**SATTASAMBOJJHANGA-THE SEVEN FACTORS FOR AWAKENING**

The seven factors for awakening are wholesome mind conditions that, when cultivated and brought to full potential, lead to nibbana (nirvana in Sanskrit). These factors are found many times in different contexts throughout the Pali Canon, perhaps most significantly in the Satipatthana Sutta, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness teachings, and the Anapanasati Sutta, the teaching on mindfulness of breathing. The word *bojjhanga* combines two words: *Bodhi,* the awakened process regarding life, and *anga,* a causative factor; therefore, we can understand the word to mean the factors that cause awakening. *Satta* simply denotes that there are seven factors

The basic formula is described in the Satipatthana Sutta, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness Discourse and is the primary focus for practice in the First Foundation of Mindfulness in the practice of Mindfulness of Breathing Meditation. As sati is developed through breath awareness, this quality of attention is brought to all the foundations of mindfulness, and is to: 1) Note the present moment awareness of mindfulness (of an Awakening Factor), 2) Note the present absence of mindfulness (of an Awakening factor), 3) Note how mindfulness(of an Awakening Factor) emerges into awareness, 4) Note the culmination of mindfulness (of an Awakening Factor) in the present moment of experiential flow.

"Furthermore, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the *seven factors for Awakening.* And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the seven factors for Awakening? There is the case where, there being mindfulness as a factor for Awakening present within, he discerns that 'Mindfulness as a factor for Awakening is present within me.' Or, there being no mindfulness as a factor for Awakening present within, he discerns that 'Mindfulness as a factor for Awakening is not present within me.' He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for Awakening. And he discerns how there is the culmination of the development of mindfulness as a factor for Awakening once it has arisen. (The same formula is repeated for the remaining factors for Awakening: analysis of qualities, persistence, rapture, serenity, concentration, & equanimity.) translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

**The Seven Factors for Awakening**

"And how are the four frames of reference developed & pursued so as to bring the seven factors for awakening to their culmination?

"**[1]** On whatever occasion the monk remains focused on the *body* in & of itself — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world, on that occasion his mindfulness is steady & without lapse. When his mindfulness is steady & without lapse, then *mindfulness* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

"**[2]** Remaining mindful in this way, he examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment. When he remains mindful in this way, examining, analyzing, & coming to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, then *analysis of qualities* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

"**[3]** In one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, persistence is aroused unflaggingly. When persistence is aroused unflaggingly in one who examines, analyzes, & comes to a comprehension of that quality with discernment, then *persistence* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

"**[4]** In one whose persistence is aroused, a rapture not-of-the-flesh arises. When a rapture not-of-the-flesh arises in one whose persistence is aroused, then *rapture* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

"**[5]** For one enraptured at heart, the body grows calm and the mind grows calm. When the body & mind of a monk enraptured at heart grow calm, then *serenity* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

"**[6]** For one who is at ease — his body calmed — the mind becomes concentrated. When the mind of one who is at ease — his body calmed — becomes concentrated, then *concentration* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

"**[7]** He carefully watches the mind thus concentrated with equanimity. When he carefully watches the mind thus concentrated with equanimity, *equanimity* as a factor for awakening becomes aroused. He develops it, and for him it goes to the culmination of its development.

*(Similarly with the other three frames of reference: feelings, mind, & mental qualities.) Anapanasati Sutta, Thanissaro*

These qualities of the mind are latent in awareness from the beginning of one’s meditation practice. Their availability and proficiency in activation are obscured by the Five Hindrances of Clinging, the topical area of focus at the beginning of the Fourth Foundation of Mindfulness. As practice matures the disruptive capacity of the hindrances diminishes and the functionality of the Awakening factors becomes enhanced and more vivid in awareness. These factors are then available for revealing the deeply important realizations of anicca (impermanence), dukkha (distress and confusion) and anatta (the absence of an enduring, autonomous self), which are key achievements in the process of Awakening.

My intention in future talks is to focus on each of these factors in ways that might increase understanding of the functions of each and how they interact to cultivate clear awareness (samma ditthi) and benevolent intention (samma sankappa), that is, the Wisdom aspect of the Eightfold Path. The factors of mindfulness, investigation of mental phenomena, energy/effort and concentration are some of the component elements of vipassana, insight into the characteristics of impermanence, non-self, and the inevitable suffering that arises as the result of craving and clinging.

The seven factors can be subdivided into three categories: persistence (viriya, the energy awakening factor), investigation of mental phenomena (dhamma vicaya) and enthusiastic interest in what is being fabricated into a self (piti, the joy awakening factor) have an energizing effect on consciousness, while stability of attention (samadhi, the concentration awakening factor), internal calmness (passadhi, the tranquility awakening factor) and emotional non-reactivity (upekkha, the equanimity awakening factor) have a quieting effect on consciousness. These functions are monitored by present-moment awareness (sati, the mindfulness awakening factor) to become aware of any imbalances between energizing and quieting or being too confident or too skeptical in the process of shaping a personality.

The next talk will focus on the first of the Awakening factors, sati, mindfulness.