

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment and Their Potential Health Benefits: an Analytical Study of Meditation Practitioners

Abstract

The seven factors of enlightenment are the imperative foundation of attainment of the ultimate liberation as well as the Buddha's alternative therapy. This research is a necessity for public health and Buddhist research field. This paper aims to investigate logical connections between the seven factors of Enlightenment and their potential health benefits in established literature, in health experiences of meditators by developing the factors in meditation centres. The interview method and the questionnaire survey were used to investigate the health experiences of nine meditators. The finding indicated that the four individuals recovered completely from their diseases just by listening to seven factors in literature, the six respondents cured completely of diseases and three respondents in partial relief from diseases by development of these factors. This research attempted to provide suggestion- alternative measure to conventional scientific remedies by using these factors in meditation and not just listening to the recitation of the Bojjhaṅga Sutta.

Key words: enlightenment, wellbeing, meditation, Bojjhaṅga Sutta

Introduction

The Buddha's teachings can endow benefit of different natures, super-mundane as well as worldly. The Buddha taught seven factors of Enlightenment with many different strategies in appropriate time according to human beings' levels of knowledge. Mostly, the Buddha taught his disciples with reference to elimination of defilements or to realization of Nibbāna. But, in Mahāvaggasaṃyutta, Bojjhaṅgasāmyutta, He declares, three-times in total, the seven factors of Enlightenment referring to curing of the sicknesses. Two out of three times, the Buddha recited the factors for Venerable Mahā Moggalāna and Mahākassapa to achieve instant recovery from their illness and once the Buddha makes Venerable Mahā Sunna to recite the seven factors to Him to recover from His sickness. In the Buddha's employment of the seven factors of Enlightenment as a therapy for sicknesses of the three Venerable saints, Buddha, Mahā Kassapa, Mahā Moggalāna, were completely and instantly cured after the recitation.¹ In Pathama Gilānasutta, the commentator Venerable Mahā Buddhaghosa said Venerable Mahākassapa recollected these factors while listening to Bojjhaṅga that I had developed these factors while I

¹ S. v-71, 72, 73.

had got rid of defilements or realized Nibbāna. At that time, Venerable Mahākassapa recovered from his sickness because the blood and materials in his body, cleaned.²

Illustrating the Bojjhaṅgasamīyutta mentioned above, the early Buddhist monks managed Bojjhaṅga Paritta composing original Pāli Suttas referring to recite easily.³ Sayardaw Ashin Nandamālābhivaṃsa also said that the Bojjhaṅga Sutta in Paritta is a Sutta that the early Buddhist monks composed as incantations for ease of reciting or it is a Sutta composed as incantations incorporating the truth to cure diseases because it is very difficult to cure diseases with these factors for not everyone has ability to practically develop the seven factors.⁴

In the present days, Most Buddhist people usually listen to Bojjhaṅga Sutta especially when someone in their family is seriously ill or almost die. At that time, it is seen that mostly, it is extremely difficult for the patient himself to listen to Bojjhaṅga Sutta as well as very hard to develop Bojjhaṅga. Therefore, it can be said that it is not just a genuinely methodical developing to cure their illness with Bojjhaṅga as the Buddha indicated. It is just only the best way to lead patient to happy realms after death. Most Buddhist people do not usually attempt to treat their diseases by developing Bojjhaṅga as they obviously do not understand Bojjhaṅga and their potential health benefits. Therefore, it seems that most Buddhist people do not use Bojjhaṅga for treatment of their diseases whenever they are in physical ailment and mental stress. They usually attempt to cure their diseases only using scientific medicines, therapies and drugs proven and produced scientifically, or revert to alcoholism and resort to other means to alleviate their pains and sufferings. They invariably have to face consequences, suffering from the side-effects of such medicines and activities. Within our short lifespan, a cycle of diseases is constantly spinning in our bodies. Modern and scientific medicines and therapies are expansive but there is no guarantee of recovery or success and usually out of the reach of common people. A usual alternative is spiritual healing, in this case the application of seven factors of enlightenment in treating diseases. There have been proven cases and witness accounts where neither traditional nor modern medicines work but the intense concentration applying the seven factors can drive the ailments away. As medical technology has been seldom fail-safe and numerous human errors abound leading to tragic losses of valuable human lives, and alternative way of healing, viable for low income families and useful for others with means as an alternative or a last resort, should be explored.

Everyone needs to comprehend and use the Buddha's medicine and therapy without side-effect as there is no use of chemicals, dangerous radiation or surgical tools, to practise in treating diseases, to realise these factors deeply and the significant links between these factors and one's physical and mental health. To best of researcher's knowledge, there is no research that practically investigates potential health benefits of these seven factors and the natural

² Spk-186

³ Tipiṭaka Pāli-Myanmar Dictionary, Volume (15)- 335

⁴ Ashin Nandamālābhivaṃsa (Ph. D), Summary of Bojjhaṅga Sutta-4

evolutionary changes of mind and matter with the application of these factors. Therefore, this research can possibly contribute to public health and Buddhist research field.

This research aims to investigate the seven factors of Enlightenment and their potential health benefits, to point out the systematic cultivation of seven factors for suitable solution of physical and mental problems, to explore logically the natural evolutionary changes of mind and matter with seven factors and to give a very positive contribution for public health.

Literature Review

There are Thirty-Seven Bodhipakkhiya Dhammas in Buddhism. These Dhammas are the most essential Dhammas in Buddhism. Bodhi means Enlightenment. Pakkhiya means Factor. Bodhipakkhiya means Factors of Enlightenment.⁵ Bodhipakkhiya Dhammas are assembled as Seven Groups. In them, Satta Bojjhaṅga; the Seven Constituents of Enlightenment include as a sixth group. Satta means seven. Bojjhaṅga comes from the two words Bodhi and Aṅga. Aṅga means factor. Satta Bojjhaṅga means the Seven Factors of Enlightenment. The Sāratthapakāsanī defines them as Factors of Wisdom or of one who has attained Wisdom (Bojjhaṅgāni bodhāya bodhissa vā aṅga).⁶ They are .1 Satisambojjhaṅga; Mindfulness 2. Dhammavicayasambojjhaṅga; Investigation of Dhamma 3. Viriyasambojjhaṅga; Energy 4. Pīṭisambojjhaṅga; Zest 5. Passaddhisambojjhaṅga; Tranquility 6. Samādhisambojjhaṅga; Concentration 7. Upekkhāsambojjhaṅga; Equanimity.⁷ They are very important factors in realization of Nibbāna. There is no one realized to Nibbāna without cultivation of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment in Buddhism.⁸ Therefore, these factors must be cultivated if one wants to realise Nibbāna.

The Buddha taught the seven factors of enlightenment his disciples to realise Nibbāna with different strategies in many times according to level of human's knowledge but in the three times of all, especially the Buddha taught the seven factors to heal suffering from illness. In Saṃyutta Nikāya, Venerable Mahākassapa extremely was in sickness in his Pappali cave. The Buddha went to Mahākassapa and taught Bojjhaṅga Dhamma. Venerable Mahākassapa's serious sufferings from sickness were cured after listening it.⁹ Likewise, when Mahāmoggalāna also was in sickness in his place, the Buddha went to Mahāmoggalāna and taught Bojjhaṅga Dhamma. Venerable Mahāmoggalāna's serious sufferings also from sickness immediately were cured after listening it.¹⁰ An addition, When the Buddha Himself seriously suffered from sickness, the Buddha made Mahāsanna to recite for Him. After Mahāsanna recited Bojjhaṅga Dhamma, the

⁵ EB (VOLUME-III)- 210

⁶ Spk-177. EB (VOLUME-III)-264

⁷ S. V- 71. EB (VOLUME-III)- 263.

⁸ Ashin Nandamālābhivaraṃsa (Ph.D.) Summary of Bojjhaṅga Sutta-73

⁹ S. V-71

¹⁰ S. V- 72

Buddha's sickness was completely cured.¹¹ The commentator Mahā Buddhaghosa said reason that Mahāthe thought these factors appeared in my mind since I realized the four noble truths in my seventh day of becoming a monk. His blood and materials are very clean by recollecting these factors at the time of listening it. Therefore, his sickness was completely cured.¹²

In Sagāthāvagga Saṃyutta Pāli, Subrāhma Devaputta suffered from the most extreme sorrow because of seeing that his five hundred goddesses unexpectedly died picking flowers from a tree in the garden and went to hell and then he himself with together his left five hundred goddesses will die and go to hell after next seventh day. He asks the Buddha on the cause of overcoming his sorrow and fear, the Buddha respond Devaputta that He do not see nothing expect captivating the seven factors (Bojjhaṅga), an ascetic practice (Dhutaṅga tapa), subjugation of senses (Indriya Saṃvara), free from craving (Nibbāna) to overcome much sorrow and much fear. At the end of the teaching of the Buddha, Subrāhma Devaputta overcame his the most serious sorrow and he became one who has entered the stream of Path.¹³

In Kuṇḍaliyasutta Bojjhaṅgasamyutta, the Buddha replied a wanderer named Kuṇḍaliya that Cattāro kho Kuṇḍaliya satipaṭṭhāne bhāvitā bhahulikātā satta bojjhaṅge paripūressantīti Kuṇḍaliya! If the four satipaṭṭhāna are developed frequently, the seven factors will achieve.¹⁴ This is a very exact method to achieve seven factors for meditators indicated by the Buddha. There are two kinds of Kammatṭhāna Samatha Kammatṭhāna; calm meditation and Vipassanā Kammatṭhāna insight meditation. Concentration is called Samatha because it can cause to calm hindrances [Nīvaraṇānaṃ samanaṭṭhena samathasaṅkhātānaṃ].¹⁵ Wisdom is called Vipassanā because it can cause to insight distinctly three characteristics Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta of mind and matter [Aniccādivividhākārato dassanaṭṭhena vipassanāsaṅkhātānaṃ].¹⁶ Kammatṭhāna means two sense-object Samatha and Vipassanā in establishment of concentration [Duvidhabhāvanākammaṃsa pavattiṭṭhānatāya kammatṭhānabhūtamārammaṇaṃ].¹⁷

To develop the two Kammatṭhāna, there is Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta in Mijjhimanikāya. In this sutta, there are four kinds of foundations of mindfulness. They are Kāyānupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna, Vedanānupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna, Cittānupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna and Dhammānupassanā Satipaṭṭhāna. In the four kinds of definition about the cause of the four kinds of Satipaṭṭhāna, the commentator said in second definition that the first two anupassanā Kāya and Vedanā are for two persons the dull one and the sharp one wanted to develop calm meditation. The last two anupassanā Citta and Dhamma are for two person the dull one and the

¹¹ S. V- 73

¹² Spk- (Mahāvaggasamyutta Aṭṭhakathā)-186

¹³ S. I-52, Spk. I- (Sagāthāvagga Saṃyutta Aṭṭhakathā)- 103, 104

¹⁴ S. V- 66

¹⁵ Abhidhammatṭhavibhāvinīṭikā- 256. Ashin Janakābhivaraṃsa Saṅgyobhāsāṭikā-627

¹⁶ Abhidhammatṭhavibhāvinīṭikā- 256. Ashin Janakābhivaraṃsa Saṅgyobhāsāṭikā-627

¹⁷ Abhidhammatṭhavibhāvinīṭikā- 256. Ashin Janakābhivaraṃsa Saṅgyobhāsāṭikā-628

sharp one desired to develop insight meditation.¹⁸Therefore, this research will approach meditation method to develop systematically the Seven Factors of Enlightenment according to Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta.

In Maccupāsamuttipaṇā Milindapaṇā Pāli, Venerable Nāgasena replied King Milinda that the Paritta are able to protect from harm only for one who be perfect with these three kinds of condition 1) a remaining life, 2) good age and 3) a free from limitation of the five acts that have immediate retribution. And then, Venerable Nāgasena gave two illustrations King Milinda relating to it. First illustration is that if a tree is dry, not alive, lack of tending, and hollow, it cannot return to be a luxuriant tree with leafs and branches although it is watered by a hundred water-pots. Second illustration is that a farmer has to stop taking water into farm when rice paddies ripen and dry and only the fresh and delicate rice paddies with cloud color can be grown up by water.¹⁹

In this case, third factor a free from limitation of the five acts that have immediate retribution, is the most important point as power of the five acts is the greatest in the world. And then, first factor a remaining life, is the more important than second factor good age. A remaining life means that patient is still remaining after disease.

There are Seven Factors of Enlightenment well-known Dhamma in Buddhist literature. They are the vital factors to realise to Nibbāna in Buddhism. If one wants to develop methodically these factors, it needs to take meditation according to Kuṇḍaliyasutta Bojjhaṅgasamṃyutta. In fact, the Buddha taught these factors to realise to Nibbāna in many times with different ways in Tipiṭaka. Among these, treatment of ailments with these factors occurs a total of three times.²⁰ The early Buddhist monks incorporated these factors composing incantations into Paritta for protection against sickness. Therefore, most Buddhist people are familiar with the factors as the Buddhist therapy but they do not know clearly, extensively how to cure disease with these factors. Indeed, this case is needed to know clearly, extensively to cure easily their diseases. There are many books, research studies, articles, Dhamma-talks on benefits of the seven factors of Enlightenment as well as on benefits of meditation. But, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no study which has investigated practically the potential health benefits of the seven factors and the natural evolutionary changes of mind and matter by combining these factors with meditation method.

Among these books, in Mahāsī Sayardaw (1995), Teaching of Bojjhaṅga, Yangon, Myanmar, Sarpaypownkue, First Print. In this book, Sayardaw taught the Bojjhaṅga with the meditation method according to Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta. Although Sayardaw addressed a systematical method in detail to cultivate the Bojjhaṅga for meditators in this book, he did not address Bojjhaṅga referring to health case. In Vāsetṭhābhivasa, Ven, (2005), Great Teaching of

¹⁸ D-II A- 347

¹⁹ Mil 152, 153

²⁰ S. V - 71,72,73

Satta Bojjhaṅga, Yangon, Myanmar, Mikhin Ayarvati, second print, Sayardaw wrote extensively about the Seven Factors of Enlightenment with their characteristics, duties, appearances, proximate causes and the cause of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment. It can be said this is the most comprehensive description about the Seven Factors of Enlightenment in Myanmar Buddhist Scholar's books. Sayardaw distinguished worldly Bojjhaṅga and unworldly Bojjhaṅga for everyone can easily cultivate the Bojjhaṅga anywhere. But, Sayardaw did not describe extensively the Bojjhaṅga emplacing health perspective. In Nandamālābhivaṁsa (Ph.D), Ashin (2011), Summary of Bojjhaṅga Sutta, Yangon, Myanmar, Aung Zambu, First Print. Sayardaw taught exactly the systematic method and benefits to develop the Seven Factors of Enlightenment in treatment for illness. This is the essential book for this research work. It can be seen that Sayardaw did not investigate practically extensively the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, their potential health benefits and the natural evolutionary changes of mind and matter with seven factors. In addition, this is a book printed from Sayardaw's a Dhamma talk. Everyone exactly, evidently, extensively should know these factors, method to develop and their potential health benefits. Therefore, this research certainly needs for publish health and Buddhist research field.

Related Research

A. Spowart, Sara (March 5, 2014), In Long-term Mindfulness Meditation: Anxiety, Depression, Stress and Pain, Is There A Connection for Public Health? University of South Florida. In this dissertation, researcher used Mixed Method (Quantitative and Qualitative). It investigates the concept of each factors, the types of each factor and doctrines relating to seven factors, the significance, investigate whether there is a relationship between stress, anxiety, depression, pain and long-term (one year of more) mindfulness meditation practice. If a relationship exists, this study was meant to explore the meaning and significance of this relationship. It also investigates whether long-term mindfulness meditation practice may be relevant to public health through its community-based settings. All participants in both the pilot and general study indicated a positive improvement in perceived levels of stress, pain, anxiety and depression. Participants commonly began a committed. Regular mindfulness meditation practice after loss of an important relationship. All participants indicated that mindfulness meditation practice is an effective treatment and has potential value for school-age children. In addition, regular mindfulness meditation practice severed as an additional support to participants using prescription medication or therapy to manage their condition more effectively. Mindfulness meditation practice is also low-cost and can be done whenever needed, these outcomes are especially important for those who suffer from anxiety, depression, stress and who will not seek or cannot afford therapy or meditation.

Puñña Kāmī (2017) conducted an Analytical Study of the Seven Factors Enlightenment in Bojjhaṅga Sutta as a protection against sickness in Theravada Buddhist perspective, Mahachulalongkornjavidya University. In this research, the major method used by researcher is textual analysis which reviewed early Theravada Pāli canon, Pāli Nikāya, commentaries, sub-commentaries and the Theravada Buddhist texts, the research works, Buddhist journals together

with the later interpretations from modern Buddhist scholars. It examined the seven factors of enlightenment in the undeniable stories at the time of the Buddha, the concepts of each factors, the types of each factor, the doctrines, the application, the significance, benefits of these factors.

Cyr, Serena M.A. (2017) conducted a study, *Spirituality within Research: a Pathway through Meditation*, Antioch University Santa Barbara. In this dissertation, researcher used quantitative method of online survey. It tested survey data (N=965) using t-tests, chi square, and logistic regression statistics at the $p < .05$ threshold for statistical significance. Overall, 53% of the total sample reported achieving spiritual height `` many times" or `` almost always" during meditation, with 62% of MM practitioners reporting experiencing spiritual height `` many times" or `` almost always". One third or more of secular meditation (MBSR) and (RR) practitioners reported achieving spiritual height `` many times" or `` almost always". Combined, these findings indicate that the clinical community need to be aware that meditation is a viable strategy to achieve spiritual height in clients, even if the meditation is secular in nature, and that MM may provide the best odds of experiencing spiritual height during meditation.

Research Methodology

In this research work, a mixed method- a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches was used to investigate the role and impact of the seven factors of enlightenment for practitioners of meditation. The questionnaire survey is administered to the meditators to collect quantitative and qualitative data while the interview method assists in the collection of mostly qualitative data offering more specific information on the meditators' individual experiences. In this research, firstly, data is collected from Buddhist Pāli Canons, commentaries, sub-commentaries and also from numerous books and voices of numerous monks in Myanmar concerned with this research, to study using thematic analysis and discourse analysis. Secondly, using interview and survey methods, data was collected from nine participants based on their diseases, types of meditation, experiences, feelings and beneficial health effects of seven factors of enlightenment in two meditation centres.

The tools used for the research were a questionnaires survey and follow-up interviews. Nine meditators from two meditation centres were selected: eight participants from Dhamma Yatanar Meditation Centre and one from Yanking Nyein Aye Meditation Centre in Patheingyie Township, Mandalay. The questionnaire was administered to the participants followed by the interviews. One criterion for selection respondents is he/she must have benefited from his/her meditation experiences, most preferably being cured from the diseases they were suffering from. Since the aim of the research is to verify and confirm the beneficial impacts of the seven factors of enlightenment, it is necessary to measure the effect of meditation and concomitant factors on the practitioners.

For the questionnaire survey, the researcher drew a statistical tool with eight parts to investigate how the meditators feel about the seven factors of enlightenment in their mind and body while they practised meditation there. For individual participants, the researcher made a paper file with fifteen questions for interviews and a questionnaire in two languages- English and Myanmar, based on their experiences of the seven factors of enlightenment and the beneficial health effects.

In the choice of participants, it was ensured that all of them were practicing meditation and that all of them have been completely or partially cured of their diseases. Among the respondents, there are a monk, five nuns and three laywomen. Each participant was given a survey to collect background information of the research and to preview for ten minutes before answering interview questions followed by explanation and discussion of the seven factors of enlightenment. The individual interview was conducted, which lasted 15 minutes each.

All the participants were patients suffering from different diseases when they started to practise meditation in those centres, ranging from headache, backache, aching arms, hypertension, gastric trouble, heart attack, ear trouble and trouble breathing, diabetic problem, heart disease, eye trouble to neural problem among others. Almost all of them used traditional methods as well as modern, scientific methods to treat their diseases before practicing meditation whereas very few meditators did not have any medication.

Data analysis

Among the participants, four respondents (R1), (R2), (R6) and (R7) individually practiced meditation for over three years and two respondents (R3), and (R9) practiced meditation for over one-year and other three respondents (R4) (R5) and (R8) practiced meditation for under one-year. Their meditation schedules were different depending on their individual ability for meditation. There is one respondent (R4) who take meditation for two hours per day, two respondents (R1) and (R3) for three hours, two respondents (R5) and (R8) for four hours, two respondent (R6) and (R7) for five hours, one (R9) for eight hours and one (R2) for ten hours per day each. In addition, depending on the nature of their diseases, different percentages of ability to develop the seven factors of enlightenment in meditation as well as the different beneficial health are found in this study. Among them, within a one-hour a period of meditation three respondents (R1), (R3) and (R5) report being able to develop, adhere to and concentrate on the seven factors for 50%, half of the meditation time of one hour and among the remaining participants, one (R2) reports being able to develop the seven factors of enlightenment for 70%, two respondents (R6) and (R8) for 75%, one respondent (R7) for 80% and tow respondents (R4) and (R9) for 90%.

There is correlation between the extent of development in the seven factors of enlightenment and recovery from diseases. According to the data, it was found that six respondents meditators (R1), (R2), (R3), (R4), (R5) and (R9) out of the total of nine participants were completely cured of their chronic diseases, namely headache, backache, hand ache,

hypertension, gastric trouble, heart attack, ear trouble and trouble breathing by taking meditation in these centres. Three participant meditators (R6), (R7), (R8) were partially relieved from their suffering- diabetic problem, heart disease, eye trouble and neural problem.

There are individual respondents who has one disease (R2), (R3), (R4), (R6) as well as respondents who has two (R1), (R5), (R8), or three(R9) or four kinds of diseases (R7). Among them, three respondents (R2), (R3), (R4) have only one disease and they have completely cured of their disease. One respondent (R6) have only one disease and she partially recovered from her disease. One respondent (R8) have two diseases and she partially recovered from her diseases. one respondent (R5) have curable disease as well as reducible disease by taking meditation. An addition, one respondent (R1) has been completely cured two diseases and one (R9) three diseases using a little traditional medicine for one month. The other meditator (R7) has four kinds of disease and her diseases are not completely curable but all the diseases can be alleviated to a certain extent. She never has to go to the hospitals or clinics since she was in meditation centre.

Findings and discussion

This research has attempted to highlight the systematic cultivation of seven factors and their beneficial health effects based on the experiences of nine meditators by developing these factors in meditation to confirm the practical contribution of the factors to the wellbeing of practitioners and their meditation practices.

Findings from the Buddhist literature

According to Kuṇḍaliyasutta, it was found that when systematic cultivation of seven factors is repeatedly practiced, the four kinds of foundation of mindfulness can be developed. In Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna sutta, there are four kinds of mindfulness: Kayānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna (contemplation of the body), Vedānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna (contemplation of feeling or sensation), Cittānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna (contemplation of mind) and Dhammānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna (contemplation of Dhamma).

The study found that the seven factors of enlightenment are able to actually help in treatment for various diseases. In Saṃyutta Nikāya, when Venerable Mahākassapa, Venerable Mahāmoggalāna and the Buddha were individually suffered from sickness, the three saints listened to Bojjhaṅga Dhamma. After listening it, each all of them immediately recovered from sickness. In these Suttanta: Pathama Gilānasutta, Dutiya, Gilānasutta and Tatiya Gilānasutta, it is found that the seven factors of enlightenment can facilitate the healing of physical diseases.

In Sagāthāvagga Saṃyutta, in asking about the cause of overcoming serious sorrow of Subrahma Devaputta who suffered from the most serious sorrow because of his past and future, the Buddha responded Devaputta that He do not see nothing expect captivating the seven factors (Bojjhaṅga), an ascetic practice (Dhutaṅga tapa), subjugation of senses (Indriya Saṃvara), free from craving (Nibbāna) to overcome the most serious sorrow. At the end of the teaching of the

Buddha, Subrāhma Devaputta overcame his the most serious sorrow and he became one who has entered the stream of Path. In this sutta, it found the Buddha's indication that captivation of the seven factors of enlightenment is one cause to solve mental problems.

In Maccupāsasamuttipaṇā Milindapaṇā Pāli, there are three kinds of condition 1) a remaining life, 2) good age and 3) a free from limitation of the five acts that have immediate retribution to protect one from harm by Paritta. Venerable Nāgasena gave two illustrations watering the dry, not alive, lack of tending, and hollow tree and the ripe, dry rice paddies and the fresh and delicate rice paddies with cloud color for diseases.

Findings from the interview and the questionnaire

In this research, data were collected from nine meditation participants in two meditation centres: eight participants from Dhamma Yatanar Meditation Centre and one from Yanking Nyein Aye Meditation Centre in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay.

Experiences of Meditators in practising meditation

No.	Participant number	Age	Place	Type of Meditation (Calm-Meditation and Insight-Meditation)	Use any medicine or not in meditation centre	Reducible disease	Curable disease	Time to take to reduce disease	Time to take to perfectly cure disease	Time to take meditation per day	Percent ages of ability to develop the seven factors
1	R1	56	Dhammayatanar	Both	Use about a month	No	gastric trouble and Headache	1-Year	Over one year now 3-years	third 3-hours	50%
2	R2	50	Dhammayatanar	Both	Sometime	No	Hypertension.	7-months	3-years now 5-years	Sixth 10-hours	70%
3	R3	71	Dhammayatanar	Both	No	No	Heart attack	3-months	6-months 1-year now 1 year 1-6-months	Third 3-hours	50%
4	R4	43	Dhammayatanar	Both	No	No	Trouble breathing	2-months	4-month now 5-month	Twice 2-hours	90%
5	R5	64	Dhammayatanar	Both	No	Eye ache	Ear trouble	1-month for ear trouble/ 5-month for eye	2-month Now 10-months	sixth 4-hours	50%

								ache			
6	R6	74	Dhammay atanar	Both	Sometim e	Diabetic problem	No	1-Year	Now 4-years	sixth 5-hours	75%
7	R7	67	Dhammay atanar	Both	Always	Diabetic trouble, heart disease, neural problem. Foot trouble	No		Now 3-years	Fifth 5-hours	80%
8	R8	47	Dhammay atanar	Both	No	Heart disease and difficulty in breathing	No	2-months	5-monts	fourth 5-hours	75%
9	R9	37	Yankin Aye Nyain	Both	No	No	Headache, backache, hand ache		2-weeks for headache 2-month for backache, hand ache	Fifth 8-hours	90%

According to data, there are the six respondents who were completely cured of their diseases and the three respondents who just reduced their diseases, or partially cured by taking meditation there.

Out of the six participants who were completely cured their diseases, these are two respondents (R9) and (R4) who could absorb the seven factors of enlightenment to the highest extent. the respondent (R9) aged 37, suffered from headache and backache for 14 years and aching arms for 5 years. Before practice meditation, she had received treatments for her headache, backache for 14 years and hand ache for 5 years with both traditional methods or modern, scientific methods. She said that those medicines gave her only temporary relief when she got treatment only to recur later when she stopped getting medical care. And then she practiced meditation, practicing both calm meditation and insight meditation in Yan King Nyein Aye Dhamma Centre. She did not use any medicine for her diseases while she took meditation over eight hours per day. In terms of developing the seven factors within one-hour meditation sessions, she has developed and maintained balanced enlightenment factors for 90% of the session. It is reported that this happened within a short period- 2 weeks for her headache and two months for backache and aching arms. Now, she no longer suffered from her diseases anymore. The next respondent (R4) who developed all the seven factors for 90% of the session is a monk aged 43 who sit in the shortest meditation session among the six respondents. He had trouble breathing but he did not get any medical treatment. Now. he has taken only two hours per day for five months. During these two hours sessions, he could develop the seven factors for 90% of the

session. He did not use any medicine while also he take meditation there but it was completely cured after four months of meditation. These two respondents (R9) and (R4) have the highest percentages of focus on the seven factors within one-hour session in meditation.

Among the six respondents recovering from their diseases by taking meditation there, the respondent (R2) aged 50 sits in longest meditation sessions among all over ten hours per day and has the second highest percentage ability to develop the seven factors of enlightenment at 70%. She suffered from hypertension. She said that she used got modern medical treatments for high blood pressure but it was not completely cured. The use of medicines resulted in temporary relief but it would recur repetitively later. She took meditation doing both calm meditation and insight meditation in Dhamma Yatanar Meditation Centre. She used to take prescribed medicines sometimes when she had high blood pressures. She reported that after seven months in her meditation practice, she got partial relief from high blood pressures. She had to do meditation for three years to be completely cured. Now, she no longer has high blood pressure after doing meditation for five years.

The three other respondents (R1), (R3) and (R5) were completely cured who developed the factors at 50% each. Among these respondents, respondent (R1) aged 56, suffered from the two diseases: headache and gastric trouble. She said that she used two methods- traditional method scientific method to treat her diseases for three years. She took the analgesic medicines when she had a headache. For her gastric trouble, she used to go to the clinics and hospitals when she suffered from intense pains due to the disease. Taking prescribed medicines every day for about one month relieved her disease but after three months, the problem would recur. Thereafter, she used traditional medicines for her gastric trouble and her pains were relieved but she was not completely cured. Then she practiced meditation doing the both calm meditation and insight meditation in Dhamma Yatanar Centre. At the time, she used traditional medicines for gastric trouble for about one month and then she did not use any medicine there. She does not do meditation in regular sessions- the sessions ranging from twice, three times, to four times per day because she has to teach students in that meditation centre. She practiced meditation for about three hours per day. Now, she has taken meditation for five years there. She reported that after meditating for one year, her diseases repeatedly appeared and disappeared naturally without using any medicine but only by taking meditation. Meditation practice over a period of one year has completely cured all her diseases.

Respondent (R3) aged 71, suffered from heart problem. She used traditional method to treat her disease for 3 months. It was just only to relieve and her disease did not completely cure it by using traditional medicines. She practiced the two kinds of Meditation: Calm Meditation and Insight Meditation 3 hours per day in Dhamma Yatanar Meditation Centre. She could develop the seven factors 50% within one-hour session. She reported that she did not remember very-well, but she thought she got relieve from her disease after about 3 months and has been absolutely cured of her heart problem after 6 months while taking no medication or treatment but

just by taking meditation. In addition, she said that she got better if she practiced meditation whenever she suffered from any disease such indigestion.

The remaining respondent (R5) aged 64 among the three participants who could develop the seven factors of enlightenment for 50% and also among the six respondents who completely cured of their disease by taking meditation, suffered from left eye problems arising from an operation in the hospital and ear trouble. She has taken meditation 4 hours per day and was able to develop 50% of the seven factors in a session for 10 months. She said that she had both ear problem and eye trouble. Ear problem was cured after taking meditation for two months Also, she underwent an eye operation in 2016, but it was not successful. After the operation, her left eye kept aching. She used modern, regular medicines for her eye ache for 6 years. Taking medicines gave her temporary relief but she was not completely cured. Since she arrives at the meditation centre and practice meditation, she stopped taking medicines and getting medical treatment at the clinics and hospitals because of Covid-19 pandemic. After taking meditation for five months, her eye started improving. Even without medication, she no longer suffered from eye problems although she has not been completely cured.

The six respondents (R9), (R4), (R2), (R1), (R3), and (R5) mentioned above are the respondents who were completely cured of their diseases by taking meditation. Eight different chronic diseases were eliminated: hypertension, headache, backache, aching arm, gastric trouble, heart disease, ear trouble, trouble breathing.

The remaining three (R7), (R6) and (R8) out of the nine participants in this research were partially cured of their diseases by taking meditation. Their diseases were not completely cured. Each three respondent (R7), (R6) and (R8) have taken meditation for over five hours per day, able to develop the seven factors of enlightenment for 75% and over of their individual sessions.

The respondents (R7) aged 67 is the highest percentage 80% of session among these three respondents. She suffered from four types of diseases: diabetic trouble, heart disease, neural problem, foot trouble. She said that she used scientific method always taking medicine only for diabetic trouble but none for other health problems. Medical examinations at clinics and the hospitals for heart trouble did not reveal any problem but she felt that she was suffering from serious disease. She reported that she took meditation for five hour per day which reportedly reduced her diseases a lot. Her health problems returned, getting seriously sick when she got home. When she came back to meditation centre, her health problems disappeared. Therefore, she did not go home for a long time as she felt better at meditation centre then at home. Also, she find it difficult to climb up stairs. But surprisingly, she has no difficulty at the centre climbing up stairs to worship at the prayer hall. Apparently, she feels better while meditating than stay at home.

The respondent (R6) could develop the seven factors of enlightenment for 75% of session. Aged 74, she suffered from diabetic problem. She has reduced her disease by taking meditation for five hours per day. She said that she used scientific method to treat her disease for

ten years. She used to go to the clinics and hospitals when she suffered seriously from her disease. During treatments with prescribed medicines, blood sugar levels went up and down, sometimes seriously affecting her. She took both calm meditation and insight meditation and was able to develop 75% ability focus on seven factors for five hours per day in Dhamma Yatanar Dhamma Centre. She used to take prescribed medicines (insulin) sometimes when her blood sugar levels have remained stable at 5.6 and it did not go up over 5.6. After one year, it gradually relieved. Her situation of diabetic problem is 5.6 and it did not go up over 5.6. It has been over one year she did not need to go to clinic. Now, she has taken meditation for six years at the centre.

The last respondent (R8) aged 47, suffered from heart disease and had difficulty in breathing. Although she consulted doctors at the clinics, she did not take any prescribed medicines. Apart from her health problems, she was also facing some social problems which made her confused and dejected. She took meditation every day in the Dhamma Yatanar Centre, but since she had to do sundry tasks, she did not have any regular meditation sessions- ranging from four to five hours per day with 75% ability to develop the seven factors. After one month of taking meditation, both her physical problems of diseases and depression were solved. AT the point the interview was conducted, she had done meditation for five months.

These three respondents (R7), (R6) and (R8) had partial relief from five kinds of chronic diseases by meditation: diabetes, heart disease, neural problem, leg aches, congestion.

Discussion

In this study, evidences from the Buddhist literature and results of questionnaire survey and interviews have been used to investigate the relation between the development of the seven factors and recovery from disease. According to the Buddhist literature, four individuals were completely cured their diseases just by listening to the seven factors of enlightenment. They are Venerable Mahākassapa, Venerable Mahāmoggalāna, the Buddha and Subrāhma Devaputta. Three among theses, Venerable Mahākassapa, Venerable Mahāmoggalāna, the Buddha suffered from physical diseases and Subrāhma Devaputta suffered from mental disease. They all recovered from their diseases just by listening to the seven factors of enlightenment. In this case, there are two conditions to recover from their sickness just by listening to the seven factors. 1) It must be a small ailment or a curable disease and 2) being skillful in captivation of the seven factors. The three individuals, Venerable Mahākassapa, Venerable Mahāmoggalāna and the Buddha, have attained final emancipation therefore they are skillful in the captivation of the seven factors. Furthermore, their diseases are only common diseases though of higher degree. The last one to recover is Subrāhma Devaputta. He suffered from his extreme mental disease but he is skillful enough in captivation of the seven factors to realise Nibbāna just by listening to the seven factors only once.

In Summary of Bojjhaṅga Sutta, Sayardaw Ashin Nandamālābhivaraṃsa (Ph.D.) said that there are nobodies to realise Nibbāna without development of the seven factors. Indeed, they are

able to develop skillfully the seven factors during the time of listening to it. Therefore, just by listening to these factors, they immediately recovered from sicknesses. In Bojjhaṅga Sutta from eleven Paritta, the famous monks such Sayardaw Ashin Nandamālābhivaṃsa (Ph.D.) said that it is composed as incantation from Pāli paragraphs to heal the patient's disease by including the power of taking an oath so that common people are also able to captivate the seven factors in order to cure their disease. It is strongly reiterated that the seven factors of enlightenment are capable of curing physical and mental diseases in Gilānasutta suttas and Subrāhma sutta.

In Saṃyutta Nikāya, The Buddha instructed a practical method of captivating the seven factors to develop frequently as Bhāvitā and Bahulīkatā in Gilāna suttas. Furthermore, also in Kuṇḍaliyasutta, the Buddha declared that If the four satipaṭṭhāna are developed frequently, the seven factors will be fulfilled. This is the way for one who want to realise Nibbāna or to cure their disease.

In Buddhist literature, according to Gilāna suttas in Mahāvaggasaṃyutta, it is found that the seven factors of enlightenment were able to heal the physical diseases. And it also is found these factors were able to heal mental diseases according to Subrāhma sutta in Sagāthāvagga Saṃyutta,

According to data from interview and questionnaire survey, out of a total nine participants, the six respondents recovered completely from their diseases while the three were only partially cured, reducing the sufferings and the symptoms by developing the seven factors in meditation. They recovered from their diseases to develop extant some entirely and then partially. The respondents (R9), (R4) and (R2) were completely cured of their disease by developing the seven factors in the highest 90% (R9), (R4) and 70% (R2) in meditation.

Although three respondents (R1) 50%, (R3) 50%, and (R5) 50% had lower percentages of developing the seven factors, they were completely cured of their disease. Although other respondents (R7) 80%, (R6) 75% and (R8) 75% had tried to take meditation the better percentages 70% and over of developing the seven factors, they were partially cured of their diseases by developing the seven factors in meditation. Indeed, the main different condition of these respondents is situation of their types of diseases. Individual participants felt different results of the seven factors of enlightenment in meditation. This shows that there are different beneficial health effects of the seven factors depending on various states and stages of diseases and captivating these factors.

According to Maccupāsamuttipaṇṇā Milindapaṇṇā Pāli, there are three condition to protect one from harm by Paritta. They are 1) a remaining life, 2) good age and 3) a free from limitation of the five acts that have immediate retribution. In this case, third factor a free from limitation of the five acts that have immediate retribution, is the most important point as power of the five acts is the greatest in the world. And then, first factor a remaining life, is the more important than second factor good age. A remaining life means that patient is still remaining after disease. It is found that these three conditions corresponded with this investigation experience of participants.

In particular, it is found that in the two illustrations, the situations of tree and rice paddies is more important than water for tree and rice paddies to be alive and grow. Effects of water on the tree and the rice paddies depend on the situations of the tree and the rice paddies.

Likewise, in this research, it is found that effects of the seven factors of enlightenment depended on the different situations of participants' diseases. Even if development records of all participant are equivalent in only one condition, the effects of these factors can be different depending on different situations of their diseases.

The respondents (R9) aged 37 and (R4) aged 43 completely cured of their chronic disease headache, backache, hand ache and hard breathing within 2-months by developing seven factors each 90% of session in meditation. It is found that there are 4 kinds of cause of recovery of her diseases. they are 1) a little young age. 2) curable diseases. 3) 90% of session. 4) development until 2 weeks to cured of their diseases.

The respondent (R2) aged 50 also included in the six respondents who completely cured of their diseases. Her disease is hypertension. She completely cured of her disease within 7 months, taking prescribed medicines sometimes, by developing seven factors 70% of session in meditation. It is found there are three conditions 1) elder age, 2) curable diseases. 3) 70% of session, and 4) development until 7 months to cured of her disease.

The three respondents (R1) aged 56, (R3) aged 71, and (R5) aged 63 completely cured of their disease headache and gastric trouble, heart disease and ear trouble within under 1 year by developing the seven factors 50% of session for 3 hours and 4 hours per day. In their conditions of healing her diseases, it is found they are 1) elder age. 2) curable diseases. 3) 50% of session. 4) Development Under 1 year and 1 year to cured of her diseases.

Another three respondents (R7) aged 67, (R6) aged 74 and (R8) aged 47 out of the nine participants in this research, were partially cured of their diseases diabetic trouble, heart disease, neural problem, heart disease and difficulty in breathing. foot trouble by developing seven factors 75% and over of session for each 5 hours in meditation. The differences in three respondents are age and types of disease and time having been taken meditation. The respondents (R7) aged 67, (R6) aged 74 have been practiced meditation for 3 years and 4 years. Their ages are the eldest age. Their diseases are diabetic trouble, heart disease, neural problem, heart disease. The respondent (R8) aged 47 has been taken meditation only for 5 months. Her diseases are heart disease and difficulty in breathing. Her age is 47. But each respondent is the same situation of their diseases by taking meditation. They all were partially cured of their diseases.

In comparing differences between the six respondents (R9), (R4), (R2), (R1), (R3), (R5) completely cured of their diseases and other respondents (R7), (R6) and (R8) partially cured of their diseases, three different conditions are found. They are 1) their different age, 2) different situations of their disease 3) different percentages of session. Although they (R7), (R6) and (R8)

had tried to take meditation the better percentages 70% and over of developing the seven factors for 3 years and four years, they were partially cured of their diseases by developing the seven factors in meditation. Indeed, the main different condition of these respondents is situation of types of their diseases.

In this research, there are total 13 participants: 4 participants from literature, 9 participants from two meditation centres. Out of them, 10 participants were completely cured of their diseases by developing the seven factors. Other 3 participants were partially cured of their diseases. as mentioned above, it is found that the effects of seven factors are many differences on participants depending on different situations of their diseases.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted the systematic cultivation of seven factors and their beneficial health effects. The method used in this study is the mixed method: qualitative and quantitative method. This study found that the seven factors of enlightenment completely cured diseases of four individuals as stated in the Buddhist literature just by listening to the seven factors in data collected with qualitative method. Furthermore, it found also that by practical cultivation of these factors in meditation centres, the six respondents of nine participants perfectly recover from their diseases as revealed by data collected using interview and questionnaire survey methods and the next three respondents certainly reduced their diseases by taking meditation. all participants have felt the beneficial health effects of the seven factors of enlightenment. It is suggested future researcher to find out in detail the gradual process of mind and matter by developing the seven factors in meditation.