

## An Analysis of Pañcasila and its Importance in Society

Yuzana Thein Gyi<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Alok Kumar Verma<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Research Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor

Samrat Ashok Subharti School of Buddhist Studies, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh

Email Id: [alokphd0802@gmail.com](mailto:alokphd0802@gmail.com), [alok9630@gmail.com](mailto:alok9630@gmail.com)

### Abstract:

The Buddha's teachings of Dhamma pointed us in the direction of the right path that leads to utmost tranquilly. There are three main steps may be identified on this course. They are *Sila* (morality), *Samadhi* (concentration) and *Paññāna* (wisdom). These are the three pillars of Buddhism, which guide us to the heights of tranquilly. With a lot of work, they can be accomplished across several lifetimes.

*Sila* is the initial step of them. The words “*Sila*” and “discipline”, “good behaviour”, “virtue,” “precept,” and “morality” are equivalent. This is the basis for living a religious lifestyle. A house will be extremely unstable if it is built without a solid foundation. Modern man had understood the value of residing in Society. We must learn how to be kind and innocent in our daily lives. In plain English, we must learn how to live so as not to interfere with the tranquilly and goodwill of others. It entails honouring others' right to live in peace and harmony. This would be a huge accomplishment if we were able to pull it off. A good Buddhist is deeply concerned and respectful of all living things.

*Sila* is a noun that refers to morals or rules. It is split into two halves. These are *Cāritta Sila*, or the obligations one should fulfil, and *Vāritta Sila*, or abstinences from the things the Buddha forbade. *Cāritta Sila* is satisfied by carrying out the compulsory obligations towards parents, kids, spouses, instructors, pupils, friends, monks, and other people who are specifically listed in the *Singālovāda Sutta*. In addition to these, fulfilling *Vāritta Sila* involves adhering to other disciplinary standards, such as the five, eight, or ten commandments.

**Keywords:** Buddha, Dhamma, Panccasila, Society, and Contemporary Era

### **Introduction:**

We are living in the period of time when the world is badly in need of peace - war and violence prevails in the world. People are fighting between religious groups, fanaticism, terrorism, ideological persecutions and warfare. Life in a major city is now becoming unpredictable. Traveling by air, train or any other routes are prone to terrorist attack. Almost every day the world hears news about suicide bombing or innocent people were killed in some countries.

In modern society, many people experience intense distress because their belongings were stolen or robbed. There are a lot of sensual pleasures and news of sex scandals are heard often from televisions and newspapers. Many sectarian leaders propagate their faith professing it to be the absolute truth and millions of people are led astray, finally encountering an infinitive number of catastrophes. Moreover, most drinkers are no more hesitant to quarrel, kill, steal, telling lies, rape or arson etc. Seemingly, men are making all efforts to turn the earth into an unsafe place. Peace and happiness seem to be farther and farther away human society. Peace has slipped out of the hands of man.

How can we stop this problems and conflicts? How can we be sure that peace will prevail and become long-lasting? It is at this point that we need amendment the service of religion which means systematic thinking and free of harmful motives. The man has to be trained to think in terms of ethical or moral values. If moral thought has been established, the moral behaviours and actions will follow. Therefore a person should try his best to observe precepts so that all inhabitants on earth are in peace and harmony. To do this, everyone should critically study the five precepts and observe them with earnest mind. It brings great benefits to this life and hereafter. To understand the fruits of the precepts well, everyone should study them in detail.

### **The five precepts prescribed in the *Pāli* canon for every lay Buddhist are:**

(1) Abstaining from killing a living being

(2) Abstaining from taking what is not given

(3) Abstaining from sexual misconduct

(4) Abstaining from telling lies

(5) Abstaining from taking intoxicants.

If someone observes these noble precepts, he not only leads religious way of life but also renders a better service to others by allowing them to live peacefully.

First precept is abstaining from killing. This precept is not only to abstain from killing living beings, irrespective of age, sex and size, from the time of their conception but also prohibit acts such as wishing to harm or torture them in various ways. The killing could be by one's own hands, by given instruction to someone else, by shooting, by digging trenches, by mantras and by supernatural powers.

The act of killing can have difference degrees as its result which based on object, purpose and effort. The objects are living beings; the purposes are intentional and unpremeditated killing. The former is murder in cold blood which can be seen in the case of a gang of robbers. Unpremeditated murder has three kinds: The first is impulsive killing which can be seen in the case of two persons quarrelling and one of them is killed. The second is self-defense, when a person is assaulted and defending himself his attacker is killed. The third is when a person attempts to discipline a child and the child is accidentally killed.

The second precept is to abstain from taking what is not given which includes by force, by cheating, by trick, by trading with false weight, false measuring basket, by false scale or by adulteration. The word Adina means 'what is not given' signifies the belongings of another person over which he exercises ownership legally and blamelessly. Thus no offense is committed if the article has no owner, e.g., if log is taken to make fire, stones are gathered to build a wall. The degrees of stealing are direct, indirect and, actions analogous to stealing.

**Direct stealing includes:**

- (1) Snatching: taking something by force, with or without harming the owner.
- (2) Extortion: an act of stealing which is accompanied by a threat of some kind or other.
- (3) Gang-robber.
- (4) Laying false claim.
- (5) Lying: thieving done by lying.
- (6) Deceit.
- (7) Imitation.
- (8) Breaking of promises.
- (9) Pilfering.
- (10) Change.
- (11) Smuggling and evasion.
- (12) Embezzlement.

**Indirect stealing is as follows:**

- (1) Acting as an accomplice.
- (2) Accepting bribery.
- (3) Exploiting (or fleecing),
- (4) Accepting bribery. Actions analogous to stealing are willful destruction and careless taking or using.

Third precept is to abstain from committing misconduct in sexual relations. It means a man has sex with other woman and a woman, with other man. This relationship is called *Kāmesumicchācāra*, which is a heinous crime. The word '**karma**' has the general meaning of sensual desire, but the commentaries explain it as sexual relations. *Michalaras* means wrong modes of conduct. Thus the precept enjoins abstinence from improper or illicit sexual relation. *Kāmesumicchācāra* means *paradāragamana* (going to a woman who belongs to others). For men, there are twenty types of women who are illicit partners. They are (1) a woman is under of the protection of elders of other authorities charged with her care, e.g., a girl being cared for by parents, by an elder brother or sister, by other relatives, or by the family (2) a woman who is prohibited by close relatives forbidden under family tradition, nuns, and other women vowed to observe celibacy, and those forbidden as partners under the law of the land; and (3) a woman who is

married or engaged to another man, even one bound to another man only by a temporary agreement.

**For the woman who is married any man other than a husband is an illicit partner.**

For all women, a man forbidden by tradition or under religious rules is prohibited as a partner. For both men and women any violent, whether by physical or compulsion or psychological pressure, can be regarded as a transgression of the precept even when the partner is not otherwise illicit. But a man or woman who is widowed or divorce can freely remarry according to choice. The precept does not only mean lustful attachment to a man or woman and physical transgression, but requires abstinence from all indulgences in the sensuous acts of by the five organs through vision, smell, gestation or touch. There are two things indicated in the third precept; one is that a man should have only one woman; the other is that premarital sexual engagement is also not allowed. According to Buddhism, ethics has no sex distinction; ethics is meaningful for both men and women. If a man is harmed by a woman, it is also *paradāragamana*. In this third precept both are the same opinion. Therefore, this precept is so important for protection and emancipation of women.

The fourth precept is to abstain from telling lies, cheating or deceiving. Telling what is not true by gesture or by words with malicious intention is committing the fourth precept. The opposite term of *Susāissacca* and the opposite of *Sacca* is *Susā* which means "confusion". The definitions of the *musāvāda*veramani are 'refraining from falsehood' after defining what false is and 'refraining from giving false evidence'. False speech is defined as 'the wrong volition with intent to deceive, occurring through the door of either body or speech. In addition to sneaking may be done by via writing or making gestures with deceitful purpose. It is the aim of this precept to avoid verbally injuring another's name or reputation.

The degrees of falsehoods are direct falsehood, indirect falsehood and the breaking

promise. Direct falsehoods are **downright lie, oath breaking, wiles, hypocrisy, play upon words** which is the telling of a lie by using artful method, **exaggeration** that is a lie based on the truth but which is more than the truth of what is or really happened, and **concealment** which is a half-truth or one that is less than what really is or has happen. All these kinds of falsehoods whether they are believed or not by the listeners, are likewise in violation of this precept.

Indirect falsehoods mean a falsehood without deceitful intention. They are;

- (1) **Injuring words** which can divide into sarcasm and insult.
- (2) **Thoughtless lie**; a falsehood spoken inadvertently through the gist of gab.
- (3) **Insinuation**; this is done with idea of fomenting discord and arousing the feeling of enmity between individual and groups. Indirect falsehoods are evil from both moral and legal points of view and should be avoided by people.

The breaking of the promises is the failure to do what was give as a pledge to someone. It denotes the absence of deceitful purpose at the time of given the pledge. There are three kinds as: bilateral promise, unilateral promise and revocation of one's words. All these forms of promise breaking are falsehoods which spoil the good names of the persons and make such persons less trustworthy in the eyes of others. But there is an important warning here: that is some kinds of promises and words are better broken than fulfilled and kept if those words are given in a moment of insanity. A person may lie for self-benefit, for the benefit of others and for material gains.

The fifth precept is to abstain from taking distilled and fermented intoxicants which could be prepared from sugar, flour, cooked rice, flowers, and fruits, honey etc. The important terms in this precept are **Surā, Meraya, Majja, and Pamāda**. *Surā* is unfermented liquor while *meraya* is fermented liquor. Another term for merays is *āsava* which means intoxicant and defiling things. *Mijja* means physically inactive and *pamāda*

means mentally inactive. Thus the consumption of liquor makes man both physically and mentally weak and inactive. In addition, *pamāda* defines as absence of mindfulness while *appamada* means the presence of mindfulness. The Buddha advises his followers to cultivate *appamada* because it takes man to *nibbānawhildpamāda* takes man to the mouth of death (*māra*). Therefore, when someone consumes the liquor, it takes him to death day by day.

Both *surā* and *meraya* are equally bad in that they weaken self-control, thereby making a person do all evils. The evil of these intoxicating drinks is that they stupefy the mind, driving a person out of his senses. Violation of this precept often leads a person to commit the four precious mentioned evils. That is why the Buddha laid down this precept, for when this precept is strictly observed, the chance for committing the four other evils will be greatly reduced.

The factors for this precept are the intoxicant, the intention of taking it, the activity of ingesting it, and the actual ingesting of the intoxicant. If these four factors are involved in taking intoxicants, one is said to have committed *Suramerayakamma*. It said in *Mahāvagga* that liquor cannot be consumed as a medicine. The characteristics of liquor are color, taste, and smell. The Buddha said that as long as these characteristics remain in the liquor, it should not be used as a medicine. Other intoxicants, such as Indian hemp, opium and marijuana are to be included in this precept as they 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.

### Conclusion:

The lay Buddhist morality embodies in the five precepts. It may be considered at two levels. First, it enables men to live together in civilized communities with mutual trust and respect. Second, it is the starting point for the spiritual journey towards liberation. Unlike other religious commandments, Buddhist precepts are accepted voluntarily by the person himself with

understanding the usefulness of adopting some training rules for disciplining his body and speech. The precepts are basic practice in Buddhism. They are guidelines for human beings to follow on right path to future security, happiness and welfare. The purpose is to eliminate rude passions that are expressed through thought, word and deed. The precepts are also indispensable basis for people who wish to cultivate their minds.

When a person observes the precept of not killing, he controls his hatred and cultivates loving-kindness. In the second precept, he controls his greed and cultivates non-attachment. He controls sensual lust and cultivates his contentment in the third precept. In the fourth precept, he abstains from false speech and cultivates truthfulness. He abstains from unwholesome mental excitement and develops mindfulness through the fifth precept. When a person follows the precepts through faith, he will realize that the observance of the five precepts does not cause him to be self-critical and negative, but to earn great fame and reputation. The scent of the virtue excels all scents and the reputation of the virtuous ones wafts in all directions.

#### **References:**

1. Bhikkhu Nyanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha, a new translation of Majjima Nikaya, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1995 printed.
2. Bhikkhu, Bodhi, The numerical discourse of the Buddha (A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya, wisdom publication, united state of American, 2012 printed.
3. Bhikkhu, Bodhi, The connected discourse of the Buddha (A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya, wisdom publication, united state of American, 2012 printed.
4. Bhaddanta Visittasarabhivamsa, The Most Venerable Mingun Sayadaw, Translated By U Ko Lay And U Tin Lwin, The Great Chronicle Of Buddha, Tini Publishing Centre, 1991
5. Daw Mya Tin (M.A), The Dhammapada; verse and stories, Rangoon, Burma, 1986 printed 273.
6. Narada, Mahathera, A Comprehensive Manual of *Abhidhamma*: the *abhidhammatthasangaha* of *Acaraya Anuruddha*: Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 2007 printed.
7. Narada Mahathera, A Manual of Abhidhamma, Being *Abhidhammattha Saigaha* of Bhaddanta Anuruddhacariya, the Buddhist missionary society, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1956 printed.
8. Nyanamoli, Bhikkhu, *Visuddhimaggathe path of purification*,: Buddhist Publication Society, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
9. Nyanamoli, Bhikkhu, and Bodhi, Bhikkhu. The middle length of the Buddha, wisdom publication, united state of American, 1995 printed.
10. Bhikkhu Nyanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourse of the Buddha, a new translation of Majjima Nikaya, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1995 printed.
11. Bhikkhu, Bodhi, The numerical discourse of the Buddha ( A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya, wisdom publication, united state of American, 2012 printed.
12. Bhikkhu, Bodhi, The connected discourse of the Buddha ( A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya, wisdom publication, united state of American, 2012 printed.
13. Bhaddanta Visittasarabhivamsa, The Most Venerable Mingun Sayadaw, Translated By U Ko Lay And U Tin Lwin, The Great Chronicle Of Buddha, Tini Publishing Centre, 1991.
14. Daw Mya Tin (M.A), The Dhammapada; verse and stories, Rangoon, Burma, 1986 printed.
15. Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, B.sc.Hons.(Yangon), Msc.Ph.D(U.S.A), Kamma, The Real Creator, Mehm Tin Zar Mon, Yadanar Min Literature, Dagon township, Yangon., 2007.
16. F.L Woodward, E.M. Hare, The book of the Gradual Saying (Aṅguttara Nikāya), vol-3, The Pāli Text Society, London, 2006.

17. K.Sri Dhammananda, The Dhammapada, Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardana Society, Malaysia, 1988 printed.
18. Maung Tin (M.A), The expositer (atthasālini) vol-I, pali text society, landon, 1920 printed.
19. Narada, Mahathera, A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma: the abhidhammattha sangaha of Acaraya Anuruddha: Buddhist Publication Society, kandy, Sri lanka, 2007 printed.
20. Narada Mahathera, A Manual of Abhidhamma, Being Abhidhammattha Saīgaha Of Bhadanta Anuruddhācariya, the Buddhist missionary society, kualar lampur, Malaysia, 1956 printed.
21. Nyanamoli, Bhikkhu, Visuddhimagga the path of purification,:Buddhist Pulishfication Society, Colombo, Sri lanka.
22. Nyanamoli, Bhikhu, and Bodhi, Bhikkhu The middle length of the Buddha, wisdom publication, united state of American, 1995 printed.
23. R. Morris & E. Hardy; Aṅguttaranikāya Pāli, ed. Vols. I – II, PTS, London, UK, 1989-1995.
24. Thumana, The Venerable, Pārājika Pāli, Transgression Of The Disiplanary Rules, Department For The Promotion And Propagation Of The Sāsanā, Yangon, Myanmar, 2001.