



The Five Precepts : The Buddhist Golden Rule

*By His Royal Highness the late Supreme
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Human beings born into this world cannot choose the kind of body they would like to have. There are creative forces belonging to each, which are responsible for the variety and diversity of human types, thus making some of them good-looking and others displeasing to the sight. Those who are good-looking can, like brilliant flowers, do better than those displeasing to the sight in attracting the eyes of the passer-by, but that is all they can do as far as 'skin-deep' beauty is concerned.

A fragrant flower, though of dull hue, emanates more charm and deserves deeper admiration than a brightly hued type, which possesses nothing but superficial attractiveness. If it gives out an offensive smell, it is more than worthless in spite of its beauty. The same is true in the world of human beings wherein a virtuous person, however unsightly, is more worthy of respect than one without any virtue, who, although good-looking, is good-for-nothing.

It is far worse in the case of a vicious person who, despite his or her outward beauty and charm, is to be given a wide berth by all. It is a fact that a man's life depends on both aspects of his being, that is to say, his body and mind. The former is independent of will and consequently unchangeable, whereas the latter, given the strength of will, is subject to alteration and development.

Of course, a man is very likely to choose a line of action that he has followed before, but with training and discipline the mind can be made less wavering and more stable. It is for this purpose that a system of mind control and self-mastery is laid down.

The first step is called Precepts, by which a code of moral conduct is laid down as the basis and framework during the elementary stage of the course. This, like a ruler for drawing a straight line, prevents Buddhists from sidestepping the right path and urges them on straight to the goal. With this elementary stage well established the rest is sure to be won sooner or later.

Violent offenses are of two kinds, physical and verbal. Physical violence includes personal offenses such as killing, property offenses such as stealing, and sexual offenses such as adultery. Verbal violence is principally the telling of lies.

All such misdeeds are based on bewilderment, the chief cause of which is intoxicating drugs such as alcoholic liquors. These harmful drugs stupefy the mind and under their influence a person has no control of his senses.

To prevent this, a system of basic morality has been laid down by the sages. It is founded on the five prohibitive articles, which are as follows:

1. To abstain from taking the lives of living beings.
2. To abstain from taking that which is not given.
3. To abstain from sexual misconduct.
4. To abstain from telling falsehoods.
5. To abstain from distilled and fermented intoxicants, which are the occasion for carelessness
(which also includes drugs).

Each of the five above is called a sikkhapada or 'step of training', and collectively they are usually referred to as the five precepts. They have been formulated for the welfare and security of everyone and their observance means peace and happiness, not only of the individual undertaking to preserve them in purity, but also to all others with whom he has contact.

Contrasted with the negative virtues of precepts, there is also a set of five positive practices, which correspond to them, thus forming a complete practice of virtue. They are:

1. Loving-kindness and compassion.
2. Patience in the right means of livelihood.
3. Contentment in married life.
4. Truthfulness.
5. Watchfulness.

The following is an outline for the explanation of the ten practices and the details of each are elaborated in the chapters, which follow.

The Five Precepts Or Negative Virtues

1. The first precept, based on compassion, prohibits killing, hurting and torturing.
2. The second forbids (direct) stealing, actions supporting stealing and actions analogous to stealing.
This is to secure observance of other's rights regarding their property.
3. The third is meant as a guide against perverse sexual actions (un-chastity) and unfaithfulness in marriage life.
4. The fourth emphasizes truthfulness and includes avoidance of telling direct and indirect false-hoods and the breaking of promises.
5. The fifth is to prevent indulgence in intoxicants.

By this is meant alcoholic drinks of all description and other intoxicating substances such as Indian hemp, opium and other habit-forming drugs. This is to eliminate the great cause of many evils - drunkenness.

Abstention

As far as precepts are concerned, abstention is of three kinds or stages:

1. Immediate abstention (sampattiviratti):
One without a resolution made in advance.
2. Votive abstention (samadanaviratti):
One carried out through the observance of a religious vow.
3. Absolute abstention (samucchedaviratti):
One upheld unconditionally and at all times.

The Five Ennobling Virtues

1. The first precept is based on the virtues of loving-kindness and compassion. It is the duty of monks to relieve others' suffering and sow the seeds of happiness indiscriminately to all.

2. The second calls for energy and effort in following the right means of earning one's livelihood.

3. For the perfection of the third precept, there is laid down a set of reciprocal values between husband and wife.

This is faithfulness to and contentment with each other. For a husband it is called sadarasantutthi, emphasizing contentment with his wife. For a wife it is called pativatti, which stresses devotion to her husband.

4. The positive practices supporting the fourth precept are of four kinds: fidelity in the performance of one's duty, truthfulness towards a loyalty towards one's superiors, and gratitude towards one's benefactors.

5. For the fifth precept the following four aspects of watchfulness are advised.

They are watchfulness in food, work, behavior, and in the nature of life.

The prohibitive articles and their corresponding ennobling virtues will be discussed in detail in the following pages.

The First Precept

PANATIPATA VERAMANI SIKKHA-PADAM SAMADIYAMI

I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from taking the life of living beings.

The objects of killing are animals as well as human beings, such living beings, irrespective of age, sex and size, from the time of their conception being included here under this precept.

The purpose of the practicing of this precept is for developing the virtues of loving-kindness and compassion, which are to be extended towards all kinds of beings. It is true that even in animals this virtue of loving-kindness can be found, but it is entirely motivated through instinct and is limited to its own family or group as it is necessary for their survival.

It is only in human beings that loving-kindness can be deliberately extended to people outside one's own family or group, and even to animals. This depends on the will and strength of the trained mind, which can scatter more seeds of happiness as it grows in insight.

All human beings want to preserve their own bodies and lives as long as possible and they are afraid of any dangers, which threaten their lives and try their best to keep clear of them. This is no less true of animals. Those who care nothing for the happiness of others but who care only for their own happiness, thereby seeking to harm others merely to obtain pleasure for themselves, are acting against the law of nature. This is selfishness and evil.

Based on the virtues of loving-kindness and compassion, this precept prohibits not only killing, but also acts, which reflect cruelty in the mind, such as wishing to harm or torture in various ways.

Three Standards Of Judgment

The act of killing, as can all other acts, can have different degrees as its result. This is based on the three standards of judgment, which are also applicable to all other acts: object, purpose, effort.

Killing

The first standard by which to judge an act of killing is its object, which can be broadly divided into two categories: human beings and animals. From the point of view of both Buddhism and the state, killing is held to be a capital crime. In the case of Buddhism, a Bhikkhu (monk) who is guilty of such an offense is called a defeated one (parajika) and is to be expelled from the Order of Monks (Sangha).

In the case of the state, unless the accused can prove himself to be deserving of leniency due to some reasonable excuse, the law of the country generally metes out some form of capital punishment or mitigates this to life imprisonment.

The second standard by which to determine the resultant degree of killing is the motive behind the killing, which can be divided into two kinds:

- a) Intentional or premeditated killing,
- b) and killing under the impulse of the moment.

The former is murder in cold blood, which, even in the absence of anger or hatred in some cases, is still motivated by strong passion or greed. This can be seen in the case of a gang of robbers who take to plundering and killing premeditatively.

An instance of killing without greed but based on hatred can be seen when a person seeks revenge, killing someone without any desire for that person's possessions. Unpremeditated murder is murder where there is no planning in advance. There are three different types of unpremeditated murder.

The first is impulsive killing. This may be seen in the case of two persons quarrelling and who then come to blows, one of whom is killed or who later dies. Such a killing has come about through impulsive action.

The second is killing in self-defense, as when a person is assaulted and in defending himself his attacker is killed. He is said to have killed in self-defense.

The third is accidental killing, as when a person attempts to discipline a child and the child is accidentally killed, or when a person who is target-practicing misses his mark, and kills another person.

In acts of killing of this type, due to the absence of intent to murder, the guilty person is usually granted some degree of leniency by both the monastic code and the law of the state.

The third standard for consideration is the effort involved, which may be divided into two kinds: direct effort and indirect effort.

Direct effort means that the killer himself has performed the act of killing. Indirect effort means that the killing is carried out through orders or through the hiring of another person or persons to do the killing. This kind of killing, whether involving weapons, tricks or other kinds of plans, is completed through the efforts of the person or persons concerned. Both parties are therefore subject to the various grades of punishment of the monastic code and the law of the state.

As far as the objects of killing are concerned, the murder of an innocent person or one who is harmless to others is a great wrong because there can be no excuse in doing so. Of these persons, the murder of one whom lives a life of morality or benevolence is the greatest offense. Such people include parents, whether one's own or someone else's, whose death would bring about misery for perhaps several helpless children supported by them; teachers who impart knowledge and wisdom to many; chiefs of communities who take upon themselves the welfare and happiness of the people who come within the orbit of their responsibility.

Killing such people is a double crime in that it not only destroys their bodily existence but also the exemplary virtues practiced by them. With regard to volition or motive, murder motivated by revengeful hatred or unscrupulous greed, as when a person hires himself out as a killer, is a very serious crime. In short, an act of killing is considered to be a grave offense.

The effort entailed in the process of killing constitutes another important basis of judgment, for within this precept is included torture, the sadistic pleasure of making a victim suffer excruciating pain before the actual killing is done. This is regarded as a far worse offense than if the victim is quickly murdered, which is an instantaneous death with as little pain as possible.

The first precept also prohibits the killing of oneself as well as others. Suicide is thus regarded as a serious crime from the standpoint of both religion and state law. Only those who give themselves up to the miseries of life can resort to such a practice, but they should never overlook the fact that birth at the level of a human being is a rare event and very difficult to obtain in the various worlds of sentient existence.

It is therefore most deplorable that a person, once in possession of this valuable birth, should do away with it in so foolish a manner. Since death is sure to come, whether one wants it or not, is it not advisable for everyone to prepare himself for a calm and honorable departure instead of being driven to a hasty one with regret and shame in its wake?

Animal Killing

Animals are generally regarded as the objects of a crime, which is less serious when they are intentionally killed. The Patimokkha (Code of Discipline of the Buddhist Order of Monks) imposes an offense called pacittiya on a Bhikkhu who intentionally kills an animal. An offense of this type requires that the Bhikkhu guilty of the killing confess his guilt to another Bhikkhu together with a promise to be more heedful.

In Pali this is called desanagamini. With respect to the law of the country, the killing animals is wrong only when the animal killed does not belong to the killer or when it is some species protected by the government. From the moral

or karmic point of view, the inner results affecting a person's character cannot be offset by such formalities or standards of the law.

As a rule, such crimes are to be judged by object, volition (or motive) and effort. Of all the animals, those that have owners are the objects of a more serious crime than those, which are ownerless. In the former case it is obvious that the killer has committed not just one crime, but two: the actual killing itself which is against the first precept, and an offense against a person's property which is correlated with an act of stealing, an offense against the second precept.

The killing of useful animals, such as work animals and beasts of burden (horses, oxen, buffalo, etc.) is a greater crime since such an act means the destruction of their usefulness with the destruction of their lives. Size is also another factor entering into judgment.

Killing the same kind of animal can result in different degrees of evil since it can imply differing amounts of benefit lost there from. Killing one's own animals however does not transgress the second precept, but the other factors should be judged on the same basis as mentioned above. As for ownerless animals, killing a harmless creature is a greater evil than if a dangerous one is killed, and one of a larger bulk is again the object of a greater wrong.

On the basis of volition or purpose, killing without a sufficient cause is an act entailing a serious offense. By a sufficient cause is meant, for example, self defense, a scientific or medical experiment, a way of earning a livelihood, to kill for food, or to kill to relieve an animal of acute or prolonged suffering before death.

The essence of the matter is whether or not the killing is done with a purpose overpowered by a strong evil desire. Thus killing for the sake of earning a living may in some cases not be regarded as a sufficient cause. When the person, in spite of the fact that he is able to earn his living by some other means, still prefers doing so in this reprehensible fashion because of strong greed.

On the third basis, effort, the act of killing will be a serious, middling, or minor offense according to whether a great deal of effort, a moderate amount of effort, or a little effort is involved. One that is preceded by torture and that affects animals indiscriminately and on a great scale is really very serious. Poisoning fish in a pond may be cited as an example of this kind of brutal killing.

In absolute terms and from the moral point of view, the act of killing is always wrong as it is against the first precept. From the karmic standpoint, however, there can be a great difference in both the degree and the amount of evil committed when the three bases of judgment - object, motive, and effort - are taken into account, both individually and collectively.

Bodily Harm (An Offense Against The Person Of A Human Being)

The term bodily harm is limited to an offense against another human being. The same type of act committed against an animal will be discussed below under 'torturing'. An act against the person of a human being, although not depriving a person of his life, inflicts painful suffering on the victim and is subject to punishment by both the law of the country and the monastic code.

With regards to the law of the country, punishment is meted out in accordance with the weapons used and the degree of suffering inflicted upon the victim, which may be classified as injury, disfiguration and crippling. An injury is trouble that temporarily affects a person's pursuit of work or enjoyment. A disfiguration is the permanent spoiling of the shape or appearance of any part of the body or organ, which may [or may not] cause the victim shame. Crippling is the depriving of the victim of any of the senses or the loss of any organ.

In the Monastic Code of Buddhist Monks, there are several degrees of offense according to whether the act is done with the intention to harm or to kill. For complete details, the reader may refer to *The Entrance to the Vinaya, Volume 1 (Vinaya Mukha, Volume 1)*.

If one is to look at bodily harm from the karmic standpoint, one must again refer to the three bases. In brief, to inflict bodily harm with the intent to kill is the most serious of this category, whereas to inflict bodily harm with a weaker malicious intent has consequences, which are less grave.

Torturing

Torture here is an act of bodily harm inflicted upon an animal since it is not the normal practice of human being to torture each other (although in times past there were many occasions when torture was freely indulged in). As before, there is an underlying evil here, a sadistic intention, and for this reason, keeping a bird in a cage as a pet or putting animal to work within decent limits is not included under torture.

Torture is known in all cases, motivated by the manifestation of cruelty and lack of mercy, and from this standpoint, an act that would not normally be considered an act of torture would have to be so called. The following examples will help to clarify this.

Putting an ox or buffalo to work pulling a plough is nominally not an act of cruelty or torture. These are working animals, beasts of burden, and they are the living property of men. This is recognized both legally and morally. But at the same time, the owners of these animals have the moral obligation to look after their health and to treat them with mercy.

This means giving them enough food and time for rest and relaxation, preventing them from contracting diseases and providing them with medical care. He who has done so has fulfilled his moral duty towards them and is praiseworthy on all occasions. On the other hand, the owner who disregards his moral obligations is guilty of an act of cruelty.

This includes starving them or over-burdening them with work, neglecting to give them enough rest or medical care and treating them brutally by beating them or whipping them. These are examples of cruelty in work. It is morally permissible to keep a bird in a cage and to tether an animal when it is necessary to do so. Animals and birds, however, need food and rest, and, what is more important here, enough room to move about in freely.

Any owner who fails to provide a confined animal without enough comfort must be said to have performed an act of cruelty in this respect. Animals and birds are moved from place to place by carrying.

Examples of this can be seen in a person's carrying a live pig or hen upside down, or keeping too many fish in a small creel. It is true that animals such as these are doomed to die sooner or later, but there is no reason why they should have to undergo torture before death. An act of sadistic cruelty is a kind of enjoyment.

In other words, it is brutality committed just for fun. Children are often seen fastening a bunch of firecrackers to a dog's tail and delight themselves in seeing the animal dash away frantically from the explosive noises, which follow it everywhere. Some are known to have placed a lit candle on a tortoise's shell in order to watch the frightened animal rolling and struggling helplessly when it feels the heat of the candle snuff on its back.

Others are often seen throwing stones at such harmless animals as birds or frogs or tearing off locusts' or crickets' legs or wings for no purpose whatever. These children or people in fact have no revengeful hatred towards those animals. They do what they do for their own amusement and nothing else, or, as in the case of children, often thoughtlessly.

Fighting includes such games of sadistic nature as bull-fighting, cock-fighting, fish fighting, etc., which evoke pleasure in human beings at the expense of innocent animals. The excuse may be made that animals are naturally willing to fight among themselves anyway. Otherwise their battles would not be waged with such ferocity. It should not be forgotten, however, how men have cunningly contrived hideous devices to inflame the animals into a state of maddened temper.

In other words, the animals' desire to fight is stimulated by sadistic human contrivance. It does not arise naturally in them at that time. There are several other ways of showing cruelty to animals, each of which is wrong according to the spirit of the first precept. The one to be used here as an illustration is the

crocodile trap, for this involves a double offense - the killing of two animals for one purpose.

A person who wishes to lay a trap for a crocodile must fasten a live monkey in a snare, which is close to the water. He must then cut off some of the monkey's fingers, causing it to bleed freely. The monkey, frightened by its own blood, instinctively dips its hand into the water, thereby unknowingly spreading the blood-smell throughout the area. Tracing the smell, the crocodile soon dashes to the decoy monkey and makes a meal of it without further ado. The spring of the trap then locks in the crocodile's throat, killing both animals at the same time. This is an outstanding example of the brutal killing of animals.

In ancient times, laws for the punishment of criminals were based on the principle of retaliation, or what is called 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'. Execution and torture were freely inflicted on the accused in the most painful ways imaginable. This is done in the belief that such methods would frighten people into being honest, law-abiding citizens. Thus execution involved flesh carving followed by the rubbing of salt into the wounds (to produce the most excruciating pain for the longest period of time possible), burning, chest-mutilation, trampling by elephants, impaling, and other forms of horrible death.

Different methods of torturing were the cutting off of limbs or organs, disfiguring, flogging, whipping, and putting into a pillory and the stocks. But with the growth of civilization, such forms of barbarism were gradually eliminated and law and order was based more on kindness and understanding than on force and threats.

Capital punishment has now been abolished in many countries, and even in those that still retain it, emphasis is always laid on producing an instantaneous death with the least possible pain and suffering. Torture as a punishment for crimes has been eliminated in all civilized countries and imprisonment and forced labor of some sort is used in its stead.

The use of torture is now outlawed, not only in the courts of justice, but also in all other institutions of society. A master has now no right to inflict any form of torture on his servant, and in some countries this prohibition is also extended to animals. From the karmic point of view, torture is, as before, to be judged by the three bases earlier mentioned.

Let everyone always bear in mind the fact that as he desires happiness and loathes death, torture, or even pain in any form, so do all other human beings and animals. In the presence of these experiences, whatever his feelings and reactions are, they are also those of other human beings as well as animals. What right or reason could anyone therefore give to justifiably indulge his own pleasures at the expense of the security and lives of others?

The Second Precept

ADINNADANA VERAMANI SIKKHA-PADAM SAMADIYAMI

I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from taking things not given.

The essential purpose of this precept is to abstain from taking away with thieving intent that which is not given. The objects covered by this precept include every kind of property, both living and non-living, that is still rightfully owned by someone, and those things, although without any individual owner, which are for general or public use (such as offerings that have been devoted to a special religious place or the fixtures that belong to a society).

This precept prohibits an offense against other people's property, thereby encouraging a right means of livelihood. It is based on the fact that everyone has the right to the ownership over his own property. He who refuses to obey this universal law transgresses the second precept. He has committed an evil action. Broadly speaking, there are three degrees of stealing: direct stealing, indirect stealing, and actions analogous to stealing.

Direct Stealing

Several manners of stealing may be listed here as follows:

Stealing

An act of silently or stealthily taking away a thing unseen. A person who takes away a piece of cloth which belongs to some other person, or who steals into a house at night by prying open a door or a window in order to take something with intent to steal, is guilty of this manner of stealing.

Snatching

Taking something away by force, with or without harming the owner. A person who takes away by force anything belonging to another person who is off his guard is a snatcher. He is a criminal who practices the 'snatch-and-run' method of stealing.

Extortion

An act of stealing which is accompanied by a threat of some kind or other and may be seen in the case of a robber who threatens the property owner with death or with torture if the latter refuses to reveal where his valuables are kept.

Gang-Robbery

A joint effort by many armed robbers who forcibly break into a person's house whether involves killing or not.

Laying False Claim

There are two kinds of this manner of stealing. The first concerns property, which is not under one's protection, whereas the second involves what is at that moment under one's care and responsibility. An example of the former may be seen when a person files a case against the Rightful owner of a piece of land, falsely claiming his right to that land.

An example of the latter can be seen in the case of a person who claims ownership over property which its rightful owner has bona fide committed to his care for the time being (such as during his absence). Or in the case of a person who, having rented a piece of land for some time, comes to claim it as his own.

Lying

Thieving done by lying. This is illustrated when a person goes to another and tells him that he (the former) was sent by someone (usually the property owner) to take such-and-such piece of property away. When the latter believes this false statement and gives the former what he asks for, there is an offense of stealing through lying.

Deceit

Theft through such deceptive means as giving short weight or short measure, including raising the bottom of the vessel used for measuring.

Imitation

Passing a thing of lower worth or inferior, quality off as one of higher value or superior quality, either by means of mixing together or by substitution.

Breaking Of Promises

A person who borrows a thing from another but who later refuses to return it, or one who borrows money on interest but who afterwards purposely neglects to pay back the interest or the principal or both are examples of stealing by breaking a promise.

Pilfering

Turning to private use part of the money entrusted to one's care. Thus a salesman who pockets part of the cash in his control for his personal use or a bill collector who cheats the company of part of the money he has collected is committing a theft by pilfering.

Change

The underhanded changing of a superior thing, replacing it with an inferior one.

Smuggling And Evasion

This relates to government tax and revenue. Smuggling means secretly removing taxable commodities from one place to another or producing things prohibited by law or rules such as the growing of opium poppies or liquor distilling. Evasion is the refusal to pay to the government what is required by law in the form of taxes and revenues.

Embezzlement

Appropriating for one's own use the property that is entrusted to his care, or misappropriating his own property, which is to be confiscated by law.

A person who commits any of the above-mentioned offenses himself or who has another do so for him, or who is an accomplice of someone else who does so, is likewise guilty of the crime of stealing. He will be punished by the law of the country as well as receive the effects of his bad karma.

The verdict of the law of the country is, as a rule, based on:

1 the property stolen - its value which is in direct proportion to the loss suffered by the owner,

2 the criminal's motive - whether the act was committed with malicious intent or not, and

3 the effort involved - whether it is a mere act of stealing or whether it involves any harm to the property owner or the loss of his life, the latter of which is sure to receive greater punishment than a case of theft.

Such property, being wrongfully obtained, cannot bring about any peace or pride to its possessors, as does that which is honestly earned. The delight of one who earns his living in a rightful way is fourfold:

1 He is blessed with justifiable pride in that he is the rightful owner of the property.

2 He is free from the burden of un-payable debt, which would otherwise compel him to live a life of concealment to avoid being discovered by his creditors.

3 While he is using his well-earned money, there is nothing to disturb his conscience.

4 It keeps him from falling into evil ways.

But this is not so with ill-gotten gains, for they always bring worry and fear to their wrongful owners, requiring them to remain in hiding and to keep the stolen goods hidden in secret. Such a person is forced to live under the shadows of disguise and concealment, thereby depriving himself of any opportunity to settle down and provide for his future like other law-abiding citizens.

He will, in all probability, be compelled to commit other crimes until he is overtaken by the inevitable results, even in the present life. It is therefore advisable that a self-respecting person should, by all means, avoid such immoral ways of earning a livelihood, which, in the long run, produce only shame and regret.

Indirect Stealing

Indirect stealing means that conduct which, although not direct forms of theft as earlier described, are closely associated with them and are considered equally blameworthy. They are as follows:

Acting As An Accomplice

This is helping criminals in their wrong doings or keeping their crimes secret for their sakes. An example can be seen in the receiving of stolen property for sale at good profit. This is indirect support of crime since it gives thieves the confident hope that they will always find a place to dispose of their stolen goods. It also encourages them to be more daring in mercilessly depriving honest people of the property, which they have earned through their own efforts.

Exploiting (Or Fleecing)

Making friends with, or making love to, someone with the malicious intent of swindling. It also means the deserting of the exploited or swindled person in time of need.

Accepting Bribery

Taking what is clandestinely given in return for unlawful services. An example of this may be seen in the case of a judge who, for the sake of personal gains, shamelessly perverts the justice of the law, pronouncing judgment in favor of that side which offers him more money, regardless of humanity or the truth in that case.

This practice is a serious offense in that it is an incentive for the criminals to perpetuate worse crimes in the hopes that they will be able to go scot-free after all, in spite of the law.

Property or money obtained in such ways of indirect thieving, like that of direct stealing, are never known to have given any peace or prosperity to their unlawful owners. They are, on the contrary, conducive to all forms of disgrace and decline. Thus he is a true Buddhist who applies himself to his work assiduously and with sincerity avoids even indirect stealing.

Actions Analogous To Stealing

Under this heading come two kinds of immoral acts: willful destruction and careless (unscrupulous) taking or using.

Willful Destruction

This is the deliberate destruction of another's property with revenge as the motive. It is true that the criminal who does so does not especially desire anything for his own, nor does he profit materially by doing so, but it does practically deprive the property owner of his rightful property in much the same way as an act of stealing does. It is, in fact, all the more evil because of the sinister motive on which such an act is based. This may be seen when a person malignantly kills another's cattle or sets fire to his enemy's place in order to gratify his bitter hatred of that property owner.

Careless (Unscrupulous) Taking Or Using

For example, a wild and unruly youth who arbitrarily uses the money or property of his or her parents or relatives, arguing evasively that it belongs to members of the same family, is guilty of analogous stealing. It is true that sometimes a person is tacitly allowed to take away another person's property or money, and friends can, at times, use each other's money or property without the formality of asking the permission of their owner.

Such using, however, should be based on what are called the rules of intimacy (vissasa):

- 1 The owner must be closely intimate with the user so that there may not be any suspicion or accusation of theft.
- 2 The owner has made his or her permission known sometime before.
- 3 The object taken must not be one that is still very precious to its owner so that by taking it an intimate friend has not caused him a loss too great to bear.
- 4 The owner, having learned that his property has been taken away in such a manner, must be willing to part with it, or at least he will not bother to make any complaint against the user.

These are the rules of intimacy, the criterion by which to clear a person of the complaint or the accusation of theft. In the absence of any of these rules, the act of taking away another person's property or money, without waiting for the owner's permission to do so, is never justified. It is sure to be branded as an act analogous to theft, resulting in disgrace for the person who does so and distrust on the part of other people.

To sum up this precept, there is a twofold practice for every self-respecting person to keep. This is the avoidance of theft in all its forms and manners as mentioned above, and respect for the inalienable right of everyone to his property

The Third Precept

***KAMESU MICCHACARA VERAMANI SIKKHA-PADAM
SAMADIYAMI***

I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from wrong conduct in sexual pleasures.

The underlying purpose of this precept is to prevent disunity and to promote mutual trust. It is marriage life that makes two people, both strangers to each other, become one in body and mind. But with the intervention of a third person, the unity between the two is severed, resulting in bitter hatred and revenge.

This immoral practice on the part of a third person cuts the ground from beneath the foundations of human society in that it breeds jealous suspicion and unrest in hitherto peaceful families where two persons are tenderly devoted to each other. As far as man is concerned, there are three kinds of women, which are for him objects of immoral conduct: a married woman (a wife), a woman still under protection, and a woman who is conventionally prohibited.

A married woman is a woman who is already united to a man as his wife, and this includes a woman who, although not formally married, is generally recognized as a man's wife; who, having accepted a man's offerings, lives with him; or who is kept as a man's wife.

All these women are forbidden objects to men other than their own husbands. This prohibition, however, includes all immoral conduct besides adultery in the general sense of the term. Thus it includes all other acts of wrongfully taking liberties with her, such as fondling or caressing her, making love to her either with words (courting) or with gestures, such as casting lustful looks at her.

A woman still under protection is one who is under the care and protection of mother, father, relatives, or those who are rightfully entitled to be her

protectors or guardians. A man who secretly takes her to wife or induces her to elope with him is guilty of committing adultery. It is only through permission from her guardian that a man can freely claim her as his wife.

But after the guardian has received from the man any property given as a betrothal pledge, the right of guardianship is tacitly transferred to the man. In case the said property is returned to the man, the right of guardianship is once again vested with her guardian.

Women who are conventionally prohibited are:

1 Those forbidden under family tradition.

This includes one's own ancestors, descendents and other close relatives.

2 Those forbidden under religious tradition.

This refers to a nun or Bhikkhuní in early Buddhist times (in the Theravada tradition) or the nearest equivalent to her in the present (a white-robed, not yellow-robed as a Bhikkhuní, Buddhist laywoman). The white-robed Buddhist laywoman is really an intermediate between a Bhikkhuní and an ordinary lay follower, living a life less strict than that of the Bhikkhuní in spiritual training while still leading a chaste life.

3 Those forbidden under the law of the country (in the old days), such as the concubines of previous kings. It is to be noted that as far as these 'forbidden' women are concerned, consent, whether mutual or unilateral, cannot be taken into account.

As for women other than these, it is a crime only when there is the use of force by a man. In like manner, a man can be a 'forbidden object' to a woman. This is not given in detail but forbidden men fall roughly into two categories—men other than her husband are forbidden to a married woman, whereas those men under conventional or religious rules are forbidden to all women.

A married woman violates this precept when she breaks the marriage vows of fidelity to her husband. But, as earlier mentioned, she is free from such obligations when she is a widow or divorcee and can freely remarry, provided, again, that the man she chooses is not one forbidden to her.

A woman who conducts herself immorally with a man, who is forbidden to her, unless compelled to do, so by force or threat on the part of the man, is guilty of the crime of adultery. If she is threatened or forced into such immoral behavior, it is only the man who is guilty. A woman under protection who behaves immorally with a man who is not conventionally or religiously forbidden to her is not considered guilty of violating this precept.

It is reasoned in the Scriptures that those protectors or guardians have the moral duty to prevent girls in their charge from disgraceful immoral conduct

(but they are not vested with absolute power over the girl's choice of her lover). Yet it is highly inadvisable that such a girl should behave in this way, thus hurting their feelings and putting them to shame, while also depriving herself of due honor and respect in society.

Adultery is both a crime and an evil, a heavy penalty being inflicted in the realm of moral conduct and that of the country. As far as the law of karma or morality is concerned, it is as a rule differentiated by the three standards of object, volition and effort. On the basis of object, adultery is more serious when a person of great merit is involved in the misdeed.

With regard to volition, an action committed through sheer lust brings on more serious results than such an act, which is forced upon one. Concerning effort, the use of force entails heavy punishment on the user. Besides, an action that ends in intercourse is subject to severer penalty than one of minor degree. A married couple should be content with each other.

Those who want to marry should find a mate from among those who are not 'forbidden' to them. It is through a healthy union that both will be equal partners in society as well as in private, in times of sickness as well as in health. If such animals as birds can build a home of their own, enjoy an innocent life together and help each other happily in tending their young ones, why then should men, far nobler creatures, humiliate themselves in the guilt of such shameful misdeeds?

The Fourth Precept

MUSAVADA VERAMANI SIKKA-PADAM SAMADIYAMI

I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from false speech.

This precept encompasses all degrees and types of falsehoods, physical as well as verbal. It is the aim of this precept to avoid verbally injuring another's name or reputation. It is natural that everyone should expect truthfulness from everyone else in whatever matter is being communicated. When the time comes for one to tell others of what one knows, it is again natural that one gives only a truthful account. This is part of the universal law and he who violates it by telling falsehoods is committing an evil action.

There are three degrees of falsehood: direct falsehood, indirect falsehood and the breaking of promises.

Direct Falsehood

A direct falsehood is composed of two elements:

A false statement, and a conscious effort to make it false. Telling falsehoods, however, can be physical as well as verbal. In addition to speaking, it may be done via writing or making gestures with deceitful purpose. Thus when a person writes a false statement in a letter or nods affirmatively when he should shake his head in negation or vice versa, he cannot avoid being guilty of violating this precept.

Direct falsehoods are variously manifested as follows:

Downright Lie

This is a statement diametrically opposed to the truth. This may be seen in the case of a person who says no when he should say yes, or vice versa. As far as the underlying purpose is concerned, it may be further subdivided into:

Incitement, when it is done with the purpose of stirring up the feeling of discord or enmity between persons or groups.

Deceit, when it is based on the intention to cheat.

Flattery, when it refers to excessive and insincere praise.

Revocation, when it entails a flat denial of one's own statement.

Oath Breaking

This means the taking of a vow or oath without intending to keep it, such as a witness in court who, having taken a solemn oath, dares to tell a lie.

Wiles

By wiles here is meant trickery or boasting with selfish, deceptive ends, such as to boast of untrue magic powers or miracles of one's invulnerability to weapons.

Hypocrisy

This is an act of feigning to be what one is not, such as the false assumption of an appearance of virtue or religious attainment.

Play Upon Words

This is the telling of a lie by using an artful method. An example may be seen in the case of a man who has seen a thief running past while he was standing on one side of the road. He then moves to the other side of the road and when

asked by a policeman running behind whether he has seen the thief or not, he answers that he has not seen him since he has been standing there.

This is in fact literally true, yet the intention to tell a lie is there. A person who prefers only to keep up the appearance of precept-observance choose thereby to cling to their literal meaning for his own ends. He often neglects their essential purpose and prides him-self on his artful deception. This practice, however, goes against the spirit of the precept and is no excuse for violating it.

Exaggeration

This is a lie that is based on the truth but which is more than the truth of what is or really happened. Actually it is the habitual practice of those who prefer to 'talk big'. In describing the efficacy of a remedy, for instance, he tends to exaggerate it so as to make it sound like ambrosia, in spite of the fact that the remedy is only meant for one or two kinds of disease.

Concealment

Like exaggeration, this is a lie that is based on the truth, but, like exaggeration, this is a half-truth or one that is less than what really is or has happened. This is also employed for deceitful purposes, for the omitted part is usually essential to the truth of the story. This act of concealment serves to obscure or distort other people's understanding of the truth.

A pupil who falls in with an evil companion some-times goes to his home and then goes out again together with him to do some mischief. Asked why he had come back home later than usual, he replies that he had gone to his friend's house. This is not in fact a lie, but is in actuality concealed truth for the essential part, which is left out in order to create a false understanding, is fixed in the mind of the speaker. It is, therefore, a false statement in that it is spoken with intention to deceive.

All these kinds and manners of falsehoods be they verbal or physical (either by writing or by making gestures), and whether they are believed or not by the listeners, are likewise in violation of this precept.

A person who is guilty of it exposes himself to punishment by both the monastic code and the law of the country. In the Vinaya (code of monastic discipline for Buddhist monks) it can be an offense involving defeat (expulsion from the Order) when a Bhikkhu boasts of his non-existent psychic powers. In cases other than that, it is a lesser offense accompanied by a penalty of some kind or other. Under the law of the country, a liar is subject to punishment in proportion to the damage done to another's benefit or good name.

From the karmic point of view, the three bases of judgment - object, motive, and effort - are again to be taken into account. On the basis of object, it is a serious offense when another's benefit and good name are seriously damaged, such as the act of slander or cheating against a solemn oath. Also, when a

person lies to his benefactor, such as parents or teachers, or to a holy man such as the Buddha, he is guilty of a grave moral offense.

By reason of volition or motive, a falsehood with a malignant intention, such as a false accusation, is a serious crime. With respect to effort, the use of various tricks and wiles involved in the deceitful aim deserves a heavy penalty. Unlike the truth, a lie is 'groundless', having nothing to rest upon. It is invented and therefore has no substantial existence. It is difficult to make it fit into the truth and thus one lie calls for many, which at sometime or someplace will not be but contradictory.

Just as a gold-plated brass vessel will expose its true nature upon being heated, so will a liar helplessly reveal his deceitful nature in the process of cross-examination by a clever person who can always detect a clue even in a mountain of lies. Besides, it is very unlikely that a liar, given the opportunity, will abstain from other evils. Thus a person who is given to falsehoods is always untrustworthy and detested in the same way as one smeared with dirt and filth is loathsome to everyone. It is only through the virtue of truthfulness and sincerity that a man will be trusted and respected wherever he goes.

Indirect Falsehood

Indirect falsehood generally means a falsehood without deceitful intention and it may be divided into various kinds as follows:

Injuring Words

Hurting another's feelings through what both sides know is not true, and which can be further divided into:

Sarcasm

When words imply a bitter praise of virtue or merit that is plainly higher than the insulted person's status or capability and which is, therefore, not deserving of him.

Insult

When words are meant to humiliate a person with something that is lower than his station.

Thoughtless Lie

A falsehood spoken inadvertently through the gift of gab.

Insinuation

Like incitement in a downright lie as mentioned above, this is done with the idea of fomenting discord and arousing the feeling of enmity between individuals or groups. Unlike a downright lie, however, this is based on the truth with the result that a trifling event or slip of the tongue on the part of another is blown up into a matter of importance.

Since it is based on evil intention, it is also prohibited under this precept. Indirect falsehood is an evil from both the moral and legal points of view. It reflects the meanness of character of the person who condescends to speak in such a way. Thus it is to be avoided by cultured people everywhere and at all times.

As far as object is concerned, it is a dire evil when many people are hurt through an act such as that of insinuation, or one done against a benefactor or a virtuous person. With regard to volition, the presence of evil desire entails a heavy penalty. By way of effort, the disunity and enmity resulting from such evil words are productive of a heavy penalty. But even though there is no actual result from the wicked attempt, the evil is there to yield punitive results to its own creator.

All these kinds of indirect falsehood should be avoided by polite, cultured people. They are evil when spoken to children as well as by them. It does not produce a desirable result even when based on good intention as when a parent uses insulting language against his or her children. Except that it serves to show the emotion of the speaker, such language has no actual or potential desirable power.

As long as the insulted child or person has no regard for the feelings or good wishes of another person, such treatment will never make them more heedful. If he is obedient and considerate, he will promptly comply with what is told to him in a gentlemanly manner, either to do some thing or to avoid it.

The way of gentlemanly speech, besides being injurious to no one, is an example of exemplary conduct to the children in the family, who are by nature imitative and highly susceptible to examples and environment. Children born into such a family are sure to rear in turn more dutiful and courteous children of their own.

The Breaking Of Promises

The breaking of promises is the failure to do what was given as a pledge to someone. It denotes, however, the absence of deceitful purpose at the time of giving the pledge. There are three kinds as follows:

Bilateral Promise

When two persons work out an agreement such as a contract, each pledging to do something for the other, this is called a bilateral promise. If afterwards one of the two parties involved refuses to fulfill any of the specified conditions and unjustly takes advantage of some later developments, he is said to have broken this kind of promise.

Unilateral Promise

A unilateral promise is a pledge given to someone either to do or not to do something. A government official who takes an oath of loyalty to that government when appointed to his office is giving a promise of this kind. A wrongdoer or criminal who has given a solemn vow not to break the law again is also bound by this kind of promise.

Revocation Of One's Words

An individual revokes his words when he refuses, for example, to give another person something, which he said he would give. This is rather different from a promise in the sense that it is less serious and more casual, but nevertheless it is a kind of falsehood.

All these forms of promise breaking are falsehoods, which, at the least, spoil the good names of the persons guilty of them, making such persons less trustworthy in the eyes of others. They are to be avoided by all self-respecting people. But there is an important warning here: that is, some kind of promises is better broken than fulfilled, and some words are better revoked than kept. This refers to those promises or words, which are given in a moment of insanity, such as when drunk or which is a pledge, either willingly given or forced, to do evil.

Breaking such promises may be a loss in the matter of the precept, but as far as the law of morality as a whole is concerned; it is compensated for by the avoidance of all the trouble and evil, which might otherwise have resulted from them.

When however, due to unforeseen changing circumstances, a person is not able to do what he said he would, he is only revoking his word, not breaking a promise. This may be seen when a man said he would meet someone someplace sometime later but was after-wards unable to do so because of an illness. So he sends his messenger to inform that person of the necessity of his revoking his word.

The Seeming Falsehood

The following may appear to be falsehoods as far as their literal meanings are concerned, but they are not regarded as such because of the absence of deceitful intention.

Euphemism

This is an indirect or conventional way of speaking and writing, sometimes for the sake of politeness and at other times for the sake of elegance of style. Words of greeting or welcome such as 'Good morning. Thank you.' or those of closing letters as 'Yours respectfully' or the idiomatic or polite style of writing such as 'We regret to inform you that...' are included in this category. Indeed, all these words seldom convey any literal meaning on the part of the speaker or writer, yet they are not treated as falsehoods because of the above-mentioned reasons.

Story-Telling

A fable or story (parable or allegory) told as an illustration or personification of some truth, although it cannot be true in the sense that it is said to have happened, is excluded from falsehood. Thus a person cannot be accused of telling a lie when in the course of his narrative, either in speech or in a book, he illustrates it with a fable. Poets or writers producing such works of imagination are likewise exempt from the guilt of telling falsehoods.

Misunderstanding

Sometimes when a person is asked about the day of the week, he may give the wrong answer, such as saying that it is Friday when in fact it is Thursday. Of course, the answer is wrong and the listener who believes it may be deceived. But owing to the absence of deceitful intent on the part of the speaker, it is not considered a falsehood under this precept.

It is advisable, however, that the speaker, having come to know that his reply was incorrect, should correct his mistake, thereby preventing anything which may happen to the listener and also demonstrating that there was no intention on his part to tell a lie.

Slip Of The Tongue

There are occasions when the mouth contradicts the mind. This can be seen when a person intends to say one thing but through his absent-mindedness says another. Here it is also advisable for the speaker to immediately correct his mistake for the sake of correct understanding.

The Fifth Precept

SURA-MERAYA-MAJJA-PAMADATTHANA VERAMANI SIKKHA-PADAM SAMADIYAMI

I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from liquor causing intoxication and heedlessness.

This precept encourages the abstinence from liquors and intoxicating drinks of all kinds, both fermented and distilled, since they are productive of loss of self-control. By the word *meraya* is meant fermented liquor, whether prepared from sugar or other raw materials. This becomes *sura* when it is distilled for more concentration of flavor and strength.

Both kinds are equally bad in that they weaken self-control, thereby making a person do what he would never have dreamt of doing in his saner moments. Thus the evil of these intoxicating drinks is that they stupefy the mind, driving a person out of his senses.

Whatever it is that we have done without careful planning or thinking it is just those things, which we regret. If we have done whatever we can to prevent an obstacle or accident, we can reasonably excuse ourselves if things happen to fall short of our anticipation or fail to turn out as we expect. This is beyond our means and we do not sorrow over it.

But if through our own self-stupefaction with liquor we become impulsive and are driven to hysterical action or even go berserk, there will be no greater regret than this. Such, however, is only the moral side of a person's affairs. Often there are more serious troubles, which follow. These may be a fine, imprisonment, injury or dismissal from a position in disgrace.

Violation of this precept often leads a person to the four previously mentioned evils (killing, stealing, adultery, and lying). It is because of this fact that the Buddha laid down the fifth precept, for when this precept is strictly observed, the chance for committing the four other evils will be greatly reduced, if not eliminated.

The following is a brief account of what liquor is chemically and the evils of drinking it. What is liquor? Liquor is any drink that intoxicates the mind or overcomes one's reason, or, to be more precise, a person's self-control. In a pure undiluted form, it is a colorless liquid with a strong smell. It burns with a smokeless flame, which, although not so bright, gives out great heat. It is lighter than water, but, unlike oil, can readily mix with water, not just floating on its surface. Such a liquid is more commonly called alcohol.

The Evils Of Intoxicating Drinks

According to the Scriptures, the evils of taking intoxicating drinks are of six kinds:

1. It is a waste of money.
2. It often leads to quarrels.
3. It is harmful to one's health.
4. It is a source of disgrace.
5. It leads to impudent actions.
6. It weakens a person's power of reason.

A Waste Of Money Due To Uncontrollable Craving.

The purpose of earning money is to pay for the necessities and comforts of life, but this does not mean that we should seek only to satisfy our present wants and indulge every passing desire, thinking nothing of the limit of our income or of our earning capacity.

A wise man is always moderate in his expenses with something put away for an emergency, sickness or old age. He draws a line between the necessities of life and luxuries. Food, clothing, shelter and medicine are examples of the necessities of life which cannot be dispensed with, whereas betel nuts, cigarettes and liquor are included in luxuries which should be either avoided or reduced to a minimum.

Habitual use of these luxuries, especially liquor or other alcoholic drinks, will create an uncontrollable craving, which is a drain on one's income. By giving way to such influences, he deprives himself of what would otherwise have been reserved for a rainy day. In most cases, as when a person has a limited income there is surely nothing that will ruin himself and his family as will this habit of intemperance or the excessive indulgence in intoxicating drinks.

Even if he should happen to have enough financial support for such a wasteful habit, however, as in fact few have, intemperance is nonetheless an evil, for its other dangers are still ever present with the same destructive force.

An employee who becomes a drunkard impairs his own efficiency in his work. He is one who is prone to absent-mindedness and indecent acts and is one who is sure to be thrown out of work to starve. If a person who runs a business becomes an alcoholic himself, he is doomed to lose that business sooner or later through misjudgment or muddled-mindedness. There can be no progress expected of a business run on alcohol.

A Great Cause Of Quarrels

In sane moments, everyone wants peace and dislikes quarrels of all kinds. If it happens that one is provoked or teased, one usually has a certain degree of

forbearance, and, except in a really serious case, will choose to avoid more trouble rather than to retaliate. But with alcohol as a stimulant, this will not be the case.

A person tends to have a shorter temper and any simple, meaningless word can arouse him to an uncontrollable rage. Many drunkards have been known to attack others without provocation. Thus alcohol can drive a person out of his senses, blinding him to all reason and decency and making him think that everyone is his enemy.

A Great Cause Of, Not Remedy For, Disease

Alcoholics often excuse themselves for temperance on the grounds that they are suffering from several kinds of disease, such as loss of appetite, stiffness of muscles, weakness of body and mind, and sleeplessness. It is through alcohol, so they say, that such diseases are made tolerable for them. This, according to their argument, is equivalent to saying that alcohol is a medicine, or to some extent necessary for a person's health.

But, obviously, the alcoholic is in no better condition than those who abstain from it, and oftentimes they are worse. This should bring us to the reverse conclusion that alcohol, instead of being a remedy for preventing disease, is really itself the cause of those diseases. Any harmful foreign substance that is absorbed into the blood impairs a person's health. In extreme cases, it can be a poison destroying a person's life.

Alcohol, being a poison by its very nature, always hinders and never helps the body or mind to work properly. There is a general misunderstanding that alcohol can give or increase a person's strength to work. As far as alcohol is concerned, there is perhaps no greater misconception than this. It is true that alcohol can stimulate the circulation of the blood for a time, thus deceiving a person into thinking that he is growing stronger, but his strength is by no means increased.

This is the same as whipping a tired horse to make it go faster. Of course, through fear of the pain of the whip, the horse may be able to increase its speed for some time, and repeated whipping may apparently urge it on a little faster, but its rate of speed each time is a little slower. This is because whipping does not put more strength into the horse as whipping is often thought to do, but it forces the horse to exhaust its remaining strength all the sooner.

The same is true of an individual who, having drunk alcohol, fancies he is stronger. The more he indulges himself in it, the sooner will he be exhausted. There is a story, which can illustrate this fact. A ship at sea sprang a leak and the crew was ordered to pump out the incoming water day and night, and after some time they appeared to be tiring from the labor.

Seeing this, the captain provided his men with liquor to enable them to go on with their work with the same strength and courage as before. But the captain soon noticed that the liquor ration had done more harm than good, for the men were being steadily weakened instead of strengthened. He then ordered the liquor ration stopped and instead allowed his men more and better food and rest. It was in this way that the men were able to put up with the hard work and the ship was at last brought safely to harbor.

Another great misunderstanding is that alcohol can generate warmth. But here again, the above analogy of the whipped horse may be referred to. Alcohol may reduce a person's sensitivity to the weather through its stimulating power, which acts upon the circulation of the blood, but this is only for the time being. After that it will come to lower the temperature in the system to the detriment of the person himself.

This is against the natural law that in order to enable the body to stand the cold weather better, an amount of heat must be given to it, not taken from it. The alcohol inside eventually acts as an ally of the cold outside and thus helps to freeze the man all the more quickly. The only way to prevent this harmful after effect is to drink it repeatedly and at shorter and shorter intervals. People will endure cold better, however, if they would only drink a solution of water and ground pepper, hot tea, or simply hot water.

In some cases, however, alcohol may be useful in that it deadens the unpleasant feeling caused by some diseases, but it must be used carefully and only sparingly to produce the expected result. In the long run, its excessive or careless use will be very dangerous to the patient's health.

A Great Cause Of Disgrace

A person's good name is his essence. It makes him worthy of respect and is of great help in his work, which is his way of earning his livelihood. But this good name or reputation is an acquired quality, which is built up by effort and time. It is not until people are convinced of a person's behavior, feeling sure that he has stood the test of time and temptation that they will treat him with honor and respect.

Nevertheless, reputation is a frail thing, being easier lost than gained. And very often, one slip is enough to throw a person back to where he started. It is just natural that a person should safeguard his good name with the utmost care. But under the bewildering influence of alcohol, he is apt to forget everything and lose all power of self-control. Most regretfully, in such moments he will never hesitate to disgrace himself or to undo what he has painstakingly done over many years.

Loss Of Self Control

A man's mind is generally governed by conscience telling him what is right and what is wrong, what should be avoided and what should be done. There is here an analogy between a man's conscience and the driver of a horse-driven carriage. As long as the driver keeps a tight rein on the animal, the carriage runs smoothly on its way. But whenever he is absent-minded and releases the reins, the horse will gallop freely in any direction taking itself, the driver and all, to ruin.

Thus the mind, without the guiding light of conscience, will lose all power of self-control and is unable to think and act properly. Such a person will not hesitate to do or say what he would otherwise have avoided at all costs. This is another evil of liquor.

Interference With The Function Of The Brain

Although people are different from one another in the levels of their intelligence, yet they can make it better or worse for themselves. The way to improve intelligence is to nourish the brain by thinking for themselves and sober reasoning. This is like a piece of land which, without loosening up or fertilizing, would be no better than a desert or a place suited only for wild growth.

Just as tilling and fertilizing make land permanently suitable for cultivation, so it is by learning and proper self-training that the brain will be nourished and a person's intelligence improved. Here a human brain may also be likened to an instrument or an engine. A knife kept without use becomes rusty or blunt, and a machine left without being used cannot function well.

Even our own muscles, deprived of any movement or exercise, will become stiff and fatigued. So is the brain will be developed and function properly through enough and suitable exercise. But it must not be disturbed in the performance of its duty, otherwise the best results cannot be expected. Of all the causes that harmfully interfere with the function of the brain, there is perhaps nothing worse than the poison alcohol, which paralyses feelings and stupefies the faculty of reasoning. When the brain, which is the seat of intelligence, is impaired, a chain of evil consequences affecting the person physically, emotionally and socially is sure to follow.

Potential Danger

How liquor can bring on evils and disease may be obvious to many, but few, if any, realize its potential danger, even in so-called 'moderate drinking'. It is true that no one wants to be under the power of alcohol the first time he tastes it, but the first taste leads temptingly to the second and 'occasional drinking' becomes more frequent.

The interval between drinks becomes shorter and the amount each time grows, otherwise the ever-growing desire for alcohol cannot be satiated. So uncontrollable is the passion for alcohol that the alcoholic will wreck his own health for its gratification. How serious its influence is may be seen in the cases of some who, having abstained from it for years, revert helplessly to the old habit merely because of once giving way to the old desire.

Thus the most important warning for everyone is 'stay away from the first taste'. Alcohol is sometimes mixed with some kinds of food to subdue its oily odor or as a seasoning. If its color and flavor cannot be detected, it is called *abbhocharika* (negligible) and can be taken as food or medicine without any evil from the physical or moral standpoint.

But its potential danger, however small, is still there and may tempt those who at one time had been alcoholics to go back to their old habits again. In this case it is advisable that the food should be heated so that its habit-forming effect may be substantially reduced, if not destroyed.

Essential Purpose Of This Precept

Buddhists should remind themselves of the fact that the essential purpose of this precept is to abstain from whatever intoxicates the mind and damages a person's health and good name. Thus all other intoxicants, such as Indian hemp, opium, marijuana and others are to be included (as *majja* - those that bewilder the mind).

Indeed, they are not directly mentioned in the wording of the precept itself since they were not known in the time of the Buddha. But there is what are called the *maha-padesa* (the great references) which Buddhists may turn to for a basis for judgment in case of doubt or indecision due to unforeseen circumstances. These references may be explained in brief as follows: whenever there arises a thing or an event and the question arises as to whether it should be allowed or prohibited.

Buddhists must weigh its benefits and dangers honestly and thoroughly and then determine into which category it should fall with regard to its nature. Such drugs with their injurious and intoxicating effects can thus be reasonably included in what is to be abstained from under the meaning of this precept.

Opium and other opiates, like all narcotic drugs, reduce sensitivity and are strongly habit-forming, but unlike liquor, they do not produce a belligerent effect on the addict. In the long run, however, they are more harmful than liquor.

Opium and other opiates are also used for medicinal purposes as painkillers, sometimes by smoking and at other times by being taken orally or by injection. This is reserved, however, only for cases of extreme necessity when pain has become so severe that it becomes unbearable. Here it is applied against

symptomatic pain, giving time for the other remedies to produce their direct curative effect on the disease itself.

Many people, however, not knowing its dreadful potential danger, look only at its soothing property and choose to use it for pleasurable effects, only to become its complete slave afterwards. In some cases, where disease has become chronic, the application of this drug has to be repeated until it forms a habit with the patient, even after recovery. It then becomes indispensable for the gratification of desire itself, instead of being a remedy for the disease.

The evils of being addicted to opium (including, of course, the other opiates) are manifold. In short, it leads most certainly to the wreckage of a person's health, money, virtue, and good name. The greatest danger of opium is its seemingly beneficial effect in its early stages. It deadens pain, dispels worry and anxiety, induces sleep and encourages the imaginative faculty. This is opposite to the stimulating, pugnacious effect of alcohol and deludes a person into thinking that it is really helpful.

But after a time, the person becomes overwhelmed with drowsiness and stupefaction, with his appetite lost his stomach upset, his blood poisoned and its circulation depressed. Also accompanying these adverse results is a general debility with the derangement of the nervous system and dullness of the mind.

One who is addicted to opium is forced to steal to supplement his income. This deprives him, and his dependents, of other decent items of expenditure or a sum to be put away in case of an emergency or illness. It is only when he is fortunate enough to have an unlimited income, which is most rare, that a person can be its complete slave without much affecting his financial status.

Since opium stupefies the brain, which is the headquarters of physical and mental activities, a person is apt to lose his self-control and be powerless in the face of temptations.

He can shamelessly tell lies or commit thefts, which he would never have thought himself capable of had he not been under its tyrannical influence. It is only through having a constant financial supply of opium that he is able to remain a law-abiding citizen, otherwise there would be no sense of virtue left in his mind.

In view of these actual and potential evils, however wealthy and consequently immune against crime a person may be, he is nonetheless scorned and loathed, although silently, by everyone who knows of his habit. He is said to be always on the road leading to destruction, for his life is all the time hanging on the thread of his wealth, which has to bear the weight of ever-increasing desire.

Let all self-respecting people bear in mind the above-mentioned evils of opium. Even in the case of necessity, let them be scrupulously heedful of its use, whether in taking it orally, smoking it or injecting it, for this kind of drug saps

energy and mental strength and forms a habit, which can be broken only with the greatest difficulty.

Another kind of drug is called hemp or Indian hemp (*cannabis sativa*). In small doses it may be used for medicinal purposes to produce sleep or to dull the senses. It is also addictive and has an intoxicating effect. Addicts prefer to smoke it. It reacts mainly on the nervous system, producing both visionary and auditory hallucinations. Thus what a person addicted to it sees or hears is often distorted and exaggerated. Very often a rope is to him a snake and the sound of a drum becomes thunder or the roar of a cannon.

This in turn gives rise to a morbid fear and an uncontrollable excitement leading eventually to delirium and insanity. There are several other kinds of intoxicants, all of which produce the same adverse effects on the health, both of the body and the mind. They are regarded as things to be avoided under this precept. In cases of extreme necessity, however, all are to be used abstemiously and with the greatest possible care.

Abstention (Viratti)

Those who can abstain from the evils described above have observed the five precepts with the consequent purified and harmless words and deeds.

Such acts of abstention (*viratti*) are of three kinds:

Sampattaviratti - immediate abstention,
samadana-viratti - votive abstention,
samucchedaviratti - absolute abstention.

Immediate Abstention

Immediate abstention is the abstention of a person who has not made up his mind in advance to abstain from doing such evils, but who, given the opportunity, is courageous enough to keep himself from succumbing to the temptation. Thus a person who refuses to kill, steal, commit adultery, tell a lie or take an intoxicating drink, even when he has the opportunity to do so, without fear of being seen or punished; who thinks that such an act is not becoming to a person of his birth or rank or station; or who follows the moral sanction of his own conscience, is one who practices abstention of this kind.

With regard to most people (except those who have made a vow to observe precepts), there are different kinds or grades of this immediate abstention. To some it may tacitly cover all five precepts, whereas to others it may include some while excluding the rest.

Again, such abstention may be different in degrees, strictly abstaining from serious crimes but being slack where minor offenses are concerned. This kind

of abstention, although irregular and partial, is better than total neglect. But it must not be confused with the forced restraint of a robber who has not done any evil through lack of opportunity. This has nothing whatsoever to do with abstention.

Votive Abstention

Votive abstention is abstention through observing a vow, referring to that of lay followers who have made a vow to observe precepts, as well as of monks and nuns. The purpose of abstention here is to fulfill their vows. There are several kinds of votive abstention. It may be through accepting what is traditionally required of a way of life such as to be ordained as a monk or a novice, or it may be through expressing a resolution either in the presence of others or silently to oneself, as may be seen in the cases of some lay followers at present.

It is again differentiated by the time involved, for some may undertake to observe the vow for the rest of their lives, while others may be able to do so only temporarily or periodically. As in the case of some monks who voluntarily retire from the monkhood or of some lay followers who observe their vows only on the full moon, the half moon and the last moon days.

In all such cases, those who violate the precepts have committed a twofold offense in that they not only have infringed upon the prohibitions of the precepts, but also have broken the vows of truthfulness they have taken upon themselves to observe. On the other hand, those who manage to fulfill the conditions of their precepts have also fulfilled their religious vows.

These two kinds of abstentions are really helpful to people in their own way of life and in accordance with their own ability to observe them. This is like a country, which is made up of a variety of people, each with his or her own particular duty more or less related and helpful to others in one way or another.

The police, for example, are charged with the duty of maintaining law and order within the country, whereas the armed forces are responsible for defending the country against external enemies, thereby enabling people with other responsibilities to perform their work peacefully.

There are groups of people who have devoted their lives to a religious cause and whose work it is to establish people in right conduct so that they may be law-abiding citizens of that country. Then there are other groups who prefer to instruct others in the various arts and sciences in order that they may be intelligent members of society and able to earn their livelihood by honest means.

Still other groups may be merchants, gardeners, and farmers, manufacturers or even laborers who depend on menial tasks for their living. All these people are

essential to the whole fabric of society in their own way and are dependently connected with the rest in one way or another. The absence of any one of these, however unimportant they may seem to be, would adversely affect all the others and consequently impair the strength of the whole.

Just as the proper arrangement of several types of wood and other things round an empty space gives birth to a 'house' and makes it stand as such so that it is not merely a collection of construction materials; so are the functional combination of these manifold types of people working harmoniously together contributes both to the solidarity of the whole and to the welfare of the individual.

Absolute Abstention

Absolute abstention is abstention through the elimination of all the causes that will lead to infraction. It denotes the quality of a Worthy One (arahat) who is absolutely incapable of violating any of these precepts the moment he or she has won through to Enlightenment.

These five precepts are the basic discipline in Buddhism and are meant for Bhikkhus and lay followers alike. Those who are Buddhists at heart observe them more or less at different times according to their capacity. Those who neglect them altogether can be proud of paying lip service to Buddhism.

The Five Ennobling Virtues

The qualities of a virtuous person are mentioned in the scriptures, referring to precepts (sīla) and ennobling virtues (kalyana dhamma). One who has fully observed the precepts is not necessarily one who is equipped with virtue. For example, when such a person happens to see a drowning man while he is passing by in a boat, he is morally bound to stop the boat and to save that man.

If he cannot be bothered to do so, in spite of his ability, and he leaves the man to drown. However, one can say that he has not broken any precepts, but he has certainly lost something higher than precepts and will surely be severely censured for his positive lack of virtue.

It is only when he has tried his best to save the drowning man that he is worthy of being called virtuous in the true and positive sense to be described below. These ennobling virtues or kalyana-dhamma serve to ennoble those who practice them. They are five in number, each one corresponding to one of the five precepts, and being positive in nature, are more advanced than the negative prohibitions.

They are:

1. Loving-kindness and compassion
- corresponding to abstention from killing.
2. Patience in the right means of livelihood
- corresponding to abstention from stealing
- 3 Self restraint in sexual practices -
- corresponding to abstention from committing adultery
- 4 Truthfulness
- corresponding to abstention from falsehood
- 5 Watchfulness
- corresponding to abstention from taking intoxicating drinks

The First Ennobler

Loving-Kindness - a longing to help others attain to the same happiness oneself has experienced. It is an urge to mutual assistance.

If we look at the things around us, we shall see a variety of manifestations of this virtue. The monasteries where the people and Bhikkhus can perform their religious services and study religious subjects for the sake of their spiritual growth. In schools children are taught various subjects so that they can earn their living later on and be good citizens of the country while the orphanages for helpless children who would otherwise have been left in lonely misery.

The rest houses are for weary travelers and wells supplying water for drinking, bathing and other purposes. The roads, bridges, canals and several other things are built for public use, even the tiny water booths at the door of a public-spirited person. All these distinctly reflect the spirit of loving-kindness on the part of their original builders, those who have repaired them and those who manage to keep them in good condition in the present time.

Such people, through the advantage of their birth, virtue, or an acquired capacity for earning, having provided for themselves and their own dependents, have not forgotten to think of the well being and comfort of others. In order to share their happiness with other people, out of generosity they have given to charity a part of their well-earned gains which indeed they could have kept and hoarded for their use alone.

It is a moral duty for every human being to do some act of kindness on the appropriate occasion. Without the kindness of our loving father and mother, we would never have grown up to be what we are now. It is they who attended to our wants and looked after our welfare when we were young and helpless. Even though we were orphans, there were those who, out of

kindness, took the place of parents and brought us up with the same loving care.

When we have grown up, we are sent to school to be trained in various arts and sciences, in the behavior and manners of cultured people, and also in the moral law to keep us within the right path. Still later, when we have become mature men or women and have to fend for ourselves, we are functionally dependent on our friends and superiors, all of whom give us help of one kind or another.

Thus it is naturally reasonable that we should in turn perform acts of kindness towards others whenever we are in a position to do so. This is the only way in which life is made worth living and the world kept rolling on. There are those, however, who fail to render return services to others. They refuse to look after the needy or to look after their families despite their ability to do so. Such people are called heartless ones.

They are grievously selfish and have not paid their debt of gratitude to the world, being shamefully ungrateful for all the services done to them from the days of their infancy. From a higher point of view, however, it is natural that parents should take care of their young ones, for this is the case even among animals. But there is a broader, nobler kind of loving-kindness, which is extended to others who are not intimately connected with us.

This is an acquired quality of the mind. It has been an accepted tradition since ancient times that to help the needy and to take care of the disabled is a manifestation of loving-kindness. These people, being at the end of their resources, are compelled to suffer the shame of being beggarly dependent upon others. Thus arose the custom of establishing houses of charity as well as occasional alms-giving whenever a person came across a beggar on the way or met one at home.

For this reason, in the time of merit making, it has become a tradition to give alms to the aged, the maimed and beggars. Sometimes, when there are too many of them, it is impossible to distribute a fair share to everyone. To avoid this predicament, a method was invented of giving alms (especially money) by throwing (generally coins) upon the waiting group at random to let them scramble for the coins themselves.

Still later, there were some thinkers who voiced their opinion that although charity was instituted as a channel of merit making, it should be done discriminatingly for the long-term benefit of the receivers themselves. In many cases, giving alms to beggars does not render them any real assistance for instead of being helped, they are often spoiled by the apparently meritorious act, which has made them, and many others satisfied with a life of dependency and laziness.

In such cases they are never improved either economically or morally and have deplorably become encouraging examples of lethargic contentment to others. To prevent this, in some countries special charity houses have been built where the poor and unfortunate people are given food and shelter and, except the aged and the maimed, they are put to work according to their strength and skill.

Also to provide better opportunities for children, orphans' homes have been established where children are educated and trained to prevent them from becoming beggars or a burden to society when they grow up. There is one kind of beggar, however, called vanibbaka, who, while begging, entertain the crowd with musical skills. They are more like entertainers than beggars as they also perform a kind of service to others and thus are not so much looked down on as are other kinds of beggars.

Another aspect of loving-kindness is the virtue of compassion, which may be regarded as synonymous with pity - a yearning to relieve others of their troubles and sufferings. Such institutions as hospitals and courts of justice are manifestations of this quality of mind on the part of the king or the ruler of the state.

Just as in the case of loving-kindness, it is again a moral necessity for every human being to perform acts of compassion in the same spirit as he has benefited from the compassion of others. In the days of his youth it was his parents who took pains to protect him from all types of danger when well and who took great trouble to make him well when sickness struck.

At school, teachers, taking the place of parents, tried their best to help him in matters of health as well as matters of knowledge. When he has grown up and is able to stand on his own feet or has a family of his own, it is again relatives, friends, superiors, wife and children who come to his aid when he is in distress.

When, for instance, his house is destroyed by fire or when he becomes destitute or is at his wits' end in other matters, it is these people who can offer him the help that he needs, be it financial, manual help, or help in the form of warnings or advice. But even when not in distress, he is all the time potentially in need of their cooperative help to make his life run smoothly in the present, let alone in the future.

Thus he is bound by a reciprocal obligation to take part in the dispensation of such virtue whenever he can. This may be done by tending the sick, giving alms to the poor, or providing relief of some kind or other to the victims of disasters, just as the situation demands. Having done so, he is said to have paid his debt of gratitude to the world, not taking unfair advantage of it in a selfish, heartless manner.

The saving of lives is generally regarded as a manifestation of compassion. It is a tradition in civilized countries to help those who are in distress from shipwreck, whether by storm, collision, or running upon the rocks. People living in seaside towns sometimes breed and train a type of dog, which is big and strong to help save drowning people.

Even during the inevitable wars between civilized countries, the spirit of compassion is better observed than in ancient times or between barbarous countries. An armed attack is limited to armed enemies, excluding those uninvolved (women, children, and unarmed civilians) and their property.

Even between enemies themselves those who are unable to fight because of wounds or who have surrendered themselves are also exempt from harm. Prisoners of war are also protected until the cessation of hostilities.

They must still be fed, although confined within certain places and prevented from taking up arms against their captors. After the war they are returned to their own countries and not put to work at forced labor as before. These are examples of various manifestations of compassion, which generally increase with civilization.

This practice of compassion is also extended to animals. A person with a compassionate nature often buys animals, which are to be killed. This method of saving lives is usually followed in addition to charity and many people prefer to release the animals, which they have bought, such as fish, pigs, ducks, or hens, in the compounds of monasteries so that they can enjoy security and happiness for the rest of their lives.

In ancient times there was sometimes a tradition that the king would declare a certain place to be a sanctuary for a certain kind of animal. A parallel to this may be seen today in laws prohibiting the killing of elephants or fishing during certain periods of the year. This practice of giving protection to animals, however, is confined to some kinds of harmless animals, excluding most of the carnivore, which are either poisonous or dangerous to man, and other animals in other ways.

It has been recognized that to minister to the needy, especially deserving cases, is the mark of greatness of character. Stories are often told as illustrations of such a practice of chivalrous compassion.

A king by the name of Abhayarajakumara, for instance, was said one day to have come across a newborn baby abandoned by the wayside. He took pity on it, brought it to the palace and took care of it himself. When he reached school age, he was sent to study medicine under a great teacher at Takkasila, the highest educational institute of that time. This child later became a famous doctor in the royal court and was known as Jivaka Komarabhacca, who was also the Bhikkhus', as well as the Buddha's personal physician and who has been regarded to this day as the father of the science of medicine.

Another story is told of a king who often traveled incognito in his kingdom to see for himself how his people lived and worked. One day, a child beggar who asked him for money to pay for the doctor's fee for his sick mother stopped him. Moved by the child's story, the king sent the boy to the doctor with the money and went to see the boy's mother himself. Having stayed with the patient for a time, the king left a message together with more money in the house and then departed. It was only when the boy and the doctor later returned to the house that the man who was so kind to them was found out to be none other than their own king. These are illustrations of how real greatness cannot be divorced from kindness.

Manifestations of compassion must be based on intelligent discrimination, however, in order to be helpful to both parties. When, for example, a person sees a drowning man, he must stop to think whether or not he can swim well enough to be able to save him before jumping into the water. If he cannot swim or is a very poor swimmer, trying to save a drowning man would mean his own death as well.

Another way must be found, such as a boat large enough to hold two people. If such a boat cannot be found in time, some other way should be attempted such as throwing a board or piece of wood or some other matter which the drowning man can use as a support while help is being summoned. Furthermore, a compassionate act towards one person must not be one that hurts another. Thus it is wrong to take compassion on an arrested robber and free him from the police. Such an act, besides being a crime, is helping an evil person at the expense of law-abiding citizens.

In a case such as this, a Buddhist should compose himself with the virtue of equanimity (*upekkha* based on the belief in the working of the law of karma according to which all beings are destined to receive the results of whatever actions they have done, be they good or evil).

This may be seen in the Vinaya (Monastic Discipline) where the Sangha is not permitted to give ordination to a robber. This is to prevent such people from hiding themselves under the shadow of the Robe, for such an act of kindness on the part of the Sangha would be detrimental to the welfare of the people as a whole. With regard to this, there is an ancient Thai proverb, which says 'It is unwise to raise a tiger's cub or a young crocodile in the house.'

This twin virtue of loving-kindness and compassion, properly practiced is to the precepts what the setting of a ring is to its jewel. Just as the setting of a ring adds to the beauty of a jewel, so does the practice of loving-kindness and compassion enhance the practice of the first precept.

The Second Ennobler

Samma-Ajivo - patience regarding the right way of livelihood.

Patience is a great help for the observance of the second precept. Without the positive practice of patience, it would be next to impossible for a person to avoid violating the second precept in some way or another. Even though one has inherited a fortune, it would still be like a pond without any inlet. With only an outlet, a pond, however large and full, is sure to run dry sooner or later.

Once such wealth is drained away, how can a person without any income whatsoever remain faithful to the observance of this precept? It is a sad fact that many precept-minded lay followers, through this lack of patience, have been reduced to destitution and misery. Had they been equipped with this ennobling virtue the situation would have been much less deplorable for them and their religious devotion would surely have brought about better results for both themselves and others.

The right means of earning a livelihood, however, means more than abstaining from illegal and prohibited occupations. It demands that Buddhists be righteous or just in action, in person, and in object. When a person is engaged to do anything or is allowed to share in any business, he must devote his time and energy to it in order to accomplish it as well as he can. He must not misappropriate the time for which he is paid for his work.

For this reason it is advisable that he should begin work, if possible, a little before office hours and then lay it aside a little after the official time to stop. During office hours, he is bound by moral duty to do his work as carefully and earnestly as he can. These are illustrations of righteousness in work or action. An instance of righteousness in person can be seen in the case of a person who has a number of workmen in his employ.

If he readily pays them in accordance with the terms of employment and promotes them by virtue of their ability and experience, he is practicing this aspect of righteousness. In like manner, a merchant, having determined the rate percent of profit for his goods, should sell them honestly at the same price to all his customers, neither overcharging those who do not know how to bargain nor allowing a special discount to others who cannot be deceived. Such acts of honest and just dealing with others are illustrations of righteousness in person.

Righteousness in object may be expressed in a seller's honest telling of the kind and quality of his goods, not passing an inferior article off as one of superior quality, or a mixed or imitation article for the genuine thing. This kind of dishonesty is a double fraud in that it cheats a customer of his money and deprives him of the advantage he expects from the purchased article.

In civilized countries it is required that the type of quality of goods be honestly made known to the purchasers on the tags and labels attached to each article. Margarine, for example, must not be labeled as butter and diluted honey cannot be sold as pure honey. Even with genuine articles, special care must also be taken with regards to those goods that can change their state or quality in a comparatively short period.

Thus prepared food such as curry tends to go bad when left until the next day. Such food must be disposed of, otherwise it will become poisonous and harmful to innocent buyers. Another example may be seen in the case of an engineering contractor undertaking the construction of a building. Here the terms of the contract must be strictly followed, with construction materials used according to the number and standard specified.

Having understood the various aspects of righteousness mentioned above, he who wants to find a means of earning a livelihood should avoid unfair dealings and evil occupations of all kinds, however profitable in terms of money they may be. This also includes games of chance or gambling, which will eventually lead the unwary participants to destitution and ruin.

It is true that once in a while it may bring in some profit, but this is only for the time being and cannot be expected to have any real value. Such gains have two inherent evils. Since such gains are suddenly obtained without the support of hard work, it is 'hot money', so to speak and is easily melted away in other foolish expenses. Such gains are tempting bait to lure a person into losing far more than he has gained because of his greed and an endless desire for more and more.

For these reasons it is better to devote one's time and energy to work that calls for patience, skill and experience. This will always remind a person of his financial position and will naturally check him from wrongful and extravagant spending. There are also other factors leading to the growth of wealth obtained through hard work.

This includes a safeguard against loss through external dangers such as robbery or fire or internal dangers such as improper spending or un-thoughtful planning, moderation in spending hard-earned money, and neither frittering it away by indulging in luxuries nor starving oneself just to hoard or gloat over it.

Let everyone look at the small bees moving from blossom to blossom in search of nectar from which to make honey. Think how small the amount of nectar is that one bee can suck up each time. Through their persistent and cooperative efforts they never fail to store up honey enough to sustain them and their young ones throughout the long, dreary winter.

If a man will follow the bees' example, devoting himself to work and putting aside part of his income for rainy days, he is sure to steer clear of unnecessary financial troubles in the future. Even though he cannot be very wealthy, he will

not be deprived of decent enjoyments and well-earned rest. But the best profit is that he will not be forced to turn to evil ways just for the sake of earning of a living. And this is how hard work brings its reward in the long run, both in terms of money and in the form of spiritual growth.

The Third Ennobler

To be self-controlled in sexual behavior means to restrain oneself from immoral sexual practices, referring directly to adultery and tacitly to all indulgences in abnormal or socially prohibited sexual practices (such as fornication).

Those who merely abstain from adultery but who still wallow in self-indulgence without regard to social decorum are said to defile themselves in a shameful manner. They are still exposed to blame as far as this virtue is concerned. The ennobling practice for husbands and wives is of two kinds: sadarasantutthi (contentment in one's wife) for men, and pativatti (devotion to one's husband) for women.

The strict observance of sadarasantutthi is the practice of a man who is content with only one wife, never deserting her in time of sickness or good health and never looking for other women. Enjoying only her companionship, he lives up to his vow of 'til death do us part'. In countries where it is permissible by law for a man to have more than one wife, he who is content with his own wives, not seeking other women, is also practicing sadarasantutthi.

A man who is not content with his own wife or wives and who goes to a prostitute may not be said to have committed adultery, but it is a shameful disgrace to himself. Firstly, he has to spend much of his income in doing so. The money thus wasted cannot be called a form of assistance as in the case of that given to other people out of compassion. It is a penalty for his own greedy lust.

Secondly, a prostitute, being promiscuous in sexual relations, is a source of diseases, which are at times chronic and communicable to his own wife and offspring and can sometimes be fatal to himself. This is obviously a double evil, defiling other innocent persons as well as oneself. Thirdly, it is exposing oneself to unworthy risks. Since a prostitute offers her body to everyone in return for payment, she often causes jealous envy on the part of those who go to her.

This is very likely to lead to quarreling and fighting, which may end in injury or death. These are the evils of not being content with one's wife or wives. Let every husband look at the bird which always treats its mate with sympathetic affection, each enjoying the other's company, helping each other to build their home and tend their young ones. If even birds can act in this way, should a

human being, a far nobler creature, bring disgrace upon himself by succumbing shamefully to his own corrupt desire?

A wife also has some reciprocal duties towards her husband. She is required to do everything for the sake of his comfort and happiness and to be faithful to him alone throughout her life. In some cases, even when her husband has died, she still prefers to remain a widow for the rest of her life in spite of the fact that she is permitted to remarry by tradition or by the law of the country.

This is an example of the practice of *pativatti* or devotion. There are many widows of this kind who, although not so old or so wealthy themselves, choose to consecrate their persons to the memory of their deceased husbands, never discouraged by the hardships of life that they must face in the attempt to support their children as well as themselves. This is indeed a life of unblemished purity and a great example to other widows who, being free from financial troubles, should courageously strive to establish themselves in similar practice. Such a life will be an instructive example to other women in the future.

There is another immoral practice to which a self-respecting woman should never condescend. This is to trade her body for money, which is regarded as the last resort of those who are at the end of their resources. Such women are generally treated with contempt and often have to remain hidden and unacknowledged as respectable members of society. This kind of life has in itself the seeds of bitterness and produces the sensation of being utterly alone even though one lives in the middle of a teeming city. It is one of the most agonizing experiences of a human being.

This is how the wrong sorts of sexual relations can bring on bitterness and shame as well as disease and disability. Let everyone, man and woman, husband and wife, strive to equip themselves with the virtue of self-control, avoiding by all means not only adultery, but also self-indulgence, or body-trading.

The Fourth Ennobler

Truthfulness, as the ennobling virtue of the fourth precept, is manifested as justness, sincerity, loyalty and gratitude.

Justness is the performance of one's duties in conformity with right, truth and the dictates of reason, as opposed to the following four aspects or causes of prejudice. Love - the preference of one for another; hatred - the feeling of enmity or uncontrollable ill-will; ignorance - the holding of wrong views; and fear - cowardice which makes a person turn a deaf ear to his conscience or reason.

A judge, for example, must administer justice to everyone, not siding with either the accuser or the accused. He must scrutinize each case with the greatest possible care and mete out punishment fairly where punishment is

due. Such a person is sure to be praised and respected by all who sincerely seek justice above all else. An illustration of this fact may be seen in the case of Prince Ajatashatru, who, concealing a dagger within his cloak proceeded into the court of King Bimbisara, his own father, in an attempt to assassinate him.

The patricide plot was uncovered, however, and the Prince brought to trial. The judges at the trial choosing to adhere to the law rather than altering it to suit the needs of an individual case, fearlessly pronounced the death sentence, although conscious of the fact that the King, because of his faithful love for his son, would not be pleased with the verdict.

It is true that the King did not confirm the sentence and granted pardon to his son, but the judges were not blamed and were always respected. Ironically, such persons may sometimes be deprived of praise or rank, which, in point of truth, is really their due. But there will certainly come a time when, like a waxing moon, they will be blessed with all the ranks and fame that rightfully belong to them.

Sincerity is genuineness of feeling and expression towards other people opposed to hypocrisy, maliciousness and falseness in any degree. An instance of this may be seen in the four negative qualities of a good friend. Such a person abstains from swindling, flattering or fawning on his friend and also from leading him to destruction. He also has the four positive qualities of always helping his friend, standing by him in time of need, showing him what is profitable and having loving-kindness.

Loyalty is faithfulness to that which one is bound by pledge or duty. It includes the acts of helping, serving and defending in conformity with the pledge, person or cause, even at the cost of one's own life. This aspect of faithfulness is required of an official who has taken his oath of allegiance to the Throne, thereby taking upon himself the obligation of obedience, service and even self-sacrifice in time of emergency or war.

A subject or citizen who faithfully lives up to his oath is said to have fulfilled his vow of loyalty to his sovereign or country.

Gratitude is called *katannu* in Pali and is generally coupled with *katavedi*. In this combined form, *katannu* is the feeling of thankfulness for benefits received or for kindness rendered, whereas *katavedi* is the expression or manifestation of this feeling through words and deeds. (Standing alone, *katannu* is understood to cover both meanings.)

Here, as a manifestation of faithfulness, it suggests an evenness of behavior as opposed to vanity or haughtiness. An instance of this may be seen in the regular practice of Shariputra, who was once a mendicant, that is to say, a member of one of the bodies of non-Buddhist monks. He one day came across the Venerable Assaji, one of the first Five Disciples of Lord Buddha, and having

been Enlightened by the Elder's sermon, was converted and later ordained into the Buddhist monkhood.

The Venerable Shariputra afterwards became what is called in Pali 'the right-hand disciple' of the Buddha, being respected as having supreme wisdom and exceptional methods of teaching unequalled among all other disciples of the Buddha. He was one of the most valuable helpers of the Buddha in spreading the Dhamma and was generally looked upon as second only to the Buddha.

But he remained unwaveringly faithful to his first teacher, the Venerable Assaji, who, although Enlightened, had no special gift, and always regarded the Elder as his great benefactor, never failing to pay homage to him before he went to rest for the night throughout his life. This aspect of faithfulness, therefore, is an ennobling virtue for children, pupils, or servants who do not neglect to pay due respect to their parents, teachers and masters respectively.

The Fifth Ennobler

Watchfulness (awareness or mindfulness) is manifested in various ways: watchfulness in food, watchfulness in work, watchfulness in one's behavior, and watchfulness regarding the nature of life.

Watchfulness In Food

Food, as discussed in the fifth precept, helps to feed the body and make it grow. But this, as well as other useful things, needs moderation (a manifestation of watchfulness) in order to be of any benefit to the body. It is because of lack of control that a thing, which is useful by nature, can become dangerous. Fire, for example, can be a dreadful foe as well as a great friend of man.

Brought under control it renders invaluable service in heating and lighting, but once out of control it can cause untold destruction and disaster. Thus it is with food and other things. The following will illustrate just how indispensable the virtue of watchfulness is in all cases.

The first point to consider with regard to watchfulness in food is time. This is because the usefulness of every kind of food depends largely on the time involved. Fruit juice, for instance, will after some time become an intoxicating drink and will again develop a sour taste if left a little longer. In like manner, food left over for a period will become bad and not only lose all its nutritive essence, but can also be harmful to the body.

Practically speaking, however, spoiled food may not be very dangerous since its appearance and smell often tell people of its own nature and keeps them from danger.

There are some kinds of food, which are disagreeable to some kinds of people. In this case even though it is not bad, yet it may be harmful to them more or less. Some types of food are not suitable for a person who is suffering from some kinds of disease. Such foods must be totally abstained from by such people, however tasty it may be. It must be remembered that a moment of pleasant taste does not compensate for the loss of health or the serious trouble it may bring on.

Another aspect of watchfulness, even in the kinds of food, which agree with one, is moderation in both quantity and time. Overeating or too frequent meals (with an interval of less than four hours) will put a strain on internal organs and may cause indigestion or other digestive troubles. The point of balance can be roughly known by one's own feeling.

For this purpose, stop eating the moment you feel that for that meal you have had enough. To go on eating against the warning of your own feelings is to punish, not reward yourself. The interval between meals, however, may vary to some degree with each individual and should be determined by one's own feeling or hunger.

Eating meals at regular hours is another important rule of health as far as food is concerned. It simply means that one eat nothing between meals. It should be remembered that it is the food digested and absorbed, not what is put into the mouth that will do one good.

Moderation in spending money for food is the last aspect of watchfulness in food. It is wrong to indulge oneself in rich and luxurious food as well as foolish to starve oneself just for the sake of hoarding money, which is meant to serve, not master, its owner. The service rendered by money must, however, as its name implies, be for real benefit and not real injury of the person who earns it. Here moderation, steering clear of the two extremes of extravagance and starvation, is the solution to the problem of food expenses.

Watchfulness In Work

Watchfulness in work is the energetic performance of one's duties, not putting off until tomorrow what can be done today, and always knowing the right time and means by which to get the best results in the most efficient way. To achieve this end, it is necessary for everyone to first know as extensively as possible whatever concerns the work to be done, whether that person is a farmer, a trader, a government official or one who follows another occupation.

Watchfulness In One's Behavior

Watchfulness in one's behavior is self-recollection or self-possession, a rendering of the Pali term sampajanna. Through this virtue, a person is mindful not only of whatever he is going to do or say, but also how and why he has to do or say it. Thus it implies the careful weighing of the pros and

cons of everything, reducing to a minimum the troubles of regret or revocation of what has already been said or done according to the individual's powers of understanding.

Watchfulness Regarding The Nature Of Life

A human body, like other corporeal matter, is in the sphere of physical law. It is born of the assemblage of two essential factors - name and form (nama-rupa). Rupa is composed of the four so-called elements of earth, water, fire and air, whereas nama is the source of various mental processes manifesting themselves in the form of feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness.

Being produced by a combination of causes, it is naturally a kind of sankhára (a compounded or conditioned thing), which has to undergo the stages of change and decay the moment it has come into existence. Thus we see how an infant has changed into a youth during the supposed period of growth. This physical development goes on until its peak is reached at middle age.

Thereafter the manifold signs of declining years become more and more conspicuous. These may be seen in gray hair, broken teeth, wrinkled and mottled skin, dim eyes and dull ears. These are usually accompanied by senility, which is marked by the general weakness of body and mind. Such a process of change is inherent in the corporeal body, a compounded thing, and is called decay.

The four so-called elements, which crystallize into the body, are functionally dependent on one another for the maintenance of the vitality of life. How they work and develop may be studied in detail from the books of medical science and hygiene. In Pali it is called sarirayanta (the mechanism of the body), referring to their cooperative work and ability to move. This living machine is both delicate and complicated and hence the need of constant care to make it work smoothly.

With the wrong kind of food or food in insufficient amounts, exposure to great heat and cold and sudden changes of weather, the normal function of each part is disturbed and the body as a whole suffers 'engine troubles', which are the numerous possible diseases. This is another characteristic of body. There is a time, however, when this living machine, in spite of the best fuel and watchful care, will cease to function altogether. Then there is no more vitality for life to continue.

The four combined elements are scattered, each returning to its natural state. This, in terms of everyday language, is called death. It, like disease and decay, is another inevitable stage in the process of change. From time immemorial there have been people endeavoring to find what they have called an 'elixir of life' with which to ward off the all-inclusive power of death, but the best that

has been found is only a remedy against the curable diseases, for after all such attempts, old age, disease and death are still unconquerable enemies.

Old age is sure to come when the peak of so-called growth is reached whereas disease and death in many cases give no warning of their approach is the nature of the body, a compounded thing. It is therefore advisable that a person not be elated by false pride concerning youth, health and life. To reduce the tyrannical power of these three in the mind, a (lay) Buddhist is advised to act in the following manner: In his youth he should try to equip himself with knowledge and skill with which he can earn his own living when he is grown up.

During this period of self-dependence he must bear the burden of work earnestly and honestly for the sake of wealth and fame for both himself and his family who will live on after his death. In time of old age, when he is less able to bear the stress and strain of duty, or in times of illness, when he is forced to stay away from work, he will be enabled to live peacefully on a retired income of his own. Such a person, at the moment of death takes his departure resignedly, being troubled neither by the future of his family nor the state of his own hereafter. This is watchfulness in the nature of life.

Evil doing, whether in words, deeds or thoughts, is always productive of suffering in the long run. It must not be overlooked or treated as being of minor importance merely because it may sometimes be a small amount. A person gathering evil little by little is tempted each time to do a little more. In time, the seemingly negligible amount will be of fairly considerable dimensions. This, however, is also true of meritorious deeds. If, on the contrary, a person endeavors to accumulate merit little by little, be it in words, deeds or thoughts, he will sooner or later be blessed with a good store of it.

An analogy of this fact may be seen in the rain, which falling drop by drop can eventually fill a vessel standing in an open place. A person who is always mindful of what is to be avoided and what is to be accumulated is said to have equipped himself with the virtue of watchfulness in good and evil.

It is natural that human beings, in the course of their wanderings in the course of sariisara (the cycle of birth and death), encounter from time to time that which is desirable and that which is undesirable. Both are called Iokadhamma (the nature of the world). That which is desirable, according to the Scriptures, includes increase of gains, glory, praise and happiness, whereas that which is undesirable refers to the loss of these four.

This is like a traveler on a long journey who is sure to encounter both pleasant and unpleasant things and events that variously come his way. For this reason, a Buddhist is advised to remind himself of their changing and fleeting nature, thereby checking himself from being overpowered by any of them.

Since they are by nature impermanent, the one alternating with the other in the process of birth and death, to allow oneself to be carried away by any of them is really a sign of weakness and in the long run results in heaping

unnecessary troubles upon oneself. Thus he who refuses to give himself up to these worldly experiences is equipped with watchfulness in the nature of the world.

Such are the five ennobling virtues, which add substantially to the value of the five precepts. They help to ennoble those who are already mindful to keep the five precepts, perfect the negative character of these precepts and pave the way for the higher steps of practice in Buddhism.



The Dharma Protector Bodhisattva



Transference of Merit

*May the Merits and Virtues accrued from
this work,
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,
Repaying the Four Kinds of Kindness
above,
And aiding those suffering in the paths
below.*

*May those who see and hear of this,
All bring forth the resolve of Bodhi,
And when this retribution body is over,
Be born together in Ultimate Bliss.*

