickness.

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