CHAPTER SIX
CLASSIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ETHICS
IN BUDDHISM AND TAOISM

1. The Moral Training in Buddhism and Taoism

1.1. Course of Training (Sikkhāpada)

The complete spiritual development of the Buddhist disciple who has voluntarily embarked on the life of Brahmacariya seems to have been covered under the term “Sikkhā” which means culture, training, discipline and also study. This concept of Sikkhā which brings within its fold the entire system of spiritual development in Buddhism is considered as being threefold in character. According to this classification the training of the disciple is divided into three successive stages of Adhisīla, Adhisamādhi and Adhipaññā.¹ These three stages of Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā, together mark the complete development of Buddhist moral life which leads to the acquisition of true knowledge or Aññā.² Viewed negatively, it is said that self-training in terms of these three results in the elimination of lust, hatred and delusion.³ Thus the true endeavor to develop all these aspects is made the basis of all moral aspirations.

Nevertheless, it is clear that out of the threefold Sikkhā special emphasis was laid on Sīla as the foundation of all spiritual attainments. The Buddha himself is seen assuring his disciples of the efficacy of Sīla as the basis of spiritual progress.⁴ The perfection in Sīla marks the first stage in the spiritual development of the Buddhist disciple and this advice

¹ Pathamasikkhattaya Sutta (GS. I, p.215).
² Mahāsihanāda Sutta, (MLD. p.167).
⁴ Pātimokkhasamvara Sutta (CDB. II, pp.1662-1663).
of the Buddha to his disciples is found scattered in many places in the Sutta Piṭaka, sometimes addressed to single individuals and sometimes to the Samgha as a whole. It is thus clear that Sīla was the corner-stone of early Buddhist monasticism. First and foremost, the Buddhist disciple had to be Sīlavā. It meant that the disciple had to regulate his life in terms of what is recorded under Sīla as conditions of good monastic living, abstaining from what is indicated as unworthy and contradictory to his aspirations.

In the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, the term Sīlasampanno is used as equivalent in meaning to Sīlavā and under it are included forty-three items of Sīla which are subdivided into three groups as Minor, Middle and Major (Cūlasīla, Majjhimasīla and Mahāsīla). These items of Sīla, in the Suttas where they occur, do not bear the impress of an order or injunction. The disciples of the Buddha are described as giving up Akusalakamma through word and deed. Abstaining from these evils, the disciples develop their corresponding virtues. They also abstain from patterns of conduct which are deemed unworthy of a monk. This freedom and the absence of pressure in the regulation of the spiritual life and the spirit of Sīla are very characteristic of Buddhist monasticism in its earliest phase. With those sincere and earnest disciples of the Buddha who gathered themselves around him at the inception of the Sāsana, no injunctions or restrictive regulations seem to have been necessary.

In the Kakacūpama Sutta, the Buddha records his memory of the early days of the Sāsana when he needed no strict orders to determine the behavior of his disciples. At a mere suggestion by the Master the disciples took to the good ways of life recommended. The incident referred to in the Kakacūpama Sutta clearly indicates the manner in

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5 Sāmaññaphala Sutta (LDB. pp.99-100).
6 Kakacūpama Sutta (MLD. p.218).
which the Buddha’s early disciples received and accepted his recommendations regarding the way of life appropriate for the monk. The Buddha seems at first to have counted on the sincerity and spiritual earnestness of his early disciples for the success of his religious order. It was his wish to manage with the minimum of restrictive regulations. But in the growing monastic community whose numbers were rapidly increasing, laxity in discipline was bound to appear before long.

The Bhaddāli Sutta indicates the strength in numbers, the popularity of individuals or groups and the maturity of the members of the Saṅgha as it was becoming a long established institution were among the causes of corruption. The Buddha said that when beings were deteriorating and the true Dhamma was disappearing, then there were more training rules and fewer Bhikkhus become established in final knowledge. The training rules for disciples were not set up until the basis for taints became manifest in the Saṅgha. When the basis for taints became manifest in the Saṅgha, the Buddha made known the training rule for disciples in order to ward off those things that are the basis for taints.\(^7\)

The Bhaddāli Sutta shows how the once accepted monastic tradition which had also found for itself a place among the items of Sīla as a condition of good monastic living had to be reinforced with a restrictive regulation making it an offence. It was certainly an offence against Sīla, but since Sīla had no legal status the offender could not be prosecuted and punished under its authority. It is such situations as these which mark the introduction of Sikkhāpada into the sphere of Buddhist monastic discipline. These regulations which are called Sikkhāpada now provide, beside Sīla, an effective instrument for the furtherance of good discipline in the monastic community. This is the introduction into

\(^7\) Bhaddāli Sutta (MLD. pp.548-549).
Buddhist monasticism of restrictive legislation for the purpose of maintaining good discipline and furthering the spiritual progress of the disciple.

The Buddha declared that he lays down Sikkhāpada to serve the following needs:

1. Well-being of the Saṅgha (Saṅghasuttaṭhutā)
2. Convenience of the Saṅgha (Saṅphāsutā)
3. Restraint of evil-minded persons (Dummaṅkūnaṃ Puggalānaṃ Niggahā)
4. Ease of well-behaved monks (Pesalānaṃ bhikkūnaṃ pāsu-vihārā)
5. Restraint against the defilements of this life (Diṭṭhadhammikānaṃ āsavānaṃ saṅvarā)
6. Eradication of the defilements of the life after (Samparāyikānaṃ āsavānaṃ patiṭhātā)
7. Conversion of new adherents (Appasannānaṃ pasādā)
8. Enhancement of the faith of those already converted (Pasannānaṃ bhiyyobhāvā)
9. Stability and continuance of the Dhamma (Saddhammaṭṭhiti)
10. Furtherance of the good discipline (Vinayānuggahā).  

These seem to cover mainly the individual and collective welfare of the disciples, the relation of the disciples to the laymen on whom they are dependent, and the spiritual attainments for the sake of which the disciples take to the monastic life.

The Sikkhāpada which constitute the Pātimokkha have a new emphasis and are very different in character from advice and counsel given in the Dhamma under the category of Sīla. They are at times restatements of items of Sīla, increasing in number and diversity.

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8 BD. I, pp.37-38.
according to the needs of the monastic organization of the Saṅgha. As a code for the guidance of monks in their pursuit of religious development, these Sikkhāpada are far more exacting and obligatory than the Sīla. It is implied that these Sikkhāpadas form the main stay of the Sāsana for the maintenance of discipline in the Saṅgha.

It can be concluded that Sīla, Sikkhā and Sikkhāpada form the foundations of the life of Brahmacariya in Buddhism. Not only are these perfectly co-ordinated but at times almost identified with one another. With reference to the dichotomous division of Abhisamācārika and Ādibrahmācariyika, Sīla and Sikkhā are used as though they were identical with Sikkhāpada as their subject matter. The Aṅguttara Nikāya divides Sikkhā into these two categories and includes under Ābhisamācārikā Sikkhā, the regulations which determine the outward conduct of the monk in relation to the laymen on whose good will he is dependent.9 The Ādibrahmacaryikā sikkhā, on the other hand, contributes towards the attainment of complete freedom from suffering which is the goal of the life of Brahmacariya.10 Thus it is clear that Ābhisamācārika and Ādibrahmacariyika Sikkhā in Buddhism stood complementary to each other and that they did cover from the earliest times the social as well as religious aspects of Buddhist monasticism.

In the Visuddhimagga, Buddhaghosa divides sīla into Ābhisamācārika and Ādibrahmācāriyika and makes the groups more specific when he divides the contents of the Vinaya into two categories as follows. The Ādibrahmacaryika consists of the contents of the twofold Vibhaṅga. The instructions of the Khandhakas form the Ābhisamācārika.11 It is clear from what has been stated above that Buddhaghosa not only admits the higher role of the discipline brought

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9 Sikkhānisamsa Sutta (GS. II, p.248).
10 Sikkhānisamsa Sutta (GS. II, p.248).
11 PP. p.15.
about by the Vibhaṅga, but also emphasises at the same time the important basic character, in his opinion, of the discipline brought about by the regulations of the Khandhakas. Thus, it can be noticed that both these items of Abhisamācārika and Ādibrahmacariyika are products of the Vinaya Piṭaka.

The entire discipline of the Vinaya Piṭaka is looked upon as the fundamental basis on which the Buddhist spiritual perfection of threefold Sikkhā had to be founded. Ābhisamācārika and Ādibrahmacariyika provide a basis for the perfection of Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā which once existed independently as a system of monastic culture under the name of threefold Sikkhā. Thus, the origin and development of Buddhist monastic discipline in terms of Sīla, Sikkhā and Sikkhāpada and the relation in which they stand to the threefold Sikkhā and to the more codified texts of the Vinaya Piṭaka are witnessed. They all contribute their share to the perfection of the spiritual development of the disciple and to the attainment of the goal of Arahantship which Buddhism, as a way of life, offers its followers.

1.2. Precept and Prohibition (Jìè Jìn, 戒禁)

Rules and community structures play an important role in all religious traditions. They often placed at the very foundation of religious aspiration and practice, formulating the proper way of conducting oneself in daily life and in relation to others, prohibiting destructive and disruptive behaviours, while encouraging practitioners to develop a positive and helpful outlook toward themselves and the world. Only on this basic of essential moral conduct and a functioning human community can true inner cultivation grow and can higher levels of spirituality be attained.
Taoism emphasizes on ethical guidelines requisite to serious attainment and its support of three fundamentally different types of community: lay organization, monastic institutions, and the closed communities of millenarian groups. It is unique in that its rules are highly varied and specific not only to these communities as they changed over time but also to different levels of ordination and types of rituals. Furthermore, the rules are manifold, there are numerous different terms for them. On the basis of their terminology, four types can be distinguished: (1) Prohibitions (Jīn, 禦) (2) Admonitions (Dāng, 當) (3) Injunctions (Kē, 科) and (4) Resolution (Yuàn, 願). \[12\]

The most general word for rule in China is “precept” (Jiè, 戒). Jiè can be described as occurring on three levels in Chinese Taoism. Most fundamentally, they match the basic moral rules against killing, stealing, lying, and sexual misconduct. They are considered great and universal, essentially rational, non-religious, geared to individual, essential to civilization, and beyond the limitations of particular societies or cosmologies. Beyond this, Jiè also includes prohibitions (Jīn, 禦) of certain socially disruptive behaviours and detailed taboos (Jì, 忌) of time and space. Unlike the universal rules, prohibitions focus on specific social actions and attitudes that are considered detrimental to the group and may lead to the disruption of social bonds and the destruction of integration and harmony. Taboos, in contrast, are cosmically defined and centre on space and time, prohibiting people from stepping on certain area or committing specific acts at defined times in order to create cosmic harmony through correct seasonal behaviour. Their violation creates a form of cosmic impurity and can lead to natural catastrophes and epidemics send by the gods. \[13\]

\[12\] CC. p.2.  
\[13\] CC. pp.2-3.
The second form of Taoist rules is “admonition (Quàn, 勸) which is found in positively formulated guidelines, encouraging followers to develop virtues of kindness and compassion and to become considerate toward others. Rules of this type are formulated as “should,” indicating a preferred course of action. In Taoism, they include precepts such as: “Always create fields of blessedness,” or “Always be careful where you take lodging,” as well as detailed instructions on how to behave in certain situations such as “When walking with others, always let them go first.” Admonitions both limit certain physical actions and encourage others. They focus increasingly on the mind of the practitioner and serve to create a different level of moral awareness that could be called altruistic morality. It includes a non-ego-centred approached to the world, encompassing positive attitudes that are not reciprocal but one-sided in that they teach one to do good without expecting anything in return. Virtues include compassion, love, generosity, and openness toward all being that realizes an ideal within the person rather than in society. The practitioner of this level of morality is envisioned as standing outside society’s hierarchical structures, his or her actions, undertaken in pure unselfish goodness, have a strong impact on the harmony and well-being of all.\(^\text{14}\)

The third type of Taoist rules appears as practical injunctions (Kē, 科), dignified observances (Wēi Yí, 威儀) and statutes (Lǜ, 律). They prescribe in detail how and when to perform a certain action. Injunctions regulate every aspect of life and physical activity, causing the submission of the individual to the communal pattern and enabling the complete transformation of personal reality toward a celestial level. Injunctions create a system of “ordered, authorized, tested actions,” a habitus

\(^\text{14}\) CC. pp.4-5.
sanctioned by the group that shapes the reality and identity of its members. Ranging from body movement through ways of caring for the body to consumption techniques, injunctions cover everything: attitudes to food, authority, sexual relations, nakedness, pleasure and pain, medicine and healing, and the use of body metaphors. Taoist examples include: “To bow, stand upright with palms joined at chest level;” “At meals, always first rinse your mouth and chant a blessing;” and “After use carefully fold your ritual vestments.” They provide instructions on body techniques that constitute a sense of culturally and communally determined personhood realized in ordinary, daily life. Similarly, dignified observances prescribe proper ritual behaviour, while statutes detail the administrative properties of the priestly hierarchy.\textsuperscript{15}

The fourth and the highest level of Taoist rules is the resolution (Yuàn, 願) or remembrance (Niàn, 念) that represent the moral position of the perfected Taoist, fully at one with the cosmos and intimately perceptive of the cosmic flow. Unlike the other rules, which are formulated as imperatives, these are phrased in the first person. They are declarations of positive intent and personal guidelines for developing a cosmic attitude and mindset. Creating a culture of pure altruism, resolutions guide adepts to feel benevolence, sympathy, love and compassion; to regard themselves as merely one person among others; and to find identity as part of the larger universe. Resolution include specific prayers or good wishes, such as: “When I encounter clouds and rain, I pray that all may be socked with kindness and be full to overflowing, so there is nothing that does not grow;” or “I will constantly practice a compassionate mind and pray and be mindful that all beings equally get to see the divine law.” They may also create a mindset

\textsuperscript{15} CC. p.5.
conducive to meditation and advanced Taoist practice such as “May I wonder to the Golden Towers in Highest Clarity, to pay my respects to the perfected and the Highest Lord.” Resolutions can also appear as strong declarations of determination, as in “I’d rather be harmed by wild tiger and poisonous snaked than ever harm the rules and prohibitions of the Heavenly Worthies.” Developing a mind of such resolutions and remembrances, Taoist spontaneously avoid violation any rules and step in harmony with all. They no longer have an impact on the running of the universe, but flow along with the larger pattern, rejoicing in the inner harmony of the world and finding total freedom in it.¹⁶

2. Classification of Morality in Buddhism and Taoism

2.1. Ethical Precepts for Buddhist laity

2.1.1. Five Moral Precepts (Pañca Śīla)

Buddhist ethics is concerned with the principles and practices that help one to act in ways that help rather than harm. The core ethical code is known as the five precepts. The five precepts are as follows:

1. I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures (Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samadiyāmi).
2. I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given (Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samadiyāmi).
3. I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct (Kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samadiyāmi).
4. I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech (Musāvadā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samadiyāmi).

¹⁶ CC. pp.5-6.
5. I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness (Suramerayamajjapamādatthanā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samadiyāmi).

2.1.2. Eight Moral Precepts (Aṭṭha Sīla)

Aṭṭha Sīla, the Eight Precepts are the precepts for Buddhist lay men and women who wish to practice a bit more strictly than the usual five precepts for Buddhists. The eight precepts focus both on avoiding morally bad behavior, as do the five precepts, and on leading a more ascetic lifestyle. The Buddha gave teachings on how the eight precepts are to be practiced as Uposatha Sīla. 17 Eight precepts are:

1. Abstention from destroying living creatures (Pāṇātipātā veramaṇi).
2. Abstention from taking that which is not given (Adinnādānā veramaṇi).
3. Abstention from sexual activity (Abrahmacariyā veramaṇi).
4. Abstention from incorrect speech (Musāvadā veramaṇi).
5. Abstention from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness (Suramerayamajjapamādatthanā veramaṇi).
6. Abstention from taking untimely meals i.e., after noon (Vikālabhojanā veramaṇi).
7. Abstention from dancing, singing, music, going to see entertainments, wearing garlands, using perfumes, and beautifying the body with cosmetics (Nacca-gita-vadita-visūkadassana-malagandha-vilepana-dharana-mandana-vibhūsanatṭhānā veramaṇi).

17 Saṅkhittūposatha Sutta (GS. IV, pp.170-171).
8. Abstention from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place (Uccasayana-mahasayana veramaṇi).

Concerning the first of these additions, the sixth precept, on days on which Aṭṭha Sīla is observed the layman takes his main meal at midday and does not eat again during that day. The seventh precept is self-explanatory. The eighth has an ulterior meaning in that the occupying of high beds or high chairs may connect with the assumption of high rank or of personal importance; it need not mean that the bed or chair must be less than a certain height above the floor or ground. For a layman observing aṭṭha sīla at intervals, however, the suggestion of avoiding luxury is no doubt paramount. Regarding the length of time during which the Eight Precepts should be observed, though the keeping may be periodical and therefore constitute ‘periodical virtue’ (kālapariyanta sīla), in Visuddhimagga it is said that ‘In the fifth dyad periodical virtue is that undertaken after deciding on a time limit. Lifelong Sīla (Āpāṇakotika Sīla) is that practiced in the same way but undertaken for as long as life lasts. Aṭṭha Sīla is therefore of two kinds, periodical and lifelong.’

A significant advance in the Uposatha Sīla consists in the practice of celibacy. While the daily observance of the Five Precepts preserves the status of family life and only prevents the layman from indulging in unlawful sensual acts, the layman observing the Eight Precepts must practice complete celibacy. A layman strictly observing the Uposatha Sīla is confined to meditation and other religious performances in monasteries, woods, or separate apartments; for the period of observance he is dressed in the simplest of garments. But essentially, while observing aṭṭha sīla he must not live attached to his family since the observation constitutes a form of temporary renunciation.

18 PP. p. 16.
2.2. Ethical Code for Buddhist Saṅgha

2.2.1. Moral Discipline of Sāmaṇera and Sāmaṇerī

In Buddhist context, male novice is called Sāmaṇera and female novice Sāmaṇerī. In the monastic discipline, a man under the age of twenty cannot ordain as a Bhikkhu, but can ordain as a Samanera. The female counterpart is the Samaneri. Sāmaṇera and Sāmaṇerī keep the ten precepts as their code of behaviour, and are devoted to the Buddhist religious life. Ten precepts are as follows:

1. Abstention from destroying living creatures (Pāṇātipātā veramaṇi).
2. Abstention from taking that which is not given (Adinnadānā veramaṇi).
3. Abstention from sexual activity (Abrahmacariyā veramaṇi).
4. Abstention from incorrect speech (Musāvadā veramaṇi).
5. Abstention from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness (Suramerayamajjapamādatthanā veramaṇi).
6. Abstention from taking untimely meals i.e., after noon (Vikālabhojanā veramaṇi).
7. Abstention from dancing, singing, music, going to see entertainments (Nacca-gita-vadita-visukkadasanā veramaṇi).
8. Abstention from wearing garlands, using perfumes, and beautifying the body with cosmetics (Malagandha-vilepana-dharana-mandana-vibhusanathanā veramaṇi).
9. Abstention from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place (Uccasayana-mahasayana veramaṇi).
10. Abstention from accepting gold and silver (Jātarūparajata-paṭiggahanā veramaṇi).
2.2.2. Moral Discipline of Sikkhamāna

For women seeking full ordination as a bhikkhuni, a preliminary training for two years as a sikkhamānā is required. The rule is specifically concerned with the prerequisites for conferring higher ordination on someone who has undertaken the sikkhamānā training. Sikkhamānā should have fulfilled the training in six rules:

1. Abstention from destroying living creatures (Pāṇātipātā veramaṇi).
2. Abstention from taking that which is not given (Adinnādānā veramaṇi).
3. Abstention from sexual activity (Abrahmacariyā veramaṇi).
4. Abstention from incorrect speech (Musāvadā veramaṇi).
5. Abstention from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness (Suramerayamajjapādattanā veramaṇi).
6. Abstention from taking untimely meals i.e., after noon (Vikālabhojanā veramaṇi).

2.2.3. Moral Discipline of Bhikkhu

In Buddhism, the basic code of monastic discipline consists of 227 rules for fully ordained monks (Bhikkhu). Rules of Moral Discipline are divided into eight sections:

1. Four rules of defeat (Pārājika)
2. Thirteen rules of formal meeting (Saṅghādīsesa)
3. Two rules of indefinite (Aniyata)
4. Thirty rules of forfeiture and confession (Nissaggiya Pācittiya)
5. Ninety Two rules of confession (Pācittiya)

19 BD. III, p.365.
6. Four rules of acknowledgement (Pāṭidesanīya)
7. Seventy Five rules of training (Sekhiya)
8. Seven rules of settling of issues (Adhikaraṇa-samatha).

Pārājika means to lose or be defeated. A Bhikkhu who commits any of the four offenses has surrendered to his own mental defilements to such an extent that he defeats the purpose of his having become a Bhikkhu in the first place. A Bhikkhu who commits any of these offenses severs himself irrevocably from the life of the Saṅgha and is no longer considered a Bhikkhu and he is not allowed to become a monk again in his lifetime. The outlines of the four rules of Pārājika are:

1. Not to have sexual intercourse.
2. Not to steal
3. Not to commit murder
4. Not to claim attainments of stages of pure mental concentration that have not been achieved.

Saṅgādisesa means “involving the Saṅgha in the initial (Ādi) and subsequent (Sesa) acts.” It derives from the fact that the Community is the agent that initially calls on the Bhikkhu who breaks any of the rules in this category to undergo the penalty of penance (Mānatta) and probation (Parivāsa) subsequently reimposes the penalty if he does not properly carry it out, and finally lifts the penalty when he does. There are thirteen training rules: the first nine entailing a Saṅghādisesa immediately on transgression and the last four only after the offender has been rebuked three times as part of a Saṅgha transaction.

Aniyata means “indefinite.” The rules in this section do not assign definite or fixed penalties, but instead give procedures by which the Community may pass judgment when a Bhikkhu in uncertain

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20 Pm. p.9.
21 Pm. p.13.
22 Pm. p.25.
circumstances is accused of having committed an offense. There are two training rules here.

Nissaggiya means “entailing forfeiture.” Pācittiya means letting skilful qualities fall away (Patati) with a deluded mind (Citta) but the term is more likely related to the verb Pacinati (pp. Pacita), which means to discern, distinguish, or know.23 Each of the rules in this category involves an object that a Bhikkhu has acquired or used wrongly, and that he must forfeit before he may make the offense known to a fellow Bhikkhu or group of Bhikkhus. Once he has made his confession, he is absolved from the offense. In most cases, the forfeiture is symbolic as he receives the article in return after his confession although three of the rules require that the offender give up the article for good.

As explained above, Pācittiya is most probably related to the verb Pacinati, “to know,” and means “to be made known” or “to be confessed.” They are minor violations which do not entail expulsion or any probationary periods.

Paṭidesaniya means “to be acknowledged.” As a name for training rules, it means “entailing acknowledgement.”24 The four training rules here are unique in that they mention, as part of the rule, the words to be used in acknowledging the violation; the second rule is especially unique in that it depicts the violators as acknowledging their offense as a group.

Sekhiya means “to be trained in.”25 The rules themselves do not impose a direct penalty. Instead, they simply say, “This is a training to be observed.” The Vibhaṅga, though, says that to violate any of these rules out of disrespect incurs a Dukkaṭa. The non-offense clauses state in each case that to violate them unintentionally, unthinkingly, or unknowingly,

23 Pm. p.29.
24 Pm. p.84.
25 Pm. p.89.
or to disobey them when there are dangers or when one is ill, incurs no penalty.

Adhikaraṇasamatha means “the settling of issues.”26 The seven rules in this section are actually principles and procedures for settling the four sorts of issues mentioned under: (1) Dispute-issues (Vivādādhikaraṇa), (2) Accusation-issues (Anuvādādhikaraṇa), (3) Offense-issues (Āpattā-dhikaraṇa), (4) Duty-issues (Kiccādhikaraṇa).

2.2.4. Moral Discipline of Bhikkhunī

In Buddhism, the basic code of monastic discipline contains 311 rules for fully ordained nun (Bhikkhuṇī). Rules of Moral Discipline are divided into seven sections:

1. Eight rules of Pārājika,
2. Seventeen rules of Saṅghādisesa,
3. Thirty rules of Nissaggiya Pācittiya,
4. One hundred and sixty six rules of Pācittiya,
5. Eight rules of Pāṭidesanīya,
6. Seventy Five rules of Sekhiya,
7. Seven rules of Adhikaraṇa-samatha.

The four pārājika of the Bhikkhu are increased to eight in the code of the Bhikkhunis. In the life of the Bhikkhunis, they are considered serious enough to be ranked under Pārājika. Thus half the number of Pārājika rules laid down for the Bhikkhunis deal with sex. These disciplines not only attempt to safeguard the chastity of the Brahmacariya but also try to keep the whole body of Bhikkhunis above reproach. The Buddha was prompted to provide these extra safeguards as follows:

1. Not to have sexual intercourse.

26 Pm. p.109.
2. Not to steal.
3. Not to commit murder.
4. Not to claim attainments of stages of pure mental concentration that have not been achieved.
5. Not to consent to the touching against the circle of the knees.
6. Not to conceal other Bhikkhuni’s fault entailing Pārajika.
7. Not to follow Bhikkhu who is suspended by Saṅgha.
8. Not to transgress the eight things for sexual purpose.  

The seventeen Saṃghādisesa rules of the Bhikkhunī consist of seven which the Bhikkhunī hold in common with the Bhikkhus and ten additional rules which apply to the Bhikkhuni alone.

Both the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkunis have the same number of thirty Nissaggiya Pācittiya rules. But only the following 18 rules of the Bhikkhus are held in common by the Bhikkunis as well.

Pācittiya is not only the largest of all the groups of disciplines laid down for the Bhikkunis as in the case of Bhikkhus too, but is also the group which has an overwhelmingly large collection of additional rules, amounting to ninety-six. Of the ninety-two Bhikkhu Pācittiya, the Bhikkhuni take seventy which they hold in common with the Bhikkhus. Thus the Bhikkunis have a total of 166 rules under the group of Pācittiya.

The eight Pāṭidesaniya rules of the Bhikkhuni are extremely simple in character. Both Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni share the same set of seventy five Sekhiya.

The significance of the code of precepts is multiple. The code is designed primarily to create conducive conditions for fruitful spiritual practice. With that goal in mind, specific precepts are set forth to protect

27 Pm. pp117-121.
the physical, emotional, and intellectual integrity of the individual and the group. By limiting individually determined actions and providing techniques for conflict resolution, the code provides a framework for achieving both individual emotional balance and congenial personal interactions. As a voluntary social contract, it aims at fostering group solidarly and good behaviour both within and outside the community. In defining policies for admission to the order, it helps preserve the monastic social order. Without invading the practitioners’ private emotional space, the code aims at preventing unpleasant personal entanglements and physically dangerous conditions in the outside world. Overall the implication is that prescribing external limitations will result in greater internal freedom.28

2.3. Ethical Precepts for Early Taoist Communities

Precepts of the Highest Lord Lǎo29

“The Precepts of the Highest Lord Lǎo” (太上老君戒經) is a short text of twenty-nine pages, including ample commentary. In content, the Precepts of the Highest Lord Lǎo concentrate on listing and explaining the five classical precepts in Taoist setting.

The Scripture of the Ten Precepts30

The Scripture of the Ten Precepts (十戒經) is a short text revealed by the Heavenly Worthy of Numinous Treasure. Its ten precepts are the classical rules of medieval Taoism as they were applied when

29 CC. p.145.
30 CC. p.184.
practitioners attained the rank of Discipline of Pure Faith. These precepts are accompanied by fourteen principles of self-control in the scripture.

The 180 Precepts of Lord Lǎo\textsuperscript{31}

“The 180 Precepts of Lord Lǎo” (老君一百八十戒) contains two divisions: 140 prohibitions and 40 admonitions, following the typical pattern for other, similar codes. The most outstanding characteristic of the text is its haphazard organization and frequent repetition of similar precepts. The text is seminal in Taoism. All other extensive community codes recapitulate its rules in one form or another, from the “Precepts of the Three Primes” through the “Great Precepts of Self-Observation” to the “Precepts of Medium Ultimate.”

Precepts and Rules taught by Celestial Masters\textsuperscript{32}

“Precepts and Rules taught by Celestial Masters” (正一法文天師教戒科經) contains several texts to set up the teaching and promote the precepts, giving clear instructions on how to venerate the Tao. It also includes the Five Precepts.\textsuperscript{33}

The Five Precepts of Orthodox Unity\textsuperscript{34}

“The Five Precepts of Orthodox Unity” (正一五戒) contains the five kinds of desire which echo the five disturbances of the mind listed in the Tao Te Ching\textsuperscript{35} and the five precepts.

\textsuperscript{31} CC. p.136.\textsuperscript{32} SCC. p.10.\textsuperscript{33} SCC. p.13.\textsuperscript{34} SCC. p.23.\textsuperscript{35} TTC. (chapter.12)
Precepts of Great Perfection\textsuperscript{36}

“Precepts of Great Perfection” (太真科) consists of nine rules on scriptural transmission, petitions, purgation rites, registers, assemblies, parishes which indicate a Celestial Masters context.

Precepts of the Xianger Commentary to the Lǎo Zǐ\textsuperscript{37}

“Precepts of the Xianger Commentary to the Lǎo Zǐ” (老子想爾注) consists of nine practices: higher three practices, medium three practices and lower three practices. These nine practices are contained in the eighty one stanza of the two sections of the Tao Te Ching. Taken all together, they contain the entire Tao, high and low joined together equally.

It also contains “Precepts of the Perfect Scripture of the Tao and the Virtue”\textsuperscript{38} which consists of 27 precepts: highest nine precepts, medium nine precepts and lowest nine precepts. These twenty seven precepts altogether make up the foundation of the Tao, joining high and low together equally.

2.4. Ethical Precepts for Lay Organizations

Precepts of the Tao by the Master Who Embraces Simplicity\textsuperscript{39}

“Precepts of the Tao by the Master Who Embraces Simplicity” (抱朴子内篇) contains the ritual nature of the great work, details the contemporaneous vision of fate and the greater universal connection and in this one section speaks about the moral obligation of practitioners. It

\textsuperscript{36} CC. p.126.
\textsuperscript{37} SCC. p.2.
\textsuperscript{38} SCC. p.2.
\textsuperscript{39} SCC. p.55.
also includes a set of behavioural guidelines that are presented as part of individual self-cultivation while essentially connected with social relations.

The Great Precepts of the Highest Ranks\textsuperscript{40}

The Great Precepts of the Highest Ranks (上品大戒) consists of the transmission of various sets of precepts given by the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Beginning (元始天尊) to the Highest Lord of the Tao (太上道君). It contains:

1. The Ten Wisdom Precepts
2. The Twelve Desirable Attitudes
3. The Highest Precepts of Wisdom to Block the Six Passions
4. The Highest Precepts of Wisdom for the Salvation of All Living Beings
5. The Precepts of Admonitions for Assistance to do Good
6. The Highest Precepts of Retribution for Merit and Wisdom.

Precepts against the Roots of Sin\textsuperscript{41}

“Precepts against the Roots of Sin” (罪根品戒) presents two sets of ten precepts and various lists of rules:

- The Ten precepts or ten good deeds
- The Fourteen Principles of Self-Control
- The Ten Precepts and Ten Evils
- The Precepts of the Twelve Desirable Attitudes

\textsuperscript{40} CC. p.168.
\textsuperscript{41} SCC. p.59.
Twelve Highest Precepts of Admonition\textsuperscript{42}

“Twelve Highest Precepts of Admonition”\textsuperscript{42} (十二上品權戒) was transmitted by the Perfected of Great Ultimate to the Immortal Lord on the Left. It specifies 12 precepts of unruly behaviour and the detail of the retribution of the sins.

Scripture of Jade Clarity\textsuperscript{43}

“Scripture of Jade Clarity”\textsuperscript{43} (玉清經) contains ten precepts which are addressed to lay followers and summarize the main guidelines found in the rules of the Celestial Masters.

Scripture of Ascension to the Mystery\textsuperscript{44}

“Scripture of Ascension to the Mystery”\textsuperscript{44} (昇玄經) emphasises the philosophical dimension of the Tao together with the systematic and gradual practice. Lord Lǎo outlines three ranks of attainment: higher, medium and lower: spirit immortals, finders of liberation and longevity practitioners. To reach each level, one has to follow a specific set of practices and code of behaviour which contain: The Five Remembrances, The Five Precepts, The Five Sense Protections and The Nine Precepts.

Scripture of Controlling Action and Basic Conduct\textsuperscript{45}

“Scripture of Controlling Action and Basic Conduct”\textsuperscript{45} (戒業本行經) emphasizes heavily on the cosmology of ten-precepts, items, stages, directions, world, etc. It is revealed by the Heavenly Worthy, who himself received it in revelation.

\textsuperscript{42} SCC. p.82.
\textsuperscript{43} SCC. 2004, p.140.
\textsuperscript{44} SCC. p.108.
\textsuperscript{45} SCC. p.73.
Twenty Four Precepts for followers by the Perfected of Great Ultimate

“Twenty Four Precepts for followers by the Perfected of Great Ultimate” (太極真人説二十四門戒經) has a detailed listing of the various punishments and is one of the few precepts text where the rules are clearly spoken in the first person. It also contains a description of the highest deity and his exploits as well as the ritual schedule and practical guidelines.

Immortals’ Taboos according to the Purple Texts

“Immortals’ Taboos according to the Purple Texts inscribed by the Spirits” (靈書紫文仙忌) contains ten kinds of taboos which are the great prohibitions of the celestials. These ten rules are to be cultivated so that immortal potential is realized by oneself.

Scripture of the Eight Emperors

“Scripture of the Eight Emperors” (八帝精) emphasises personal integrity through following a set of eight precepts. The text also notes that Taoists are well advised to avoid any exhibitions of vulgarity which harm the body gods and disturb the purity of life.

2.5. Ethical Precepts for Monastic Institutions

The Precepts of the Three Primes

“The Precepts of the Three Primes” (三元品戒) consist of 180 precepts arranged according to the Three Primes. In content, the rules are

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46 SCC. p.95.
47 SCC. p.103.
48 SCC. p.115.
49 CC. p.187.
revealed by the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Beginning for the sake of Lord of the Tao and begin with a description of the offices of the Three Primes, i.e., the three central bureaus of Heaven, Earth, and Water that are in charge of life and death. The text details the sixty sins under each jurisdiction.

The Highest Prime is concerned with the proper transmission of scriptures, relationships to the masters and preceptors, and harmony within the religious community. The first twenty-two rules in this section address “all those who pursue the highest Tao.” They focus on the proper ritual behaviour among the higher echelons of the community. The following rules, as much as those under the jurisdiction of the Middle and Lower Primes, are concerned with rules for “students of the Tao and lay followers.”

The Great Precepts of Self-Observation

“The Great Precepts of Self-Observation” (觀身大戒) consists of 300 rules, providing the framework for the moral, behavioural, and spiritual behaviour of advanced Taoist. It begins with the statement that “the great precepts of self-observation in wisdom originally were floating rays of light, diffused and overflowing, radiating through the great void.” The practices aimed at the individual’s perfection in the Tao. The text presents the precepts and divides them according to the Three Primes. The list begins with 180 elementary and strictly prohibitive rules addressed to those under the supervision of Lower Prime. Next come thirty-six partly prohibitive, partly prescriptive precepts to followers classified as Middle Prime. They include rules of social politeness and tranquillity of mind. The last division contains eighty-four precepts for advanced disciples of Higher Prime.

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The Precepts of Initial Perfection

“The Precepts of Initial Perfection” (初真戒) contains several sets of precepts and numerous behavioural rules. It is transmitted to ordinands of the first level of Complete Perfection, the Master of Wondrous Practice (妙行師) and represents the school’s most fundamental guidelines and practical precepts. The initial precepts include the ancient five precepts of Lord Lǎo and the set of ten “precepts of initial perfection.” The latter rules include the classic five precepts plus rules against disloyal and unfilial behaviour and other social misbehaviour. Directed mainly at the lay practitioners who had just made the decision to leave the family and pursue the Tao, they later become the first precepts for monastic novices.

The text also recovers medieval thinking in its list of the effects of certain numbers of good and bad deeds as an encouragement to behave toward better action. It also contains General Outlines of Practice and Observation of Precepts and Essential Rules for Practicing the Precepts. Beyond this, the text relies on earlier models in its set of forty-six rules regarding ritual vestments and in its many guidelines for concrete behaviour that are closely reminiscent of medieval monastic manuals. It also has a set of precepts for women aspiring to the Taoist path, acknowledging the importance of nuns in this tradition. The rules are still being used in Complete Perfection ordinations today.

The Precepts of Medium Ultimate

“The Precepts of Medium Ultimate” (中極戒) contains a list of 300 precepts used in the middle-level ordination of Complete Perfection.

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51 CC. p.253
52 CC. p.256.
53 CC. p.258.
54 SCC. p.163.
Great Precepts for Celestial Immortals

“Great Precepts for Celestial Immortals” (天仙大戒) is used for ordinands of highest level of Complete Perfection. It does not contain a list of rules but provides general encouragement to develop wisdom, selflessness and compassion, using lists of ten qualities to be developed in different aspects of life.

The Scripture of Prohibitions and Precepts

“The Scripture of Prohibitions and Precepts” (禁戒經) consists of the different kinds of precepts and the concepts associated with them such as prohibitions, admonitions, resolutions, metaphors, positive effects, failure to observe, past experience, understanding the body, attachment to body, constant practice and final blessing. This scripture can be placed in the context of early monastic manuals on the basic of its contents and terminology.

Prohibitions and Precepts on Ceremonial Food Revealed by Lǎo Zǐ

“Prohibitions and Precepts on Ceremonial Food Revealed by Lǎo Zǐ” (法食禁戒經) contains 35 prohibitions and precepts on ceremonial foods and details the five basic kinds of food: (1) Qi (2) medicines (3) grain (4) fruit and (5) vegetables. Its rules are reflected closely on Taoist monastic life.

Rules and Precepts regarding Ritual Vestments

“Rules and Precepts regarding Ritual Vestments” (法服科戒文) is set in the form of a dialogue between the Most High and Celestial Master.

55 CC. p.135.
56 CC. p.227.
57 SCC. p.132.
58 SCC. p.118.
In the course of the dialogue, it is stated that all beings, infernal, terrestrial and supernal, are ranked into groups, each with its own sumptuary rules and appropriate uniform. The Most High explains the esoteric import of some of the names of articles of ritual wear and describes the various costumes appropriate for reading specific scriptures, preaching, and making mystic journeys. “Rules and Precepts regarding Ritual Vestments” contains:

1. Nine Celestial Ranks
2. Types of Clothes
3. The Seven Ordination Ranks
4. 46 Rules and 20 Precautions

The Ten Items of Dignified Observances⁵⁹

“The Ten Items of Dignified Observances” (十事威儀) is transmitted by the Highest Lord Lǎo to the Perfected of No-Thought (無想真人) and the Ten Items presents monastic behavioural guidelines in ten sections and 144 entries. The Ten Items focuses on the concrete activities of Taoist rather than their material surroundings.

2.6. Ethical Precepts for Ritual Institutions

Ten Precepts of Initial Perfection⁶⁰

“Text of the Ten Precepts of Initial Perfection as Revealed by the Heavenly Worthy of Sovereign Emptiness” (虛皇天尊初真十戒文) is designated for those who have just made the decision to leave the family and pursue the Tao. It has both a prohibitive and prescriptive part.

⁵⁹ CC. p.235.
⁶⁰ SCC. p.141.
Record of Purgations and Precepts \(^{61}\)

“Record of Purgations and Precepts” (齋戒籙) contains a concise summary of the main purgations: the Five Precepts and the Ten Good Deeds.

Wondrous Precepts of Nine-fold Perfection \(^{62}\)

“Wondrous Precepts of Nine-fold Perfection” (九真妙戒) is part of ritual that activates talismans for salvation of being from hell. It contains instructions by the Heavenly Worthy to the Northern Emperor (北帝) of the realm of the dead. It focuses on nine precepts that include the four basic precepts plus three injunctions against anger, pride, and irresolution, as well as two rules encouraging loyalty and filial piety.

Wondrous Scripture of Exterior Daily Practice \(^{63}\)

“Wondrous Scripture of Exterior Daily Practice” (內日用妙經) associated with the practice of inner alchemy. It was revealed by Lord Lǎo and the text ranges for “respect for heaven and earth” and the sun and the moon to “fear of the law of the land” and the way of the kings, on to obedience to “father and mother” and the correct behaviour toward one’s superiors and inferiors. The text emphasizes on the dissolution of desires and establishment of harmony.

The Great Rites of Highest Clarity and Numinous Treasure \(^{64}\)

“The Great Rites of Highest Clarity and Numinous Treasure” (上清靈寶大法) is a compendium of rites served in an effort to restore ritual to its classical purity, eliminating various excesses, errors and
inaccuracies that had grown in the Numinous Treasure tradition. It contains a set of ten precepts for orphaned souls.

Rites of the Flying Celestials of Pure Brightness

“Rites of the Flying Celestials of Pure Brightness” (淨明飛仙法) is the moral instructions of the school of Pure Brightness, which integrated Chinese doctrine and ethics into Taoist practice. It has a set of ten rules which focus on the performance of essential virtue such as loyalty, filial piety, modesty, diligence, openness, generosity, forgiveness and forbearance.

Great Rites of Universal Salvation

“Great Rites of Universal Salvation” (度人大法) describes a series of precepts and good attitudes that practitioners swear to in a ceremony of Numinous Treasure. It contains “the Ten Prayers of Numinous Treasure,” “the Five Precepts of Numinous Treasure,” “the Ten Pledges of Numinous Treasure,” and “the Ten Pursuits of Numinous Treasure.” They are all written down in a formal document and submitted to the gods, binding the candidate to good behaviour and proper action in the Tao.

A Corpus of Taoist Ritual

“A Corpus of Taoist Ritual” (道法會元) consists of ten precepts and emphasizes the need for inner sincerity as much as for outward correctness of procedure. It also focuses on filial piety and loyalty and admonishes practitioners to prohibit debauchery, greed and intoxication.

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65 SCC. p.150
66 SCC. p.152.
67 SCC. p.154.
Great Complete Collection of Rules and Models for Taoist Followers\(^{68}\)

“Great Complete Collection of Rules and Models for Taoist Followers” (道門科範大全集) contains the Ten Precepts in two versions with a slightly different order. In each case the precept is followed by the virtue, one is to develop through its observation.

3. Classification of the Individual in Buddhism and Taoism

3.1. Ordinary Person (Puthujjana Puggala)

The person whose first three obstructing fetters, namely personality belief (Sakkāyadiṭṭhi), sceptical doubt (Vicikicchā), and attachment to rites and rituals (Sīlabbataparāmāsa) have not yet been eliminated, and who is not going to do anything to put these away, such a person is said to be an ordinary person (Puthujjana).\(^{69}\)

An ordinary person is trapped in the endless cycling of saṃsara. An ordinary entity has never seen and experienced the ultimate truth of Dhamma and therefore has no way of finding an end to the predicament. It is only when suffering becomes acute or seemingly unending, that an entity looks for a “solution” and finds the Dhamma.

3.1.1. The Blind Worldling (Andhaputhujjana)

The blind worldling (Andhaputhujjana) is an unawakened being who does not study the five aggregates (Khandha), the four elements (Dhātu), the six sense-bases (Āyatana) and related teachings, nor question about them, nor listen to them, nor remember them, nor reflect on them.\(^{70}\)

\(^{68}\) SCC. p.155.
\(^{69}\) Puthujjana (DHT. p.19).
\(^{70}\) DA.I. p.58.
The blind worldling does not possess that sight whereby he can discover attain that wealth which has not been attained, or can augment, he has not even that insight whereby he can distinguish good and bad, the blameworthy and the blameless, the superior and inferior states and the admixture of dark and light qualities. Such a person is said to be blind (Andha). The blind worldling is a type of person who is accomplished in states that are utterly dark and unwholesome. That is why he is called the person who once submerges, remains submerged.

3.1.2. The Good Worldling (Kalyāṇaputhujjana)

The good worldling is still unawakened, is open to the Dhamma, and reflects and reviews on the true nature of things, especially that of impermanence. While the blind worldling is one who goes with the worldly flow (anusotagāmī), the good worldling goes against worldly currents (paṭisotagāmī).

The good worldling (Kalyāṇaputhujjana) dwells, day in day out, practising the practice of making become the things that are wings to enlightenment (Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma), perfected in morality, with the sense-doors guarded, satisfied with the minimum of food and skilled in mindful awareness.

The good worldling is truthful and faithful, not using deception, patter, hinting or belittling, not always on the make for further gains, but with sense-doors guarded, abstemious, a peace-maker, given to watchfulness, active, strenuous in effort, a meditator, mindful, of fitting conversation, steady-going, resolute and sensible, not hankering after

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71 Andha (DHT. p.44).
72 Udekkāpama Sutta (GS. IV, p.7).
73 MA.1. p.42.
sense-pleasures but mindful and prudent. This is the good worldling’s proper ethical conduct.\textsuperscript{74}

The good worldling holds strong belief that faith, moral shame, moral fear, effort, wisdom are wholesome states. His wholesome states neither stand nor grow but only dwindle away. He is called a person who, having emerged then submerges.

3.2. Noble Person (Ariya Puggala)

Noble persons are those that have gone beyond the status of common worldlings (Puthujjana) or unworthy ones (Anariya). Common worldlings are recognized as those who dwell in any of the two extremes, namely, self-mortification (Attakilamathanuyoga) and self-indulgence (Kāmasukhallikā-nuyoga). Noble ones are recognised as ones, having gone beyond the two extremes, practicing the noble eight-fold path with the idea in mind to attain freedom from the suffering. Thus while journeying through the middle path the noble persons eliminate evil tendencies within, which are variously known as canker (āsava), defilement (kilesa), and fetter (saṃyojana) etc. As soon as they, having eliminated certain evil mentalities, enter into the noble-family, they are designated as ariyapuggala, ariyasamgha or ariyasāvaka. Though all in the noble family are called Ariya Puggala, they differ from each other in terms of their elimination of fetters (saṃyojana), spiritual practices, and attainments. Though there are different groupings of noble persons found in the canon, the grouping of eight noble persons (Aṭṭha Purisapuggala) became the yardstick based on which other noble persons are judged. The

\textsuperscript{74}Sampasādanīya Sutta (LDB. p.421).
eight noble persons are summed up into four individuals consisting of those obtaining the fruition (Phala) only.

3.2.1. Stream Enterer (Sotāpanna)

A stream-enterer is the lowest of the four noble persons. He eliminates three fetters, namely personality belief (Sakkāyadiṭṭhi), sceptical doubt (Vicikicchā), and attachment to rites and rituals (Śīlabbataparāmāsa). The passage defining this noble person runs thus: “After the disappearance of three fetters, the monk has won the stream to nibbāna and is no more subject to rebirth in lower worlds, is firmly established, destined for all enlightenment.”

There are three types of stream-enterer, namely, the one ‘with seven rebirth at the utmost’ (Sattakkhattuparama), the one ‘passing from one noble family to another’ (Kolankola), and the one ‘germinating only once more’ (Ekaṃbījī). All three types of noble persons, having eliminating three fetters, enter into the stream to nibbāna and are no more subject to rebirth in lower realms. They are destined to attain the full enlightenment. The differences among them lie in terms of how many rebirths they are taking until they reach the final attainment. A stream-enterer cannot eliminate entire unwholesome roots (akusalamūla) such as greed (loba), hatred (dosa) and delusion (moha). Nevertheless, one who attenuates unwholesome roots and enters into the stream or rather into the family of noble persons gradually becomes free from these evil mental states to achieve the supreme bliss (parama sukha) which is nibbāna.

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75 Mahālī Sutta (LDB, p.145).
76 Dutiyasikkha Sutta (GS. III, p.214).
3.2.2. Once Returner (Sakadāgāmi)

Once-returner is a person, who not only has eliminated three fetters as in the case of the stream enterer, but also has attenuated two subsequent fetters, namely, sensuous craving (Kāmarāga) and ill-will (Byāpāda). However there is a mention of one more fetter in the passage which runs as follows: “After the disappearance of three fetters, and reduction of greed, hatred and delusion, he will return to this world only once more and having once more returned to this world, he will put an end to suffering.”

According to this passage a once-returner, after eliminating three fetters, attenuates greed and hatred which could be understood as sensuous desire, and ill-will respectively. He also attenuates delusion which corresponds to ignorance (Avijjā) the last and the tenth fetter. It suggests that a once-returner, non-returner and even a stream enterer gradually attenuate not only delusion or ignorance but also other higher fetters.

3.2.3. Non-returner (Anāgami)

Anāgāmi is the third noble person who eliminates five lower fetters (Orambhāgīya Saṃyojana). The passage explaining an Anāgāmi runs as follows: “After the disappearance of five fetters he appears in a higher world, and there he reaches nibbāna without ever returning from that world to the sensuous sphere.”

There are two kinds of fetters, namely, (1) Orambhāgīya Saṃyojana, and (2) Uddhambhāgīya Saṃyojana. The first refers to the five lower fetters that tie an individual to the lower realms and the second
refer to the five higher fetters that tie an individual to the higher realms, i.e. form and formless realms (Rūpa and Arūpa Bhava). A non-returner eliminates only the Orambhāgiya Saṃyojana and particularly eradicates sensuous craving (Kāmarāga) and ill-will (Byāpāda) as the other three lower fetters have been eliminated before. The list of non-returners with five individuals is as follows:

1. The less-than-half-timer (Antaraparinibbayī)
2. The more-than-half-timer (Upahaccaparinibbayī)
3. The gainer without exertion (Asankhāraparinibbayī)
4. The gainer with exertion (Sasnkhāraparinibbayī) and
5. One who goes upstream to the highest (Uddhaṅsotaakaniṭṭha).

### 3.2.4. Worthy One (Arahanta)

Arahanta is the last and highest among the noble persons. He is the one who has eliminated all ten fetters and thus has achieved the goal of religious life. The term ‘Arahanta’ is a combination of two words namely, ‘ari’ (enemy) and ‘hana’ (to kill or destroy). Therefore, Arahanta means the one who has killed or destroyed his enemy namely passion (lobha), anger (dosa), and delusion (moha). He is said to have done what should be done and therefore nothing left for him to do. Thus he is known as trained (asekha) as opposed to the other seven noble persons who are known as trainee (sekha) for they still have work left to do. The passage defining an arahanta runs as follows: “Through the extinction of all cankers (Āsavakkhaya) he reaches already in this very life the deliverance of mind, the deliverance through wisdom, which is free from cankers, and which he himself has understood and realized.”

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80 Sangīti Sutta (LDB. p.495).
81 Sangīti Sutta (LDB. p.496).
82 Mahāli Sutta (LDB. p.145).
What is clear from the above passage is that the Arahanta is defined not as one who has eliminated the fetters but as one who having destroyed the cankers became cankerless (āsavānaṁkhayā anāsavaṃ). According to traditional viewpoint, a non-returner becomes an arahanta only after destroying the five higher fetters. But the passage defining arahanta says that he becomes an arahanta not by eliminating five higher fetters, but by vanishing cankers. In the exposition of cankers (āsava), there are four, namely, sensual pleasure (kāmāsava), existence (bhavāsava), speculative view (diṭṭhāsava), and ignorance (avijjāsāva). Both the cankers and fetters are said to be more or less the same.

After becoming Arahanta, the five aggregates (physical forms, sensations, perception, mental formations and consciousness) will continue to function, sustained by physical bodily vitality. This attainment is termed “nibbana element with a residue remaining” (Saupādisesa Nibbānadhātu). But once the Arahanta passes away and with the disintegration of the physical body, the five aggregates will cease to function, hence ending all traces of existence in the phenomenal world and thus total release from the misery of saṃsara. It would then be termed “nibbana element without residue remaining” (Anupādisesa Nibbānadhātu). It is called “final attainment of Nibbāna” (Parinibbāna) which occurs at the death of an Arahanta.

3.3. The Person of Virtue (Dé Rén, 德人)

3.3.1. The Sage (Shèngrén, 聖人)

The Sage is a metaphysical and cosmological character, the human incarnation of the Tao, similar to a limiting line between the Tao and

83 Nibbānadhātu Sutta (Itv. p.143).
humanity, or between the universe and humanity. The Taoist saint is characterized by an active and mystical participation in the natural workings of life and the world. In Tao-Te-Ching it is said that the sage assumed the office of non-action, conducted speechless instruction, assisted without taking credit and scored merits without claiming. The sage withdrew himself to the back and found himself in front. He cast himself aside and found himself preserved. It is because he was selfless. The sage man took hold of one to serve over all under heaven. He did not look at himself. Therefore, he was illustrious. He did not parade himself. Therefore, he was clear-sighted. He did not brag about himself. Therefore, he was meritorious. He was not conceited. Therefore, he was long-enduring. He represents the goal of the adept’s practices and hence the most powerful motivator of the Taoist quest, as his divine powers are said to be a result of his Taoist practices. Paradoxically, therefore, the saint justifies these practices by transcending them.

The sage is evanescent, unpredictable, dynamic, flexible, and ubiquitous. He is forever unchanged and centred in the Tao, but is as elusive as the Tao and emptiness itself. He can die and be reborn. He flies through the air and goes beyond the world. He is master of the elements and of space and time, and commands demons and spirits. He hides himself at a distance from the world or lives in the very midst of it, for example in the marketplace.

The sage accommodates himself so well to his environment as to pass unnoticed and ordinary people cannot see him. His sight and hearing are sharp and penetrating; knowing the secrets of time, he can predict the future. He is “dark and obscure, and as brilliant as the sun and the moon”

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85 TTC. Chapter.2.
86 TTC. Chapter.7.
87 TTC. Chapter.22.
and is “a mirror of Heaven and Earth.” He can make himself invisible because he knows how to recover the subtle, ethereal state. Returning to the Original Pneuma (Yuánqì, 元氣) and the original darkness, he can become no longer perceptible.

As a mediator, the sage measures and discloses the distance that divides Heaven and Earth and gives rise to the world. He dominates Yīn and Yáng, and stands above, below, and beyond the world, yet is in its centre. He animates the universe, whose vivid signification he embodies, organizes, and harmonizes, and whose unity he bears witness to and guarantees. He joins the visible and the invisible and all other polarities. His magical powers are symbolic of the animating creativity of the Tao; as all symbols do, he simultaneously hides and unveils the secret of life and the world.

For those who reject the devotional and religious aspect of Taoism, the sage plays the same mediating role that a god does in religion. He is the model of perfect and complete humanity and its inspired guide, a cosmic figure who embodies emptiness or the Tao in an abstract, anonymous, yet vivid way. He transcends the opposition of life and death and embraces all immortals and gods.

3.3.2. The Immortal (Xiānrén, 仙人)

A Xiānrén is a person who has attained immortality and may possess supernormal powers. In early times, the paradise of the immortals was said to be located on islands that could not be easily approached or on the peak of a steep mountain that would not permit easy access for ordinary mortals. Later, this paradise was thought to be in Heaven.

88 CT. Chapter.3.
In earlier time, the immortals are entirely removed from the human realm. There was no thought that ordinary people could become immortals through cultivation or effort. The way to eternal youth and life was closed except a mortal either found his way to the abode of the immortals by some miraculous luck, or happened to meet an immortal who gave him the elixir of immortality. Even the elixir was something that could only be given and it could not be discovered or compounded by human beings. Later, however, the distance between ordinary people and immortals somehow narrowed and immortals were drawn closer within the reach of men. Now the immortal had come within human ken, since in principle anyone could gain immortality through his own effort.

There are three classes of immortal: (1) Celestial Immortal (Tiānxiān, 天仙), (2) Earth Immortal (Dexiān, 地仙) and (3) Corpse Untie Immortal (Shǐjièxiān, 尸解仙). Moreover, there are five classes of immortal: (1) Ghost immortal (Guǐxiān, 鬼仙), (2) Human Immortal (Rénxīān, 人仙), (3) Earth Immortal (Dexiān, 地仙), (4) Spirit Immortal (Shénxīān, 神仙), and (5) Celestial Immortal (Tiānxiān, 天仙). Apart from the classification of immortal, there is a list of Eight Immortals (Bāxiān, 八仙):  

1. Immortal Maiden He (Hé Xiān Gū, 何仙姑),
2. Royal Uncle Cao (Cáo Guó Jiù, 曹國舅),
3. Iron-Crutch Li (Li Tiě Guǎi, 李铁拐)
4. Lán Cāihé (藍采和),
5. Lǚ Dòngbīn (呂洞賓),
6. Philosopher Han Xiang (Hán Xiāng Zǐ, 韓湘子),
7. Elder Zhang Guo (Zhāng Guǒ Lǎo, 張果老), and
8. Han Zhongli (Zhōnglí Quán, 鍾離權).

3.3.3. Real Person (Zhēnrén, 真人)\(^91\)

The term Zhēnrén denotes one of the highest states in the Taoist spiritual hierarchy. Tao-Te-Ching says, “Within the Tao there is an essence. This essence is the highest reality (Zhēn).”\(^92\) Zhuāng Zī defines the term saying: “Reality (Zhēn) is what is received from Heaven; it is so of itself and cannot be altered.”\(^93\) In Zhuāng Zī, it is said that the ruler of the universe is called Zhēnzai (Real Ruler) and zhenjun (Real Lord), and one who has attained the Dao is called Zhēnrén.\(^94\) Additionally, the Zhēnrén is described as follows:

The Zhēnrén of ancient times did not struggle against adversity, was not proud of success, and did not plan his actions. The Zhēnrén of ancient times slept without dreaming, and woke without any worry. The Zhēnrén of ancient times knew nothing about delighting in life, nor did he hate the world of death…. This was the Zhēnrén of ancient times.\(^95\)

The Zhēnrén of the Taoist system always acts in the spirit of Wú Wéi, of apparently doing nothing. He withdraws from the active arena of affairs and retires into seclusion and does not interfere in public agitations and turmoil but their influence is very effective. The silence they observe carries out the Tao of Wú Wéi, which is of priceless value. While the Zhuāng Zī does not describe a person with supernormal powers as a Zhēnrén, it is easy to see how the idea could be adopted into the search for eternal youth and immortality by saying that one who was like this could climb high places and not be afraid, go into water and not get wet,

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\(^92\) 其中有精；其精甚真. (TTC. Chapter.21).
\(^93\) CT. Chapter.31.
\(^94\) CT. Chapter.2.
\(^95\) CT. Chapter.6.
enter fire and not be burned. This is because his knowledge was able to rise to the Tao.\footnote{CT. Chapter.6.} Thus the Zhēnrén entered Taoist religion coloured by the idea of immortality. The Taoist Zhēnrén was ranked higher than the immortal (Xiānrén) in the celestial hierarchy. The Zhēnrén is considered as a ruler on earth in contrast to the “divine man” (Shénrén) who rules in heaven.


Midway between man and deity, the Shénrén transcends human existence. The clearest picture of him is found in the Zhuāng Zǐ saying that there is a divine man living in the distant Gūshè (姑射) mountains. His skin and flesh are like ice and snow and his body is as supple as a girl's. He does not eat the five grains, but sucks the wind and drinks the dew. He rides the pneuma of the clouds and has the dragon as his steed, roaming beyond the Four Seas (Sìhǎi, 四海, i.e., the bounds of the universe). With his spirit coagulated, he protects all things from injury and every year he causes the five grains to ripen.

The Zhuāng Zǐ adds that the Shénrén does not drown if a flood comes, nor is he burned by heat that melts metal and stone, and that even the dust and grime of his body could produce saintly rulers such as Yao and Shun. Zhuāng Zǐ mentions the Shénrén, though in less detail: “The accomplished man (Zhìrén, 至人) is selfless; the divine man takes no credit for his deeds; the saint (Shèngrén, 聖人) is nameless.\footnote{CT. Chapter.1.} “The celestial man (Tiānrén, 天人) does not depart from the source (Zōng, 宗); the divine man does not depart from the essence (Jīng, 精); the accomplished man does not depart from reality (Zhēn, 真). The saint
makes Heaven his source, virtue (Te) his root, and the Tao his gate, and he is able to see through change.”

The concept of Shénrén in Taoism is mediated by the views of the Zhuāng Zǐ. The term is often used in the sense of “divine immortal” (Shénxiān, 神仙) and also constitutes a category within the hierarchy of celestial beings. While in the Zhuāng Zǐ terms like “divine man,” “accomplished man,” “saint,” and “real man” (Zhēnrén) may not imply ranking, in the Tàipíng Jīng, 太平經 (Scripture of Great Peace), for instance, the Real Man rules on earth and the Divine Man in heaven, and there is a clear hierarchy with the Shénrén ranked first, the Zhēnrén second, and the Xiānrén (immortal) third. The Tàipíng Jīng also describes the ascent from Xiānrén through Zhēnrén to Shénrén. In the Scripture on Concentration and Observation (Dìngguān Jīng, 定觀經), those who have attained the Way are ranked in seven stages. After one obtains concentration, health, and longevity, the spiritual states of Xiānrén, Zhēnrén, and Shèngrén appear as the fourth to the sixth stages, with the Zhuāng Zǐ’s “accomplished man” (Zhìrén) graded as the highest ranking.

4. Intellectual Development and Ethical Attainment in Buddhism and Taoism

4.1. The State of Purification (Visuddhi)

In Buddhism, developing purification (Visuddhi) is considered as the path of practice leading to the attainment of Nibbāna. In this regard, there are the seven stages of purification (Visuddhi), namely:

1. Purification of virtue (Sīlavisuddhi),

99 CT. Chapter.33.
2. Purification of mind (Cittavisuddhi),
3. Purification of view (Diṭṭhi-visuddhi),
4. Purification of transcending doubt (Kaṅkhāvitarana-visuddhi),
5. Purification of knowledge and vision regarding path and not-path (Maggāmaggañāṇadassanavisuddhi),
6. Purification of knowledge and vision of the way of progress (Paṭipadāñāṇadassanavisuddhi), and
7. Purification of knowledge and vision (Ñāṇadassana-visuddhi).\(^{100}\)

To develop the seven stages of purification one must first develop purification of virtue. In this regard, either the five or eight precepts must be observed as for laity. For monks purification of virtue respectively consists of the four kinds of virtue. They are: (1) virtue that one restrains oneself from unwholesome actions and speech according to the monastic rules (Pātimokkha-saṃvara-sīla), (2) virtue with regards to restrain of the sense faculties (Indraya-saṃvara-sīla), (3) virtue with regards to purity of livelihood (Ājīvapārisuddhi-sīla), and (4) virtue that is connected with the use of the requisites (Paccayasannissita-sīla).\(^{101}\)

The bodily and verbal restraint established by purified virtue paves the way for mental restraint, which brings the next stage, purification of mind (Citta-visuddhi). This purification comes through concentration (Samādhi) which overcomes five mental disturbances (Nīvaraṇa) such as sensual desire (Kāmachanda), ill-will (Byāpāda), sloth and torpor (Thina-middha), restlessness and worry (Uddhacca-kukkucca), and sceptical doubt (Vicikicchā). They hinder the mind by obstructing its development of concentration (Samādhi) as well as insight (Vipassanā) in many ways. It clearly stated that these five hindrances, which overspread the mind, are

\(^{100}\) Ratthavinīta Sutta (MLD. p.243).
said to be the causes of blindness and loss of sight, and obstruct insight.\textsuperscript{102} The Buddha urges monks to develop concentration in order to understand things as they really are.\textsuperscript{103} Moreover he encourages his disciples to be vigilant for the purification of the mind from mental hindrances.\textsuperscript{104} Purification of mind is achieved when the degree of concentration becomes sufficiently strong to cause the suppression of the five kinds of hindrance. In the progress of the path of purification, purification of mind is essential to obtain the complete development of purification.

The third stage, purification of view, consists in arousing insight into mind and matter (Nāma-rūpa) to realize that apparent individuality is nothing but a compound of mind and matter. The aspect of matter covers the physical side of existence, the aggregate of material form. The aspect of mind covers the mental side of existence, the four mental aggregates of feeling (Vedanā), perception (Saññā), mental formation (Sañkhāra), and consciousness (Viññāṇa). A true comprehension of this truth, paves the way to realize that apart from the mind and matter, there is no individual as such. The achievement of this real vision of mind and matter and their relation to phenomenal existence is described as the purification of view.

The fourth stage, purification of transcending doubt is set to find out the cause (Hetu) and condition (Paccaya) of mind and matter. Through knowledge of insight (Vipassanāṇa), the realization of the cause and condition of mind and matter is brought to completion. In other words, the origin of mind and matter in accordance with the doctrine of Dependent Origination (Paṭiccasamuppāda) is realized and the cause of mind and matter by way of the law of Kamma and its result are also realized. With the achievement of this particular knowledge, one is able to transcend all doubts concerning oneself in the three phases of time, i.e., past, present and

\textsuperscript{102} Āvaraṇa Sutta (GS. III, p.51).
\textsuperscript{103} Samādhi Sutta (CDB. I, p.863).
\textsuperscript{104} Mahāassapura Sutta (MLD. p.365).
future. He also becomes free from the doubt concerning the nature and pattern of existence. This knowledge which is obtained by overcoming of doubt is described as purification of transcending doubts.

The fifth stage, purification of knowledge and vision regarding path and not-path is set by contemplating on the states of mind and matter, through clearer comprehension of the three characteristics of conditioned things, and the knowledge of arising and falling of mind and matter (Udayabbaya-ñāṇa). In this stage ten imperfections of insight (Vipassanupakilesa) spring up. They are: (1) illumination (Obhāsa), (2) knowledge (Ñāṇa), (3) rapture (Pīti), (4) tranquillity (Passaddhi), (5) bliss (Sukha), (6) resolution (Adhimokkha), (7) exertion (Paggaha), (8) assurance (Upaṭṭhana), (9) equanimity (Upekkhā), (10) delight (Nikanti).

One has to recognize all these as obstacles and dismiss them. For all these imperfections of insight have a subtle trace of attachment hidden beneath them, and thus they will deflect one from the right path. The understanding that these imperfections are not the right path and that the avoidance of them will lead one to the path is called purification of knowledge and vision of what is path and not-path.

The sixth stage, purification of knowledge and vision of the way of progress, is set to reach its culmination with the nine kinds of knowledge namely: (1) Knowledge of contemplation on rise and fall (Udayabbayañāṇa), (2) Knowledge of contemplation on dissolution (Bhangañāṇa), (3) Knowledge of the appearance as terror (Bhayañāṇa), (4) Knowledge of contemplation on disadvantages (Ādīnavañāṇa), (5) Knowledge of contemplation on dispassion (Nibbidāñāṇa), (6) Knowledge of the desire for deliverance (Muñcitu-kamyatāñāṇa), (7) Knowledge of reflective contemplation (Paṭisaṅkhāñāṇa), (8) Knowledge

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105 PP. p.656.
of equanimity regarding all formations (Sañkhārupekkhāñāṇa), and (9) Conformity-knowledge (Anulomañāṇa).\textsuperscript{106}

With the assistance of all kinds of knowledge one begins purification of knowledge and vision of the way as the last stage of the mundane purification. The way signifies the practice or the process of arriving at the goal. The understanding, knowledge, or illumination relation to the process of arrival is the knowledge and vision of the way. The purification or elimination of defilements by means of that knowledge is purification of knowledge and vision of the way. It is at this point that there begins to unfold the series of full-fledged insight knowledge which will climax in the attainment of the supra-mundane paths (Lokuttara Magga).

The seventh and final stage, the purification of knowledge and vision is the highest level of purification as the lineage of ordinary one (Puthujjana) ends and the lineage of noble one (Ariyapuggala) starts in this very stage. The purification of knowledge and vision consists of the Four Noble Paths (Magga-ñāṇa), namely:

1. The path of stream-enterer (Sotāpatti-magga),
2. The path of once-returner (Sakadāgāmi-magga),
3. The path of non-returner (Anāgāmi-magga) and
4. The path of arahatship (Arahatta-magga).

Following each path, each own respective frutions (Phala) as its result. Whereas the path performs the task of eradicating defilements, fruition experiences the bliss of Nibbāna.

In the conclusion, the seven successive stages of purification can be briefly explained as follows: The first two of these seven purification, that is to say, purification of morality and purification of mind, correspond

\textsuperscript{106} PP. p.662.
respectively to sīla and samādhi. The remaining five purifications are the successive stages of spiritual achievement included in paññā. Therefore, according to Buddhist ethics, morality, concentration and wisdom function together as the path leading to final liberation.

4.2. The State of Liberation (Vimutti)

The primary postulate on which the entire ethical system of Buddhism rests is the fundamental premise that there is a supreme end in human life that all rational and intelligent persons ought to aim at achieving. This goal of Buddhism is referred as Nibbāna. The ultimate aim of the Buddha’s teaching is the attainment of Nibbāna with the realization of the four Noble Truths. In the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha stated that the truth of the cessation of suffering (Norodha-saccā) is the complete fading away from craving (Asesaviraga) and extinction of craving (Nirodha) which is considered to have the same meaning as Nibbāna.107 In the state of Nibbāna, craving (Taṇhā) has completely ceased. Thus, the word “Nibbāna” is understood to have the same meaning with Nirodha in the contest of Noble Truth.

In this and related formulations of the Third Noble Truth, the term ‘Nibbāna’ does not appear. This is evident in the Buddha’s description of a person who, having seen the aggregates as impermanent, suffering and not-self, ‘turns his mind away from those states and directs it towards the deathless element thus: “This is the peaceful, this is the sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all attachments, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbāna.108 To destroy craving is to attain Nibbāna, and this undermines suffering, which has its origin in craving. Nibbāna is the state of health that is the complete cure

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107 Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (LDB. p.347).
108 Mahāmālukyaputta Sutta (MLD. p.540).
of the disease of suffering: ‘The greatest of all gains is health. Nibbāna is the greatest bliss.’ Nibbāna is clearly the focal point of the Buddha’s teaching. He said that he teaches the Four Noble Truths because they lead ‘to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.’

The absolute ultimate reality in Buddhism refers to the state of Nibbāna. With regard to the state of conditions or existences, Nibbāna is an exception, because Nibbāna had nothing to do with a conditional state, but is, in fact, an unconditional state. This means that it is beyond the conditional circumstances. In order to understand clearly the state of Nibbāna, character (Lakkhaṇa) of Nibbāna, its function (Rasa), its manifestation (Paccupaṭṭhāna) should be analysed. The character of Nibbāna is absolute peace (Santi-lakkhaṇa). Santi here means ultimate tranquillity which is free from ten kinds of defilement (kileas) and free from the eleven types of fires (Aggi). The function of Nibbāna is described as the state of deathlessness (Accuti-rasa). This means that since the enlightened beings have entered the state of absolute peace, they will definitely no longer return to the existence of Sāṃsāra. It is understood that proclaiming the state of absolute peace has nothing to do with the natural process of three moments: arising (Uppāda), presence (Ṭhiti) and dissolution (Banga). The manifestation of Nibbāna is signlessness (Animitta-paccupaṭṭhāna). This means that it consists of no signs, size, shape, formation and dissolution in the realization of enlightened beings.

The religious or holy life (Brahmacariya) is said to be lived to attain Nibbāna. The Buddha himself valued Nibbāna as the highest

109 Māgandiya Sutta (MLD. p.613).
110 Cūḷamālukya Sutta (MLD. p.536).
111 Raṭṭhavinita Sutta (MLD. p.242).
The goal of Nibbāna is the guiding principle for moral action in Buddhism. Nibbāna itself is conceived as a state of moral perfection and purification. It is defined as the elimination of lust and greed (Ragakkhayajlobhakkhaya), the elimination of hatred (Dosakkhaya), and the elimination of delusion (Mohakkhaya).\(^{113}\)

The Buddha said:

One always perfect in virtue,
Endowed with wisdom, well concentrated,
One energetic and resolute,
Crosses the flood so hard to cross.\(^{114}\)

### 4.3. The Way of Internal Alchemy (Nèidān Dào, 内丹道)

#### 4.3.1. Construction of the foundation (Zhújī, 築基)

“Laying the foundations” is the initial practice of replenishing, the preparatory practice for refining the Elixir. The alchemical texts call this stage the “arts of the Way” (Dàoshù, 道術). The practice at this stage consists in actualizing the inherent life force of the body and in applying the natural, spontaneous potential of the human being.

The process of emanation is based on Lǎo Zǐ’s cosmogony: “Tao gives birth to one. One gives birth to two. Two gives birth to three. Three gives birth to ten thousand things.”\(^{115}\) In alchemical terms, Tao is the emptiness (Xū, 虛), the emptiness emanates spirit (Shén, 神), the spirit emanates the breath, (Qì, 氣), the breath emanates essence, (Jīng, 精), the essence emanates body (Xíng, 形), the body emanates human (Rén, 人).

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112 Mahāpadāna Sutta (LDB. p.219).
113 Nibbānapañña Sutta (CDB. II, p.1294).
114 Candana Sutta (CDB. I, p.148).
115 TTC. Chapter.42.
In order to gain longevity, or to access to timelessness, inner alchemist has to rise through the hierarchy of the constituents of being by reversing the rhythms of Nature, tracking time to its beginning. Thus, alchemical process aims at bringing three to two, two to one, and one to void. When one returns to the void of Tao, the ultimate enlightenment is attained.

The alchemical practice is initially concerned with the human body. At the initial stage of the Nei dān (内丹) process, therefore, one should first replenish the basic constituents of the body, so that they conform to the requirements of the practice. Only then is it possible to undertake the stages of alchemical refinement proper. Until the basic constituents do not conform to those requirements, the body’s functions should be restored and augmented by means of inner practices, so that Essence, Breath, and Spirit can reach a state of abundance. All this pertains to the stage of “laying the foundations.”

At the stage of “laying the foundations,” there are differences of initial conditions, age, and physical constitution. The practices, therefore, differ according to each individual. With regard to this point, the alchemical texts distinguish between “superior virtue” (Shànɡ Dé, 上德) and “inferior virtue” (Xià Dé, 下德). “Superior virtue” refers to childhood and young age; “inferior virtue” refers to adulthood and old age. According to the principles of alchemy, at a young age the human body grows like a young sprout when the pre-celestial particle of numinous radiance is not yet damaged. This is called “superior virtue.” Spirit and Breath are abundant, and there is no need of performing any practice to build the foundations. After growth and maturity, Essence, Breath, and Spirit become consumed and should be replenished. In the alchemical practice, this is referred to as “inferior virtue.”

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117 TTC. Chapter.38.
virtue” after one’s “celestial reality” (Tiānzhēn, 天真) has been damaged. One should refine oneself using the practice of “laying the foundations,” as only thus can the process of aging be inverted and can one return to youth.\footnote{Wang Mu, op.cit., 2011, pp.17-19.}

Taoism deems Essence, Breath, and Spirit to be the major components of life, and the alchemical texts call them the Three Treasures (Sān Bǎo, 三寶). If the Three Treasures are healthy and flourishing, the body is strong; if they are drained and depleted, illnesses develop. When the alchemical texts speak of refining the Elixir, they actually mean refining the Three Treasures. After the human body has gone past the age of childhood, Essence, Breath, and Spirit are damaged. Therefore they should be replenished before one can start compounding the Medicine. Although the refining of Spirit pertains to the practice of Xíng, 性 (Nature), and the refining of Essence and Breath pertains to the practice of Ming, 命 (Life), at the initial stage of the practice, Xíng and Ming should be cultivated together.\footnote{Ibid., p.38.}

Refining the Spirit is the same as refining the Breath. Refining the Breath, in turn, is equivalent to refining the Spirit. Each supports and completes the other, and each is the operation of the other. In the same way, “harmonizing the Spirit” (Tiáo Shén, 調神), “harmonizing the breathing” (Tiáo Xī, 調息), and “harmonizing the Essence” (Tiáo Jīng, 調精) are actually one and the same thing.\footnote{Ibid., p.55.} At the stage of “laying the foundations” there are two tasks: the first is preserving the state of Essence and Breath; the second is replenishing their shortage. When it is harmonized and replenished by means of the alchemical process, then Essence is abundant, Breath is full, and Spirit flourishes. The Three
Treasures coagulate with one another and form the Medicine, and this stage of the practice is concluded.

4.3.1.1. The Functions of Essence (Jīng, 精)

Essence exists both as “pre-celestial essence” (Xiāntiān Zhī Jīng, 先天之精), also known as Original Essence (Yuán Jīng, 元精), and as ordinary essence, called “post-celestial essence” (Hòutiān Zhī Jīng, 後天之精). Whereas ordinary essence, which is derived from desire, is produced and kept in the kidneys, Original Essence, which issues from the appeasement of mind and the stabilization of breath, is associated with the Gate of the Vital Force (Mìng Mén, 命門), located in the right kidney or between the two kidneys.121

The most concentrated or densely vibrating energy is Jīng. Of the Three Treasures, Jīng is the one associated most closely with the physical body. Jīng manifests itself partly as the reproductive energy of the sperm and ova. Jīng can be stored in the kidneys and is the most primal energy within the body. Jīng is said to be the basis for the physical bodies and is Yīn in nature, which means it is nourishing and cooling to the body. Jīng is also thought to be the vehicle of human heredity.

Jīng is often considered the root of life force, the physical substance out of which human life evolves. Jīng is consumed continuously by the activities of daily life, stress, illness, substance abuse, sexual excess, fear, pain, anxiety, etc. In women, Jīng can be depleted through abnormally heavy menstruation and pregnancy. Some Taoist lineages promote exercises to diminish menstruation, reserving and recycling the energy that would be lost through the menstrual blood. In men, generation and replacement of semen lost through excessive sexual activity resulting in

ejaculation contributes to the depletion of Jīng. Some ancient texts actually define Jīng as semen, although this metaphor is not quite accurate. Semen contains and is energized by Jīng energy, but Jīng can also be expressed as ova, sexual energy in general, and bone marrow. Most ancient masters consider Jīng to be the raw material of Qì, though some have said that Jīng is an expression of Qì. Obviously, vitality and sexual energy are closely related, so it may be a bit pedantic to argue which came first, sex or life force.¹²²

### 4.3.1.2. The Function of Breath (Qì, 氣)

Qì exists as “pre-celestial breath” (Xiāntiān zhī Qì, 先天之氣), also called Original Breath (Yuán Qì, 元氣), and as “post-celestial breath” (Hòutiān Zhī Qì, 後天之氣).¹²³ Qì is one of the “three treasures” and it is the vital force that operates the body and manifests in everyone and everything “the natural energy of the universe.” The home of Qì is said to be centred around the liver. Throughout Taoists’ lives, they try to obtain a positive flow of Qì, which flows through the body in paths moving to each individual organ, from the perspective of internal alchemy.

Taoists map out the body according to these paths. If a path is blocked, the chi does not flow properly; this blockage disrupts the balance of Yīn and Yáng. Taoists developed methods to help get rid of these harmful blockages so that the body’s balance can be restored. Having harmony is one of the most important concepts of Qì by keeping a proper balance of Yīn and Yáng forces. Trouble either on a personal or on a larger scale is a form of disharmony and may lead to illness or stress. This is accomplished by having too much of either Yīn or Yáng forces.¹²⁴

4.3.1.3. The Function of Spirit (Shén, 神)

Spirit exists as “pre-celestial spirit” (Xiāntiān Zhī Shén, 先天之神), also called Original Spirit (Yuán Shén, 元神), and as “post-celestial spirit” (Hòutiān Zhī Shén, 後天之神). 125 Shén involves the mental activities of a person including their consciousness. Shén can also be said to include the nerve system. The nerve system consists of the “original spirit” and actions that are vital to survival such as breathing or the heartbeat. A person’s consciousness is the spirit of knowing, conscious activities, and the thinking process which can be developed through learning. Internal alchemists focus on the original spirit of Shén.

Shén implies a person’s mental function and consciousness as well as vitality, mental health and overall “presence.” Shén is known to reside mainly in the heart, or more specifically, the blood which relies on the heart. It is believed that Shén sleeps at night and if it is disturbed the result can be insomnia. Healthy Shén can be seen in a person’s physical appearance through the eyes. If the eyes are bright and shining with liveliness it indicates a healthy Shén. If one’s Shén is unhealthy their eyes will appear dull. The Shén is dependent on the Jīng and Qì. If the Jīng and the chi are happy then the Shén will be content as well.

Shén can be thought of as either a singular concept or a plural concept. When viewed singularly Shén is located in the heart and known as heart Shén. When viewed as a plural concept it is found in five of the Yīn organs; the heart, the kidneys, the spleen, the lungs and the liver. The singular Shén depends on the others as the others depend on it. If the heart Shén is not functioning properly it can damage the other Shén and lead to problems such as mental illness. 126

4.3.2. Refinement of Essence to Breath (Liàn Jing Huà Qì, 練精化氣)

In the Taoist alchemical practices of Nourishing Life, the stage of “refining Essence to transmute it into Breath” has a crucial importance, as it represents the first level after “laying the foundations” and it is a part of the “arts of immortality” (Xiānshù, 仙術). Building on the basis established in the previous stage, one advances in the work of refining Essence, Breath, and Spirit. This stage is called the “initial barrier” (Chūguān, 初關) of inner cultivation which featured its elementary nature in a total process of refinement. At this stage, Original Essence, Original Breath, and Original Spirit coagulate with one another and form a Breath made of the union of Essence and Breath.127

At the moment of a man’s birth, his Essence, Breath and Spirit were totally mixed into an inseparable entity which was hailed as the period closest to Tao. When he grew up, the Essence, Breath and Spirit fell apart. During his span of life, the division became worse on daily basis, a trend that led to his death. However, a man could return to his infancy by cultivation, which would reassemble the divided Essence, Breath and Spirit. To achieve the goal, as the first step, a man ought to refine Essence into Breath, namely transforming Three into Two (Shōusān Guīr, 收三歸二). In this case, “Three” stood for Essence, Breath and Spirit, and “Two” for Breath and Spirit. As a result, “Essence” would be refined into “Breath” in this phase, which allegedly lasted about a hundred days. For this reason, this phase was known as the “Barrier of the Hundred Days” (Bǎirì Guān, 百日關).128 In terms of the refinement process, the Refinement of Essence into Breath was regarded as the “Phase of Interfering Action” (Yǒuwèi, 有為), a term highlighting a series of technical activities such as the “Collection of Medicinal Herbs”

127 Ibid., p.65.
128 Ibid., p.66.
4.3.3. Refinement of Breath to Spirit (Liàn Qì Huà Shén, 為氣化神)

“Refining Essence to transmute it into Breath” is the “initial barrier.” Essence is refined with Breath, and forms a Breath that becomes the “mother of the Elixir” (Dān mǔ, 丹母). In the next stage, “refining Breath to transmute it into Spirit,” Breath is refined with Spirit, so that it returns to Spirit. This stage is called the “intermediate barrier” (Zhōng guān, 中關) of inner cultivation and also known as “Transforming Two into One” (Yóuèr Guīyī, 由二歸一).

The terms used to describe this stage include Great Medicine (Dà yào, 大藥), Embryo of Sainthood (Shèngtāi, 聖胎), “bathing at the four cardinal points” (Sìzhèng Mùyù, 四正沐浴), “moving the tripod” (Yí dǐng, 移鼎), “going back and forth between the two Fields” (Èrtián Fǎnfù, 二田反復), and Greater Celestial Circuit (Dà Zhōutiān, 大周天). The processes last around ten months as it is called Barrier of the Ten Months (Shíyuè Guān, 十月關).

When the practice reaches this stage, it has already entered into its idealistic portion: it is deemed that if this stage of the practice is successful, one can invert the process of aging and return to youth, extend the length of one’s life and obtain longevity. The stage of “refining Breath to transmute it into Spirit” constitutes an advanced stage of the alchemical work, in which one’s practice progresses from “doing” to “non-doing” (Wú Wéi, 無為).

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129 Ibid., p.99.
130 Ibid., p.107.
4.3.4. Refinement of Spirit to Emptiness (Liàn Shén Huà Xū, 練神化虛)

“Refining Spirit to return to Emptiness” is the highest ideal of the alchemical doctrines. This stage is also called Higher Barrier (Shàngguān, 上關) which is known as the “Barrier of Nine Years” (Jiǔnián Guān, 九年關), highlighting a period of time demanded in this phase of refinement. In practice, however, the “Nine Years” was by no means an unchangeable standard. In fact, the specific time of refinement would depend upon an alchemist’s personality, his capacity of understanding, his environment, and so on. In constant stability and constant silence, all things return to the Origin. Therefore another name of this stage is “refining Spirit to join with the Tao” (Liàn Shén Hé Dào, 練神合道), where Tao means Emptiness and Non-Being (Xūwú, 虛無).\(^\text{131}\)

The alchemical practice emphasizes the backward process of “inverting the course” (Nìxíng, 逆行). It upholds that, in the first place, “the three bodies return to two bodies,” when Essence, Breath, and Spirit are refined into Spirit and Breath; this is the stage of “refining Essence to transmute it into Breath.” Then comes the stage in which “the two bodies return to one body” and there is only the Original Spirit; this is the stage of “refining Breath to transmute it into Spirit.” Finally comes “refining the One to revert to Non-Being” (Liàn Yī Hái Wú, 練一還無), which is the stage of “refining Spirit to return to Emptiness.”

Different with either “Refinement of Essence into Breath”, which highlighted “Interfering Action” (Yǒuwèi, 有為) or “Refinement of Breath into Spirit”, which featured a transition from “Interfering Action” to “Non-Interference” (Wú Wéi, 無為), the “Refinement of Spirit back to Emptiness” stood for the highest achievement in the Refinement of Inner

Alchemy, which was characterized by “Non-Interference.” In Taoism, “Non-Interference” was regarded as the speechless nature of Tao, which used to be symbolized by a circular shape. Inner Alchemists used it to describe the oblivion of self-existence in refinement of Inner Alchemy, or emptiness of Breath in human bodies. One reverts to the fundament and returns to the root, enlightens one’s mind and sees one’s Nature. This is the highest goal of Inner Alchemy.  

132 Ibid., p.110.