

THE BUDDHIST'S DISCIPLINE

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Just as Buddhist monks have the monks' discipline to observe to be virtuous, so Buddhists in general have the lay people's discipline to keep as code of standards.

SECTION ONE

Laying a Firm Foundation for Life

Buddhists are supposed to lead good lives and contribute to the growth and stability of society in accordance with the lay people's discipline (gihivinaya) as follows.

Law 1: Refraining from 14 kinds of evils.

- A. Refraining from the four kinds of *kammakilesa* (evil deeds that defile one's life), namely:
 1. One does not do bodily harm or take life (i.e. abstaining from *pāṇātipāta*).
 2. One does not steal or violate property rights (i.e. abstaining from *adinnādāna*).
 3. One does not commit sexual misconduct (i.e. abstaining from *kāmesumicchācāra*).
 4. One does not speak falsely, lie or deceive (i.e. abstaining from *musāvāda*).
- B. Refraining from the four kinds of *agati* (bias or deviant conduct), namely:
 1. One is not biased on account of like (i.e. being without *chandā-gati*).
 2. One is not biased on account of hate (i.e. being without *dosā-gati*).
 3. One is not biased on account of fear (i.e. being without *bhayāgati*).
 4. One is not biased on account of folly (i.e. being without *mohāgati*).

- C. Refraining from the six kinds of *apāyamukha* (channels to the ruin of property and life), namely:
1. One is not addicted to drink or drugs.
 2. One does not revel, oblivious to time.
 3. One is not bent only on entertainment.
 4. One does not indulge in gambling.
 5. One does not consort with evil friends.
 6. One does not constantly laze around.

Law 2: Preparing resources for life on two fronts.

A. Choosing the people with whom one is to associate. One should associate with people who will guide one's life along a path that is prosperous and constructive, by avoiding false friends and associating only with true friends as follows:

1. Recognizing the four kinds of false friends or enemies in the guise of friends (mittapaṭirūpaka):

- 1) **The out-and-out robber**, who only takes from his friend, has four features
 - (1) He thinks only of taking.
 - (2) He gives just a little only to gain a lot.
 - (3) Only when he himself is in danger does he help his friend out.
 - (4) He associates with his friend only for his own sake.
- 2) **The smooth talker** has four features:
 - (1) He talks only of what is done and gone.
 - (2) He talks only of what has not yet come.
 - (3) He offers help that is of no use.
 - (4) When his friend has some business in hand, he always makes excuses.
- 3) **The flatterer** has four features:
 - (1) He consents to [his friend's] doing wrong.
 - (2) He consents to his doing right.
 - (3) He praises him to his face.

(4) He disparages him behind his back.

4) **The leader to ruin** has four features:

- (1) He is a companion in drinking.
- (2) He is a companion in nightlife.
- (3) He is a companion in frequenting shows and fairs.
- (4) He is a companion in gambling.

2. *Knowing of the four kinds of true friends or friends at heart (suhadamitta):*

1) **The helping friend** has four features:

- (1) When his friend is off guard, he guards him.
- (2) When his friend is off guard, he guards his property.
- (3) In times of danger, he can be a refuge.
- (4) When some business needs to be done, he puts up more money than requested.

2) **The friend through thick and thin** has four features:

- (1) He confides in his friend.
- (2) He keeps his friend's secrets.
- (3) He does not desert his friend in times of danger.
- (4) He will give even his life for his friend's sake.

3) **The good counselor** has four features:

- (1) He restrains his friend from doing evil or harm.
- (2) He encourages him in goodness.
- (3) He makes known to his friend what he has not heard before.
- (4) He points out the way to happiness, to heaven.

4) **The loving friend** has four features:

- (1) When his friend is unhappy, he commiserates.
- (2) When his friend is happy, he is happy for him.
- (3) When others criticize his friend, he comes to his defense.
- (4) When others praise his friend, he joins in their praise.

B. Allocating the wealth one has acquired through right livelihood as follows:

Stage 1: One should be diligent in earning and saving just as bees collect nectar and pollens.

Stage 2: When one's wealth accrues like a termites' mound, expenditure should be planned thus:

- **One portion** to be used for supporting oneself, supporting one's family, taking care of one's dependents and doing good works.
- **Two portions** to be used for one's career, earning one's living.
- **One portion** to be put aside as a guarantee for one's life and business in times of need.

Law 3: Maintaining one's relations towards the six directions.

A. Rendering all the directions secure and peaceful by performing the duties towards the people related to one in due accordance with their six respective positions:

1st direction: *As a son or daughter, one should honor one's parents, who are likened to the "forward direction," as follows:*

1. Having been raised by them, one looks after them in return.
2. One helps them in their business and work.
3. One continues the family line.
4. One conducts oneself as is proper for an heir.
5. After their passing away, one makes offerings, dedicating the merit to them.

Parents help their children by:

1. Cautioning and protecting them from evil.
2. Nurturing and training them in goodness.
3. Providing them with an education.
4. Seeing to it that they obtain suitable spouses.
5. Bequeathing the inheritance to them at the proper time.

2nd direction: *As a student, one should show reverence to one's teacher, who is likened to the "right direction," as follows:*

1. One rises to greet the teacher and shows respect to him.
2. One approaches the teacher to attend him, serve him, consult him, query him, receive advice from him, etc.
3. One hearkens well so as to cultivate wisdom.
4. One serves the teacher and runs errands for him.
5. One learns the subject respectfully and earnestly, giving the task of learning its due importance.

A teacher supports his students by:

1. Teaching and training them to be good.
2. Guiding them to thorough understanding.
3. Teaching the subject in full.
4. Encouraging the students and praising their merits and abilities.
5. Providing a protection for all directions; that is, teaching and training them so that they can actually use their learning to make a living and know how to conduct themselves well, having a guarantee for smoothly leading a good life and attaining happiness and prosperity.

3rd direction: *As a husband, one should honor and support one's wife, who is likened to the "rearward direction," as follows:*

1. One honors her in accordance with her status as wife.
2. One does not look down on her.
3. One does not commit adultery.
4. One gives her control of household concerns.
5. One gives her occasional gifts of ornaments and clothing.

A wife supports her husband by:

1. Keeping the household tidy.
2. Helping the relatives and friends of both sides.
3. Not committing adultery.
4. Safeguarding any wealth that has been acquired.
5. Being diligent in all her work.

4th direction: *As a friend, one should conduct oneself towards one's friends, who are likened to the "left direction," as follows:*

1. One shares with them.
2. One speaks kindly to them.
3. One helps them.
4. One is constant through their ups and downs.
5. One is faithful and sincere.

Friends reciprocate by:

1. Protecting their friend when he is off guard.
2. Protecting their friend's property when he is off guard.
3. Being a refuge in times of danger.
4. Not deserting their friend in times of hardship.
5. Respecting their friend's family and relatives.

5th direction: *As an employer, one should support one's servants and employees, who are likened to the "lower direction," as follows:*

1. One assigns them work in accordance with their strength, sex, age and abilities.
2. One pays them wages commensurate with their work and adequate for their livelihood.
3. One grants them fringe benefits by, for example, providing medical care in times of sickness.
4. One shares with them a portion of any extra gain.
5. One gives them appropriate holidays and time to rest.

A servant or employee helps his employer by:

1. Starting work before him.
2. Stopping work after him.
3. Taking only what is given by his employer.
4. Doing his job well and seeking ways to improve on it.
5. Spreading a good reputation about his employer and his business.

6th direction: *As a Buddhist, one should show reverence to the monks, who are likened to the “upper direction,” as follows:*

1. One acts towards them with goodwill.
2. One speaks to them with goodwill.
3. One thinks of them with goodwill.
4. One receives them willingly.
5. One supports them with the four requisites [almsfood, robes, shelter and medicine].

Monks help lay people by:

1. Enjoining them from evil actions.
2. Enjoining them in goodness.
3. Assisting them with kind intentions.
4. Making known to them things not heard before.
5. Explaining and clarifying things they have already heard.
6. Pointing out the way to heaven, teaching them the way to happiness and prosperity.

B. Helping one another for social harmony, i.e. helping one another and contributing to creating social peace, stability and unity according to the four principles for helpful integration (*saṅgahavattu*), namely:

1. *dāna*: giving, sharing (helping through money and material goods).
2. *piyavācā*: amicable speech (helping through words).
3. *atthacariyā*: helpful action (helping through physical or mental effort).
4. *samānattatā*: participation (helping through participation in constructive action and problem solving; being equal by virtue of the Dhamma and sharing both weal and woe).

SECTION TWO

Steering Life to Its Objectives

A. Three levels of objectives. *One should conduct one's life so as to attain the three levels of objectives (attha) as follows:*

Level 1: *ditṭhadhammikattha*, i.e. the temporal objective or present benefit

- A) Enjoying good health, physical fitness, freedom from maladies, and longevity.
- B) Having work and income, having honest livelihood, and being economically self-reliant.
- C) Having good status, and gaining the respect of society.
- D) Having a happy family, establishing a good reputation of one's family.

All the four objectives above should be righteously achieved and utilized for the sake of oneself and others.

Level 2: *samparāyikattha*, i.e. the spiritual objective or further benefit.

- A) Being endowed with warmth, deep appreciation and happiness; being not lonesome or unfirm; having an ideal to adhere to so as to be strong with *faith*.
- B) Being proud of a clean life, of having done only wholesome deeds with *virtue*.
- C) Being gratified in a worthwhile life, in having always done what is beneficial with *sacrifice*.
- D) Being courageous and confident to resolve problems as well as conduct one's life and duties with *wisdom*.
- E) Being secure and confident in having a guarantee for the future life in consequence of having done only *good deeds*.

Level 3: *paramattha*, i.e. the highest objective or greatest benefit:

- A) Having a secure, peaceful and stable mind, unshaken even when affected by the ways of the world or confronted with vicissitudes or changes.
- B) Not being so distressed by clinging or attachment as to feel disappointed or sorrowful; having a mind that is relieved, clear, buoyant and free.
- C) Being refreshed, cheerful, not sullen or depressed; being radiant and free from suffering; enjoying genuine bliss.
- D) Being well aware of causes and conditions and acting accordingly; leading a life that is impeccable and bright; conducting oneself with wisdom.

One who is able to attain from the second level of benefit upwards is known as a wise man (paṇḍita).

B. Three fronts of objectives. These three levels of objectives should be realized on all three fronts:

1st front: *attattha*, i.e. the objective for oneself or one's own benefit; the three levels of benefits explained above, which one should realize for oneself or develop one's life to attain.

2nd front: *parattha*, i.e. the objective for others or other people's benefit; i.e. the three levels of benefits explained above, which one should help other people successively achieve by guiding and encouraging them to develop their lives.

3rd front: *ubhayattha*, i.e. the mutual objective or benefit to both parties; the collective benefit, happiness and virtue of the community or society, including environmental conditions and factors, which we should help create and conserve in order to help both ourselves and others advance to the three levels of objectives mentioned above.

BUDDHISTS OF THE LEADING TYPE

Those Buddhists who are referred to as upāsaka and upāsikā [Buddhist lay followers] are considered Buddhists of the leading type. They must be steadfast and firmly established in the [Buddhist] principles to serve as examples for Buddhists in general. Apart from observing the Buddhist's discipline, they must possess the five qualities of Buddhist lay followers (upāsakadhamma) as follows:

1. They have faith, their belief being endowed with wisdom; they are not given to blind faith; they have confidence in the Triple Gem [the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha], neither being shaken nor faltering; they adhere to the Dhamma as the principal and supreme cause.

2. They have morality; apart from maintaining themselves in the Five Precepts and righteous livelihood, they should undertake the Eight Observances on due occasions to develop themselves so that their lives and happiness depend less on material needs, thus reducing harm and increasing beneficence towards others.

3. They do not get carried away by superstition; they believe in deeds, aspiring to results from their own deeds through their own effort in a rational way; they are not excited by wildly rumored superstition, talismans or lucky charms; they do not aspire to results from praying for miracles.

4. They do not seek the gift-worthy outside of this teaching; they do not grasp at fields of merit, miracle workers or holy personalities that are outside the Buddhist principles.

5. They apply themselves to supporting and helping with the Buddhist cause; they attend to, initiate and support charity work in accordance with the teaching of the Perfectly Enlightened One.

Notes

- *The Buddhist's Discipline*, a simplified version of "Part I: The Buddhist's Life Standards" in *A Constitution for Living* (revised in 1997), was completed on August 10, 2000. Then Dr. Somseen Chanawangsa revised the original English version to bring it in line with the present revised edition.
- The lay people's discipline, *gihivanaya*, is the Buddha's teaching in the *Sīṅgālakasutta* [D.III.180–193].
- The five *upāsakadhamma* is from [A.III.206].

