

CHAPTER IV

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF *VINAYA PIṬAKA*

IV. 1. Brief Description of *Pāli Tipiṭaka*

IV. 1. 1. *Pāli Tipiṭaka* as the Most Reliable and Important Text

Pāli language is mainly the conductor of the message of the Lord Buddha. It has spread peace to several regions of the world; *Pāli* language has got historical importance. It is a dead language that is widely studied because it is the language of many of the earliest extant Buddhist scriptures as collected in the *Pāli* Canon, or *Tipiṭaka*. If a man can obtain emancipation from this world at last, by means of the Buddha's teachings, then it is essential to propagate the message of the Buddha. The material available in *Tipiṭaka* and *Anupitaka*¹ is made useful by *Pāli* language. The original knowledge, at the time of the Buddha, may be achieved with this language. The Siddhattha Buddha's teaching can be known by proper study of *Pāli* language.

In the ancient time of the Indian society, *Dhamma*, philosophy, Culture, revolution etc., are also included in *Pāli* literature; *Pāli* literature plays an important role in the humanisation of the world. This literature is not only the literature of the Buddha's *Dhamma* but also the literature for

¹The *Anupitaka* (*Pāli*, literally, meaning "after *Piṭaka*") is the collected non-canonical or extra-canonical collection of *Pāli* literature of Buddhism.

the welfare of the human being in the world. *Pāli* is also the language of (the canonical literature) *Theravāda* Buddhism. Hence, *Pāli* literature is very important.

Siddhattha Buddha used *Pāli* and Magodhi languages and therefore, *Pāli Tipiṭaka* is the reliable text of the Buddha's sayings. There is a place for reality and discretion in *Pāli Tipiṭaka*. Actually, *Pāli Tipiṭaka* is considered as the literary gift of *Theravāda* school which is one of the eighteen schools at the time of the great Asoka. Therefore, *Pāli Tipiṭaka* is the ancient and reliable source of the Buddha's life and his teaching.

IV. 1. 2. The History of Establishment of *Pāli Tipiṭaka*

The Buddha has passed away, but the sublime *Dhamma* which He unreservedly bequeathed to humanity still exists in its pristine purity. Although the Master left no written records of His Teachings, His distinguished disciples preserved them faithfully by committing to memory and transmitting them orally from generation to generation.

As we have known, immediately after the passing away of the Buddha (round about 3 months), 500 distinguished *Arahants* held a convention known as the First Buddhist Council to rehearse the Doctrine taught by the Buddha.¹ Venerable Ānanda, the faithful attendant of the Buddha who had the special privilege of hearing all the discourses the Buddha recited the *Dhamma*,² whilst the Venerable Upāli recited the *Vinaya*, the rules of conduct for the *saṅgha*.³

¹ Vin. II. 284.

² Vin. II. 287.

³ Vin. II. 286.

One hundred years after the First Buddhist Council,¹ during the time of King Kalasoka, some disciples saw the need to change certain minor rules. The orthodox monks said that nothing should be changed while the others insisted on modifying some disciplinary rules (*Vinaya*). Finally, the formation of different schools of Buddhism germinated after this council. And in the Second Buddhist Council, only matters pertaining to the *Vinaya* were discussed and no controversy about the *Dhamma* was reported.²

In the 3rd Century B.C., during the time of Emperor Ashoka, the Third Buddhist Council was held to discuss the differences of opinion held by the *saṅgha* community. At this Council, the differences were not confined to the *Vinaya* but were also connected with the *Dhamma*. At the end of this Council, the President of the Council, Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa, compiled a book called *Kathāvatthu* refuting the heretical, false views and theories held by some disciples. The teaching approved and accepted by this Council was known as *Theravāda* or ‘The Way of The Elders’. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* was discussed and included at this Council.

The Fourth Buddhist Council was held in Sri Lanka in 80 B.C. under the patronage of the pious King Vattagamini Abhaya. Therefore, all Buddhist texts, which were being transmitted orally, were written down in *Pāli* language in Sri Lanka in the first century B.C. It was at this time in Sri Lanka that the *Tipiṭaka* was committed to writing for the first time in the world.

¹ Vin. II. 294.

² Vin. II. 294-306.

The *Pāli* Canon of the Buddhists, most of the speeches and addresses, are attributed to the Buddha himself; it is also told at the length and in detail, where and on which occasion the Master delivered a speech or addressed a gathering. But of all this, what really originates from the Buddha can perhaps be hardly ever decided.¹

Therefore, the Canon is divided into three *Piṭakas* (Baskets), namely, *Vinaya Piṭaka* (the monastic rules), *Sutta Piṭaka* (the discourses of the Buddha) and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (the systematic psychological and philosophical texts of "Further Doctrine").

The great division of the *Tipiṭaka* on modes of conduct, restraints on both bodily and verbal action of *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhuṇīs*, which form rules of discipline for them, is called the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. The general discourses and sermons intended of the Buddha for both the *bhikkhus* and lay disciples are known as *Sutta Piṭaka*. The philosophical aspect of Buddha's teaching is known *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. Combining all these three great divisions into one is known as *Pāli Tipiṭaka*.

The rules of *Vinaya* as we know them were evidently not laid down at the same time by the Buddha or by any other law-giver. The internal evidence of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and of the relevant material of the *Suttas* show that they were the progressive outcome of the gradual development of monastic living among the Buddhist *bhikkhus* who originally belonged to that band of wandering mendicants described in the first part of this study. Monastic living and its gradual evolution, therefore, was the source of *Vinaya* rules, which may be called their material cause.

¹ Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II, p. 4.

Buddhism is remarkable in that it denies any legislative authority apart from the Buddha himself. The total independence of the individual is a basic characteristic of the original *parivrājaka* institution that was preserved in its evolution into monarchism among the Buddhists. In one of the most beautiful passages of the Canon, the Buddha refuses to appoint a leader of the *saṅgha* after his death, as requested by Ānanda, asserting that he himself is not the *saṅgha* leader. Then he exhorts the monks: "Be lamps unto yourselves, take refuge in yourselves, betake ye to no other. Let the *Dhamma* be your lamp, take refuge in the *Dhamma*, betake ye to no other."¹

The only teacher (*sattā*), the only authority recognized after the death of the Buddha is the *Dhamma* that be preached.² In the *Gopaka-Moggallāna Sutta*, Vassakāra, the Prime Minister of Magadha, is surprised to learn that no leader of the *saṅgha* had been appointed after the death of the Buddha. Ānanda's reply to Vassakāra is typical of the Buddhist attitude to authority: "We do not lack a refuge, O *Brāhman*, we have one refuge: the *Dhamma*."³ The Buddha himself is said to have refused to appoint Devadatta as the leader of the *saṅgha* saying: "Devadatta, I would not hand over the *saṅgha* even to Sāriputta and Moggallāna. How then could I to you, a wretched one to be vomited like spittle."⁴

¹ "Attadīpā viharatha anaññasaraṇā attasaraṇā Dhammadīpā Dhammasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā." (D. II. 100, III. 77).

² D. II. 154; In the *Dhammapada*, verse 73, a *bhikkhu* who aspires to leadership of the *saṅgha* is called a fool. At the Council of Vesālī one of the ten points of controversy was whether it was allowable "thinking, 'This is habitually done by my preceptor (*ācariya*), this is habitually done by my teacher (*upajjhāya*)', to conduct oneself according to that." Revata replies that sometimes it is allowable, sometimes not: cf. CV, XII, 1, 10. Even in the *Theravāda*, therefore, in which the authority of the elders (*theras*) was greater than in the other schools, it was neither always necessary nor sometimes even permissible to follow one's superiors.

³ M. III. 9.

⁴ Cv. VII. 3, 1.

Another significant episode is that of Purāṇa. This aged *bhikkhu* refused to submit to what had been agreed upon at the First Council at Rājagaha. "Your reverences," he is reported to have said, "well chanted by the elders are *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*, but in that way that I heard it in the Lord's presence, that I received it in his presence, in that same way will I bear it in mind."¹

To overcome this complete absence of a legislative authority the doctrine of the *buddhavacana* (proclamation by the Buddha) came into being. The only Teacher (*satthā*), and therefore, the only legislative authority, recognized is the Buddha, and after his death, the *Dhamma* that he preached. One of the last saying of the Buddha prior to his *parinibbāṇa* as recorded in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* is:

"It may be, Ānanda, that in some of you the thought may arise, 'The word of the Master is ended, we have no Teacher more!' But it is not thus, Ānanda, that you should regard it. The *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya* which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them after I am gone, be the Teacher to you."²

Accordingly, it was supposed that all the laws of the *Vinaya*, as no doubt all the *Suttas*, were directly promulgated by the Buddha himself. As Sukumar Dutt points out, "This Buddha, the promulgator of laws, is not any historical personage, but only the conceptual embodiment of the formal sources of all Buddhist laws and doctrines."³

¹ Cv. XI. 1, 11. *Purāṇa* repeats almost verbatim the first *mahāpadesa*, D. II. 124.

² D. I. 154.

³ Sukumar Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, p. 22.

The *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*¹ gives four secondary sources of *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* that are called *mahāpadesa*. We must insist that these are not legislative authorities, just as they are not the originators of the *Dhamma*. They are four sources of testimony whereby a particular *saṅgha* is able to discover the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya* rising from their original and only source, the Buddha. The four *mahādesas* are:

(1) The testimony of a *bhikkhu* is that he has heard an article of the *Dhamma* or a rule of the *Vinaya* from the mouth of the Buddha himself.

(2) The testimony of a *bhikkhu* is that he has heard it from the *saṅgha* containing elders.

(3) The testimony of a *bhikkhu* is that he has heard it from a group of learned and wise elders (*theras*).

(4) The testimony of a *bhikkhu* is that he has heard it from just one learned and wise elder.

What is most evident from the wording of the text is that all these sources are taken as mere testimony. They merely state that some persons worthy of trust and respect consider a certain point to be part of the *Dhamma* or the *Vinaya* preached by the Buddha.

However, according to the same text, this testimony can be accepted as authentic only if in comparing it with the *Sutta* and the *Vinaya* (no doubt primitive collections that formed the nucleus of our *Sutta* and *Vinaya Piṭakas*) no contradiction is found. In fact, when such a testimony is accepted, the doctrine or the rule is referred back to the

¹ D. II. 124-126.

Buddha: "Truly this is the word of the Blessed One. It has been well grasped by this *bhikkhu*."¹

A word here on the nature of the *Vinaya* laws, the *khandhaka* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* attaches episodes, some evidently invented for the purpose, to the various rules and their subsequent modifications. The Buddha is thus seen to promulgate laws not in general terms but as the real outcome of his judgement on a particular case or issue at hand.

The material sources of the *Vinaya* rules are many, but it could safely be assumed that they were all connected with the development and organization of monastic living. Practical difficulties of common living must necessarily give birth to a code of regulations to be followed by individual members. The way in which these rules are put forward in the *khandhaka* shows that practical needs were at the root of most of the rules and their progressive emendations.

IV. 1. 3. The Position of *Vinaya* in *Pāli Tipiṭaka*

Vinaya has been recognized from ancient times to be so important a component of Buddhist texts that in the first period of Buddhism it was given the same position as *Dhamma* (*Dhamma* and *Vinaya*), and in the next was included in the *Tipiṭaka* (three baskets) or the complete holy texts of Buddhism in the order of *Sutta*, *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma*. In fact, from very ancient times *Vinaya* has been given so great regard that at one time it was even put first in the order of the *Tipiṭaka*, *Sutta* being placed next and *Abhidhamma* last, it being believed that *Vinaya* was *āyu* (life) or

¹ D. II. 124.

the very life of Buddhism and as long as it was observed the true religion would live, but if it was ignored the true religion would perish.¹

In such ways, *Vinaya* being mainly inhibitions concerning the daily life of priests and priestesses, we have to see why were and what made such prohibitions necessary. In other words, we have to investigate the condition of society or background existing at the time it appeared which made its institution imperative. It would be a great mistake, were one, without paying due attention to the causes crime place and men, that necessitated the institution of it, to conclude that only because the Buddha had instituted it, it should be strictly and literally observed.

IV. 1. 4. The *Pāli Tipiṭaka*

IV. 1. 4. 1. The *Vinaya Piṭaka*

The *Vinaya Piṭaka* is of very great importance as far as the religious concept is concerned. If it is called the constitution of the Buddhist *saṅgha*, the *Vinaya* consists chiefly of the rules and regulations for the life and behaviour of the Buddhist *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhuniṣ*. It contains mainly moral instructions, so it is known as ‘Basket of the discipline of the order. It can be seen that the *Vinaya* is the life of Siddhatthas Buddha's discourses and the *Vinaya* is the main path to attain *nibbāna*.

The *Vinaya* which is a part of the system of training for the Buddhist disciple is a subject of absorbing interest not only for the study of Buddhist monasticism but also for the study of Buddhism as a whole. This is particularly true of *Theravāda* Buddhism where the practice of monastic life as a means of attaining the religious goal is held in great esteem.

¹ Harcharan Singh Sobti (ed.), *Mirror of Buddhism (Based on Pāli Sources)*, p. 272.

The *Vinaya* texts contain in detail and in length the great training rules which govern the *pabbajita*'s life. In the Great section of *Mahāvagga* I, we are told that:

“As to great matters in the *Vinaya*, to bringing ease to the well-behaved

both in restraints of evil desires and in strivings for conscientiousness.

And also bearing in mind the instruction which is within the range of the all-knowing conqueror,

in a realm which has no other, in peace from bondage, in what is well laid down, in that which has no doubt.”¹

The *Vinaya Piṭaka* is made up of rules of discipline laid down for regulating the conduct of the Buddha's disciples who have been admitted as *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhuṇīs* into the *saṅgha*. These rules embody authoritative injunctions of the Buddha on modes of conduct and restraints on both physical and verbal actions. They deal with transgressions of discipline, and with various categories of restraints and admonitions in accordance with the nature of the offence.²

The *Vinaya* has two main sections, called *Sutta-vibhaṅga* and *Khandhaka*, along with a third and probably later appendix called *Parivāra*.³

(1) The *Sutta-vibhaṅga* consists of two books namely, *Pārājika Pāli* and *Pācittiya Pāli*.

¹ Vin. I. 98.

² U Ko Lay, *Guide to Tipiṭaka*, p. 5.

³ T. W. Rhys Davids, *History of Indian Buddhism*, p. 42.

a. *Pārājika Pāli*

Pārājika Pāli which is Book I of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* gives an elaborate explanation of the important rules of discipline concerning *Pārājika* and *Saṅghādisesa*, as well as *Aniyata* and *Nissaggiya* which are minor offences.

b. *Pācittiya Pāli*

The *Pācittiya Pāli* which is Book II of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* deals with the remaining sets of rules for the *bhikkhus*, namely, the *pācittiya*, the *pāṭidesaniya*, *sekhiya*, *adhikaraṇasamatha* and the corresponding disciplinary rules for the *bhikkhuṇīs*. Although it is called in *Pāli* just *pācittiya*, it has the distinctive name of '*suddha pācittiya*', ordinary *Pācittiya*, to distinguish it from *nissaggiya pācittiya*, described above.

In brief, The *Sutta-vibhaṅga* contains the *pātimokkha*, which is the basic list of rules for monks (227 rules) and nuns (311 rules), embedded in a text made up of stories, particularly of the circumstances that led to the Buddha's promulgation of each rule, and an old word-by-word commentary on each rule. The *pātimokkha* itself is recited in an important monastic ceremony which takes place on the days of the full and new moon, called *uposatha*.

(2) The *Khandhaka* has two parts, the *Mahāvagga* and *Cullavagga*, which contain a variety of materials arranged thematically, including parts of the Buddha's biography, various rules and observances (such as "On Robe Material" and "On Medicines"), stories of monks in different

areas, and accounts of the founding of the nuns' Order and of the first two Councils.¹

a. *Mahāvagga Pāli*

Mahāvagga made up of ten sections known as *khandhakas*, opens with an historical account of how the Buddha attained Supreme Enlightenment at the foot of the Bodhi Tree, how he discovered the famous law of Dependent Origination, how he gave his first sermon to the Group of Five *bhikkhus* on the discovery of the Four Noble Truths, namely, the great Discourse on The Turning of the Wheel of *Dhamma*, (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*).² This is followed by another great discourse, the *Anattalakkhana Sutta*. These two *suttas* may be described as the Compendium of the Teaching of the Buddha.

The first section continues to describe how young men of good families like Yasa sought refuge in him as a Buddha and embraced his Teaching, how the Buddha embarked upon the unique mission of spreading the *Dhamma* "for the welfare and happiness of the many" when he had collected round him sixty disciples who were well established in the *Dhamma* and had become *Arahants*, how he began to establish the *saṅgha* to serve as a living example of the Truth he preached; and how his famous disciples like Sāriputta, Moggallāna, *Mahā* Kassapa, Ānanda, Upāli, Aṅgulimāla became members of the *saṅgha*. The same section then deals with the rules for formal admission to the *saṅgha* (*upasampadā*), giving precise conditions to be fulfilled before any person can gain admission to the Order and the procedure to be followed for each admission.

¹ H. Saddhatissa, *Buddhist Ethics*, p. 75.

² Vin. I. 10-4; S. V. 420-3.

Mahāvagga deals further with procedures for an *uposatha* meeting, the assembly of the *saṅgha* on every full moon day and on the fourteenth or fifteenth waning day of the lunar month when *pātimokkha*, a summary of the *Vinaya* rules, is recited. Then there are rules to be observed for rainy retreat (*vassa*) during the rainy season as well as those for the formal ceremony of *pavāraṇā*¹ concluding the rainy retreat, in which a *bhikkhu* invites criticism from his brethren in respect of what has been seen, heard or suspected about his conduct.

There are also rules concerning sick *bhikkhus*, the use of leather for footwear and furniture, materials for robes, and those concerning medicine and food. A separate section deals with the *kaṭhina* ceremonies where annual making and offering of robes take place.

b. *Cullavagga Pāli*

Cullavagga Pāli which is Book IV of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* continues to deal with more rules and procedures for institutional acts or functions known as *saṅghakamma*. The twelve sections in this book deal with rules for offences such as *saṅghādisesa* that come before the *saṅgha*, rules for observance of penances such as *parivāsā* and *mānatta* and rules for reinstatement of a *bhikkhu*. There are also miscellaneous rules concerning bathing, dress, dwellings and furniture and those dealing with treatment of visiting *bhikkhus*, and duties of tutors and novices. Some of the important enactments are concerned with *tajjanīya kamma*, formal act of censure by the *saṅgha* taken against those *bhikkhus* who cause strife, quarrels, disputes, who associate familiarly with lay people and who speak in dispraise of the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Saṅgha*;

¹ *Pavāraṇā*: Invitation, a ceremony at the rainy retreat. (Vin. I. 155-178).

ukkhepanīya kamma, formal act of suspension to be taken against those who having committed an offence do not want to admit it; and *pakāsanīya kamma* was taken against Devadatta announcing publicly that 'Whatever Devadatta does by deed or word, should be seen as Devadatta's own and has nothing to do with the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Saṅgha*."¹ The account of this action is followed by the story of Devadatta's three attempts on the life of the Buddha and the schism caused by Devadatta among the *saṅgha*.²

There is, in section ten, the story of how Mahāpajāpatī, the Buddha's foster mother, requested admission into the *saṅgha*,³ how the Buddha refused permission at first, and how he finally agreed to the request because of Ānanda's entreaties on her behalf.

The last two sections describe two important events of historical interest, namely, the holding of the first Council at Rājagaha and of the second Council at Vesālī.

c. *Parivāra Pāli*

Parivāra Pāli which is Book V and the last book of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* serves as a kind of manual. It is compiled in the form of a catechism, enabling the reader to make an analytical survey of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. All the rules, official acts, and other matters of the *Vinaya* are classified under separate categories according to subjects dealt with.

Parivāra explains how rules of the *saṅgha* are drawn up to regulate the conduct of the *bhikkhus* as well as the administrative affairs of the *saṅgha*. Precise procedures are prescribed for settling of disputes and

¹ Vin. II. 189ff.

² Vin. II. 184- 202.

³ Vin. II. 253; A. IV. 274.

handling matters of jurisprudence, for formation of *saṅgha* courts and appointment of well-qualified *saṅgha* judges. It lays down how *saṅgha Vinicchaya* Committee, the *saṅgha* court, is to be constituted with a body of learned *Vinayadharas*, experts in *Vinaya* rules, to hear and decide all kinds of monastic disputes.

In brief, the *Parivāra Pāli* provides general principles and guidance in the spirit of which all the *saṅgha Vinicchaya* proceedings are to be conducted for settlement of monastic disputes.¹

IV. 1. 4. 2. The *Sutta Piṭaka*

The *Suttas* are the most important literary aspects of the Buddhist literature. The *Sutta Piṭaka* is said to be the primary source for the discourses of the Buddha. Prof. Winternitz writes, “Just as the *Vinaya Piṭaka* is our best source for the *saṅgha*, i. e. the regulations of the ancient Buddhist order and life of the monks, so the *Sutta Piṭaka* is our most reliable source of the *Dhamma*, i. e. the religion of the Buddha and His earliest disciples.”²

The *Sutta Piṭaka* consists of five *Nikāyas*. The first *Nikāya* is referred to as *Dīgha Nikāya* which is a collection of long discourses on important topics like the Four Noble Truths etc. The second *Nikāya* is known as *Majjhima Nikāya* which is a collection of middle length discourses. The third *Nikāya* is *Aṅguttara Nikāya* which is a collection of *suttas* or dialogues in a numerical order. The fourth one is *Samyutta Nikāya* which is a collection of *suttas* thematically. The fifth *Nikāya* is known as *Khuddaka Nikāya* which is a collection of miscellaneous works.

¹ U Ko Lay, *Guide to Tipiṭaka*, p. 18.

² M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. 2, p.34.

IV. 1. 4. 3. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*

Abhidhamma Piṭaka is the third great division of the *Piṭaka*. It is a huge collection of systematically arranged, tabulated and classified doctrines of the Buddha, representing the quintessence of this teaching. *Abhidhamma* means higher teaching or special teaching; it is unique in its analytical approach, immensity of scope and support for one's liberation. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is made up of seven massive treatises, namely:

(1) *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*: Containing detailed enumeration of all phenomena with an analysis of consciousness (*citta*) and its concomitant mental factors (*cetasikas*).

(2) *Vibhaṅga*: Consisting of eighteen separate sections on analysis of phenomena quite distinct from that of *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*.

(3) *Dhātukathā*: A small treatise written in the form of a catechism, discussing all phenomena of existence with reference to the three categories, *khandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu*.

(4) *Puggalapaññatti*: A small treatise giving a description of various types of individuals according to their stage of achievement along the path.

(5) *Kathāvatthu*: A compilation by the Venerable Moggaliputta, the presiding *thera* of the Third Great Synod in which he discusses and refutes doctrines of other schools in order to uproot all points of controversy on the Buddha *Dhamma*.

(6) *Yamaka*: Regarded as a treatise on applied logic in which analytical procedure is arranged in pairs.

(7) *Paṭṭhāna*: A gigantic treatise which together with *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, the first book, constitutes the quintessence of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. It is a minutely detailed study of the doctrine of conditionality, based on twenty-four *paccayas*, conditions or relations.¹

The Buddha observed the suffering of human beings and set out to find the way of liberation. Through meditation, he attained enlightenment. Spent more than twenty-six centuries, He was the embodiment of all the moralities. He preached during his successful and eventful ministry of forty-five years. He translated all his words into action in daily life. Therefore, the Buddha's morality is the most perfect which the world has ever known. To fully understand morality, the next portion will discuss it comprehensively.

IV. 2. The Understanding of Morality (*Sīla*)

IV. 2. 1. Significance

The ultimate goal of Buddhism is liberation, realization of *nibbāna*. Liberation is to escape the bondage of suffering and *saṃsāra*.² During forty-five years preaching of *Dhamma*, the Buddha only taught to His disciples how to realize the Truth. The practicing of *Dhamma* can lead an ordinary man from the incomplete known to the supreme known, that is the ultimate insight. In Buddhism, morality (*sīla*) is one of very important factors which leads to liberation. Morality is rather a psycho-ethical discipline entirely devoted to highlighting the moral and immoral states, exhibiting their inseparable link with the actions, resultants and thereby appearance of beings in various forms in different states of existence. It is

¹ U Ko Lay, *Guide to Tipiṭaka*, p. 141.

² Transmigration, see Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 13, p. 56.

contained in several discourses of the Buddha that is the path of practicing to purify the mind.

It can be said that, morality is the most precious jewel for the world to put on and leads to *nibbāna* which is free from suffering. On a certain occasion staying near Sāvattthī at Jeta Grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's Park, the Buddha replied to the Venerable Ānanda the significance and profit of morality thus:

- (1) Good conduct has freedom from remorse as object and profit;
- (2) Freedom from remorse has joy;
- (3) Joy has rapture;
- (3) Rapture is calm;
- (4) Calm has happiness;
- (5) Happiness has concentration;
- (6) Concentration has seeing things as they are really are;
- (7) Seeing things as they really are has revulsion and fading of interest;
- (8) Revulsion and fading of interest have release by knowing and seeing as their object and profit. So, good conduct leads gradually up to the summit, the *nibbāna*.¹

The significance of *sīla* as the foundation of the Buddhist Path of liberation is highlighted. In two verses of the *Sagātakavagga* of the *Samyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha's response to a question posed by a deity who inquired about the person who is competent to escape the internal

¹ A. V. 1.

and external tangle in which living beings are enmeshed: "There are tangles within and there are tangles without. Living beings are tangled by tangles. I question thee, Gotama, who would disentangle this tangle."¹ Then the Buddha replied: "An insightful person, an ardent *bhikkhu*, having established himself in *sīla* and developing the mind and insight shall disentangle this tangle."²

As well as the significance of *sīla* as the preliminary stage the foundation of the Buddhist goal of moral perfection are contained in many contexts in the *Pāli* canonical scriptures. In his path, a disciple is first advised to cultivate *sīla* so that he could then proceed with greater facility to the other two stages consisting of concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*).³

And the same *Sutta*, the Buddha encourages: "Come you, monk, be of moral habit, live controlled by the control of the obligations endowed with (right) behaviour and pasture, seeing peril in the slightest faults and, undertaking them, train yourself in the rules of training."⁴

The Buddha also recognized the significant role of *sīla* as a means to an end. *Sīla* was classed among other useful means to achieve the ultimate goal such as a view (*diṭṭhi*), hearing from a sacred tradition (*suti*), experience (*muti*), knowledge (*ñāṇa*) and vows (*vata*). The Buddha observed that according to him, purity is not claimed either on account of them or in the absence of them:

"One says that purity is not by view, by learning, by knowledge, or even by virtuous conduct and vows, Māgandiya, said the Blessed

¹ S. I. 13.

² S. I. 13.

³ M. III. 2.

⁴ M. III. 2.

One. 'Not by absence of view, of learning, of knowledge, of virtuous conduct, or vows, not by that either. And discarding these, without grasping, calmed, not dependent, one would not long for existence."¹

The *Niddesa* explanation of this statement makes it clear that what the Buddha intended to convey was that *sīla* and the rest are necessary as means to an end but are not final ends in themselves.² This does not, however, mean that a person was expected to abandon *sīla* after attaining the goal. After attaining the goal, a person becomes one who is endowed with *sīla* (*sīlavā*) because of the spontaneous nature of his behaviour, but is not be obsessed with *sīla* (*na ca sīlamayo*).³

There are many passages in the Canon that draw attention to the psychological impact of the perfection of *sīla* and the ensuing process of progression in the path. The most obvious psychological consequence of perfection in *sīla* is considered to be the attainment of freedom from regret or remorse. A person who is perfect in *sīla* does not have to make any resolve to be free from remorse or regret. Freedom from remorse or regret comes as a spontaneous or natural product of perfection in *sīla*. It also sets in motion a psychological process beginning with a refined sense of delight (*pāmojja*) followed successively by joy (*pīti*), relaxation of one's entire being (*kāyo passambhati*), the experience of a sense of well being (*sukhaṃ vedeti*) and the attainment of mental composure (*cittaṃ samādhīyati*).⁴ On the other hand, a person who is at fault with regard to *sīla* has destroyed the very support or foundation of right

¹ Sn. v839.

² Nid. I. 187.

³ M. II. 27.

⁴ A. V. 2-3.

composure of the mind.¹ Whenever a person reflects on one's own perfection in *sīla*, his mind is not overwhelmed by the roots of evil consisting of greed, hatred and delusion. As a consequence, he experiences a sense of spiritual delight and joy conducive to the attainment of mental composure.² *Sīla* promotes a sense of happiness derived from a clear conscience and such happiness is referred to in the *Suttas* as *anavajjasukha*.³ *Sīla* helps the Buddhist practitioner to overcome the psychological tensions resulting from rough and unrefined patterns of behaviour. A mind affected by such tensions can never settle down to attain the degree of mental composure that is necessary to cultivate insight (*paññā*).

IV. 2. 2. Meaning of Morality

The term *sīla*, literally means habit, custom, usage, natural or acquired way of living or acting, character or behaviour.⁴ As an adjective, it means good disposition, good character, good conduct, morality or virtue, more precisely speaking.⁵ This is what is meant by the term '*susīla*'; however, even without the prefix '*su*', '*sīla*' conventionally means good conduct or morality. Therefore, the English word morality is used to translate the *Pāli* term *sīla*, although the Buddhist term contains its own particular connotations. Morality (*sīla*) is the state of volition and mind manifested in right action and right speech, and not merely the external bodily and verbal manifestations, which have to be considered only as physical phenomena.

¹ A. III. 19.

² A. III. 286, I. 219.

³ D. I. 70.

⁴ Pandit Ishwar Chandra (ed.), *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Vol. I, p. 1576.

⁵ T. W. Rhys Davids & William Stede (eds.), *Pāli English Dictionary*, p. 712.

Moreover, morality is not as it may appear from the negative expressions in the *Suttas* (such as “abstaining” from killing, stealing, etc.), something negative or passive, consisting merely in “not producing evil manifestations.” It is, quite to the contrary, the intentional restraint based on the simultaneous arising of a noble state of volition and mind.

The word morality denotes a state of normalcy, a condition which is basically unqualified and unadulterated. When one practices morality, one returns to one's own basic goodness, the original state of normalcy, unperturbed and unmodified. Killing a human being, for instance, is not basically human nature; if it were, human beings would have ceased to exist a long time ago. A person commits an act of killing because he or she is blinded by greed, rage or hatred. Such negative qualities as anger, hatred, greed, ill will, and jealousy are factors that alter people's nature and make them into something other than their true self. To practice morality is thus to train in preserving one's true nature, not allowing it to be modified or overpowered by negative forces.

This definition points to the objective of Buddhist morality rather than to the practice itself, but it does give us an idea of the underlying philosophy behind the training, as well as how the Buddhist moral precepts should be followed. These precepts are a means to an end, they are observed for a specific objective.

IV. 2. 3. The Promulgation of the Morality

IV. 2. 3. 1. The Request of the Venerable Sāriputta

In the Buddha's life, there was neither injunction nor rule concerning *Pārājika* and *saṅghādisesa* offences. The members of the *saṅgha* of the early days were all *Ariyas*, the least advanced of whom was a stream-

winner (*sotāpattimagga*), one who had attained the first *Magga* and Fruition,¹ and there was no need for prescribing rules relating to grave offences. But in the thought of the Venerable Sāriputta, in order that this *Brāhma*-life may persist and last long, he required the Buddha make known *pātimokkha* for the *saṅgha*: "It is the right time, lord, it is the right time, well-farer (*Sugata*), at which the lord should make known the course of training for disciples and should appoint the *pātimokkha*."² The Buddha rejected what the Venerable Sāriputta suggested and said to him as below:

"Wait, Sāriputta, wait, Sāriputta. The *Tathāgata* will know the right time for that. The teacher does not make known, Sāriputta, the course of training for disciples, or appoint the *pātimokkha* until some conditions causing the cankers appear here in the Order. And as soon, Sāriputta, as some conditions causing the cankers appear here in the Order, then the teacher makes known the course of training for disciples, he appoints the *pātimokkha* in order to ward off those conditions causing the cankers... Some conditions, Sāriputta, causing the cankers do not so much as appear here in the Order until the Order has attained great learning. And as soon, Sāriputta, as the Order has attained great learning, then some conditions causing the cankers appear here in the Order. Hence the teacher makes known the course of training for disciples, and appoints the *pātimokkha* in order to ward off those conditions causing the cankers."³

¹ See Vbh. 335.

² Vin. III. 9.

³ Vin. III. 9-10; cf. M. I. 445.

IV. 2. 3. 2. The Cause of Promulgation of *Pātimokkha*

As the years went by, the *saṅgha* grew in strength. Undesirable elements not having the purest of motives but attracted only by the fame and gain of the *bhikkhus* began to get into the Buddha's *saṅgha*. Some twenty years after the founding of the *saṅgha*, it became necessary to form rules related to grave offences.¹ It was through *bhikkhu* Sudinna², a native of Kalandaka Village, near Vesālī, who committed the offence of having sexual intercourse with his ex-wife, that the first *pārājika* rule came to be promulgated. It was laid down to deter *bhikkhus* from indulging in sexual intercourse. So the Buddha laid down the training precepts after His twenty year *vassas* (retreat rainy season).³ But He did not lay down *Vinaya* without any reason. Only when there any reason to lay down *Vinaya* rules, the Buddha laid down them. If not so, he would never lay down *Vinaya* rules. When such a grave cause had arisen for which the laying down of a prohibitory rule became necessary, the Buddha convened an assembly of the *bhikkhus*. It was only after questioning the *bhikkhu* concerned and after the undesirability of committing such an offence had been made clear that a certain rule was laid down in order to prevent future lapses of similar nature. The Buddha also followed the precedence set by earlier Buddhas. Using his supernormal powers, he reflected on what rules the earlier Buddhas would lay down under certain given conditions. Then he adopted similar regulations to meet the situation that had arisen in his time.

¹ Cf. Nārada Thera, *The Buddha and His Teachings*, p. 272.

² Vin. III. 11-21 (The Sudinna recital).

³ Vin. III. 10; S. V. 152.

Disciplining rules is the life of the teachings of the Buddha. If *Vinaya* rules prolong, the teachings of the Buddha would prolong. So the Buddha laid down the *Vinaya* rules for the disciples on ten reasons:

- (1) *Saṅghasutṭhūtāya* (For the welfare of the Order).
- (2) *Saṅghaphāsutāya* (For happiness of Monks).
- (3) *Dummaṅgūnaṃ puggalānaṃ niggahāya* (For the punishment of the unvirtuous).
- (4) *Pesalānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ phāsuvihārāya* (For the ease of well-behaved monks).
- (5) *Diṭṭhadhammikānaṃ āsavānaṃ saṃvarāya* (For the restraint the present defilements).
- (6) *Samparāyikānaṃ āsavāṃ paṭighātāya* (For the prevention the future defilements).
- (7) *Appasannānaṃ pasādāya* (For the benefit of non-believers)
- (8) *Pasannānaṃ bhiyyobhāvāya* (For the increase in the number of believers).
- (9) *Saddhammaṭṭhitiyā* (For the prolongation the true *Dhamma*).
- (10) *Vinayānuggahayā* (For the prolongation *Vinaya* rules).¹

Eight out of the ten reasons given here deal with the relationship which is to exist between monks inside the Community, as well as between monks and society outside the Community. Only two of these reasons, numbers five and six, specifically concern the individual issue of destroying defilements. The Community's regulations were thus for the

¹ Vin. III. 21, V. 2, 223; A. I. 98.

most part motivated by the desire to safeguard the place of monks both in the Community and in the wider social and religious environment. Thus the Buddha laid the ten kinds of benefit for the welfare of monks. Those who observe the *Vinaya* rules will surely bear the aforesaid ten kinds of benefit.

IV. 2. 4. The Characteristic of Morality

As regards the characteristic of morality, the Buddhaghosa states that as visibility is the characteristic mark of the different varieties of form such like indigo, yellow, etc., so what has been told about being virtuous by way of the right placing of bodily actions and the like, and of the establishment of moral states, is the characteristic mark of the different varieties, such as, volition, etc.¹ He further says that morality has, as its manifestation, purity, purity of body, speech and mind.²

A fourfold exposition is again seen in the commentarial literature. It is in the form of indicating its characteristics, functions, manifestation and proximate cause. Its basic characteristics (*lakḥaṇa*) are to become the ground of all the moral states. It provides them a base and grants support for their sustenance (*upadhāraṇa*). Its function (*rasa*) is in the way of putting a stop of the physical and vocal misdeeds (*dussilya-viddhasantā*) and helps in developing of a quality of faultlessness (*anavajja-guṇa*). The manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*) of *sīla* as the kind of purity is stated thus: "Bodily purity, verbal purity, mental purity;"³ it is manifested; it comes to be apprehended as a pure state. But conscience

¹ "Yathā hi nīlapītādibhedena anekadhā bhinnassāpi rūpāyanassa sanidassanattaṃ lakkhaṇaṃ, nīladibhedena bhinnassāpi sanidassanābhavantikkamanato, tathā sīlassa cetanādibhedena anekadhā bhinnassāpi. Yad etaṃ kāyakammā-dīnaṃ samādhānavasena kusalanāṃ ca dhammānaṃ paṭiṭṭhāna vasena vuttaṃ sīlānaṃ, tad eva lakkhaṇaṃ, cetanādibhedena bhinnassāpi samādhānapaṭiṭṭhāna-bhāvanatikkamananto." (Vism. 8).

² Vism. 9.

³ A. I. 271.

and shame are said by those who know to be its proximate cause; its near reason, is the meaning. For when conscience and shame are in existence, virtue arises and persists; and when they are not, it neither arises nor persists.¹ Literally, the word *Sīla* is integrated in three ways, namely as a foundation-stone (*sīlana-atthena*), calming down (*sītala atthena*) and acting as fore-runner (*sira-atthena*).²

(1) *Sīla* in the first sense (*sīlana*) is an ethically symbolical expression. As a foundation stone, it symbolizes the massiveness of the building to be developed thereupon, so also it symbolically expresses the sense of sound and un-shakable nature of virtuous life to be developed establishing in it. It preserves the sense of the foot of that mountain of massive stone which does not shake even after the strongest push of the storm: "*Selo yathā ekaghano, vātena na samīrati*".

(2) The second sense as, "calming down" (*sītala*) refers to the intrinsic nature of *sīla* in process of its functioning. The three kinds of blazing fire, which burn a man internally, are the fire of attachment (*rāga-aggi*), fire of antipathy (*dosa-aggi*) and the fire of ignorance (*moha-aggi*). All the undesirable and ignoble activities which find association with a man, are generated by the piercing heat caused by them. *Sīla* minimises and calms down such heat like the Ganges-water does to the external burning sensation.

(3) Thirdly, it functions as the fore-runner (*sira*) or the supreme force. Whenever, there is a desire to lead a virtuous life, *Sīla* comes the first. It prepares the mind in generating congenial atmosphere for inculcation of the moral principles. Hence, it is not possible without *sīla*,

¹ Vism. 9.

² Harcharan Singh Sobti (ed.), *Mirror of Buddhism: Based on Pāli Sources*, p. 294.

the virtuous life cannot proceed and be firmly established. In the sequence, it is emphatically remarked: "*Sāsane kulaputtānaṃ patiṭṭhā natthi yaṃ vinā.*"

The *Vinaya Piṭaka* and *Sutta Piṭaka* mentioned the eight strange and wonderful things as the characteristics and functions of *sīla*. The eight strange and wonderful things about the great ocean, from constantly having seen which *asuras*¹ delight in the great ocean.² In exactly the same way, there are eight strange and wonderful things from constantly having seen which monks delight in this *Dhamma* and discipline:

(1) As the great ocean deepens gradually, slopes gradually, shelves gradually with no abruptness like a precipice, even so, in the *Dhamma* and discipline there is a gradual training, a gradual doing, a gradual course, with no abruptness such as penetration of profound knowledge. And, in this *Dhamma* and discipline, there is a gradual training, a gradual doing, a gradual course with no abruptness such as penetration of profound knowledge.

(2) As the great ocean is stable and does not overflow its margins, even so, whatever rule of training has been laid down by the Buddha for His disciples, His disciples will not transgress it even for life's sake. And that His disciples will not transgress even for life's sake a rule of training laid down by the Buddha for His disciples.

(3) As the great ocean does not associate with a dead body, a corpse, but whatever dead body, corpse there may be in the great ocean, that it just quickly forces ashore and pushes on to the dry land, even so, whatever individual is of bad moral habit, of depraved character, of

¹ A class of mythical beings, not apparently here, as sometimes, shown as the enemies of the *devas*.

² Vin. II. 236; A. IV. 198.

impure and suspicious behaviour, of concealed actions, not a (true) recluse (although) pretending to be a (true) recluse, not a farer of the *Brāhma*-faring (although) pretending to be a farer of the *Brāhma*-faring, rotten within, filled with desire, filthy by nature - the Order does not live in communion with him, but having assembled quickly, suspends him; and although he is sitting in the midst of an Order of monks, yet he is far from the Order and the Order is far from him ... this monks.

(4) As those great rivers, that is to say the Gaṅgā, the Jumunā, the Aciravatī, the Sarabhū, the Mahī which, on reaching the great ocean, lose their former names and identities and are reckoned simply as the great ocean, even so, (members of) these four castes: noble, *brāhman*, merchant and low, having gone forth from home into homelessness in this *Dhamma* and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder (the Buddha), lose their former names and clans and are reckoned simply as recluses, sons of the Sakyans... this is the fourth strange and wonderful thing from constantly having seen which monks delight in the *Dhamma* and discipline.

(5) As those streams which in the world flow into the great ocean and those showers which fall into it from the sky, yet not by that is either the emptiness or the fullness of the great ocean affected, even so, even if many monks attain *nibbāna* in the *nibbāna*-condition in which no more groups are remaining, not by that is either the emptiness or the fullness of the *nibbāna*-condition affected ... this is the fifth strange and wonderful thing from constantly having seen which monks delight in the *Dhamma* and discipline.

(6) As the great ocean has one taste, the taste of salt, even so, does the *Dhamma* and discipline have one taste, the taste of freedom.

(7) As the great ocean has many treasures, divers treasures, these treasures are there, that is to say: pearl, crystal, lapis lazuli, shell, quartz, coral, silver, gold, ruby, cat's-eye-even so, monks, does the *Dhamma* and discipline have many treasures, divers treasures, these treasures are there, that is to say: the four arousings of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of psychic power, the five faculties, the seven links in awakening, the noble eightfold way ... this is the seventh strange and wonderful thing from constantly having seen which monks delight in this *Dhamma* and discipline.

(8) As the great ocean is the abode of great beings, these beings are there: *titis*, *titimālas*, *titimālas*, *asuras*, *nāgas*, *gandhabbas*, individualities a hundred *yojanas* (long) ... two hundred ... three hundred ... four hundred ... five hundred *yojanas* (long), even so, the *Dhamma* and discipline are the abodes of great beings, these beings are there: the stream-attainer (*sotāpanna*), the one going along to the realisation of the fruit of stream-attainment, the once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*), the one going along to the realisation of the fruit of once-returning, the not-returner (*anāgāmi*), the one going along to the realisation of the fruit of non-returning, the perfected one (*arahanta*)¹, the one going along to perfection. This is the eighth strange and wonderful things in this *Dhamma* and discipline from constantly having seen which monks delight in this *Dhamma* and discipline.²

¹ D. I. 229, III. 107, 277; S. V. 25, 405; A. III. 272, 441, IV. 274, 292, 373.

² Vin. II. 237; A. IV. 198-204, 206-208; Ud. 53-56.

IV. 2. 5. The Buddhist Morality

In Buddhism, the *upāsaka* or *upāsikā* is known as the *gahaṭṭha* (Buddhist laity)¹ who has firm faith in the Buddha and practices the Buddhist way of the life. The Buddhists are divided into two classes: the *pabbajita* (monk and nun) and *gahaṭṭha* (*upāsaka* and *upāsikā*). Precepts in Buddhism are the base to reach ultimate goal, Enlightenment. There are different classes of precepts for Buddhists. Precepts, therefore, were a primary basis for the moral and spiritual development of both the *pabbajita*² and the *gahaṭṭha*³ of the *saṅgha*.⁴

The *pabbajitasīla* can be divided into five:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| (1) <i>Bhikkhusīla</i> : | 227 precepts |
| (2) <i>Bhikkhuṇīsīla</i> : | 311 precepts |
| (3) <i>Sikkhamānasīla</i> : ⁵ | 6 precepts |
| (4) <i>Sāmaṇerasīla</i> : ⁶ | 109 precepts |
| (5) <i>Sāmaṇerīsīla</i> : ⁷ | 10 precepts |

The *gahaṭṭhasīla* can be divided into four:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| (1) <i>Pañcasīla</i> : ⁸ | 5 precepts |
| (2) <i>Aṭṭhaṅgasīla</i> : ⁹ | 8 precepts |
| (3) <i>Navaṅgasīla</i> : ¹⁰ | 9 precepts |
| (4) <i>Ājīvaṭṭhamakasīla</i> : ¹¹ | 1 precept |

¹ See E. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism from Origins to the Śaka Era*, p. 54.

² Becoming a monk, cf. C. S. Upasak, *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, p. 137.

³ The Buddhist laity, the layman or householder.

⁴ See Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. II, p. 499.

⁵ Vin. IV. 319.

⁶ The male novice.

⁷ The female novice.

⁸ D. III. 235; A. III. 203; Vbh. 285.

⁹ A. IV. 248.

¹⁰ A. IV. 388.

¹¹ M. III. 289; Vism. 11.

IV. 2. 5. 1. The Morality for the Buddhist Laity (*Gahaṭṭha*)

IV. 2. 5. 1. 1. The Five Precepts (*Pañcasīla*)

The most commonly observed set of precepts followed by lay people are the ‘five precepts’ (properly, the ‘five virtues’, *pañcasīla*). The Five precepts form the actual practice of morality for the *gahaṭṭha*. They are the minimum ethical code, which are mandatory for all lay disciples. The *gahaṭṭhas* observe five precepts after taking the Three Refuges (*Tisarāṇaṃ*) at every Buddhist service or ceremony and are administered by a monk if one is present; otherwise the lay disciples can do it by themselves. It is usual for devout lay disciples to undertake these rules as part of their daily recitation. The basic ethical codes of *gahaṭṭhas* are as following:

(1) *Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*

I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living beings.

(2) *Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*

I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given.

(3) *Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*

I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct.

(4) *Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*

I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech.

(5) *Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*

I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness.¹

The words ‘*veramaṇīsikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*’ mean ‘abstinent training rule I undertake’ are shared by all five and shows that they are not commandments imposed externally but training rules or precepts which one takes upon oneself through one's initiative and endeavors to follow with awareness and understanding. The emphasis, here, as throughout the entire path, is on self-responsibility.

The five precepts are not given in the form of commands, but are training guidelines to help one live a life in which one is happy, without worries, and able to meditate well. Breaking one's *sīla* as pertains to sexual conduct introduces harmfulness towards one's practice or the practice of another person if it involves uncommitted relationship.²

IV. 2. 5. 1. 2. The Eight Precepts (*Aṭṭhasīla*)

As an extension of the usual five precepts, a set of eight precepts may be taken by lay people. These go beyond purely moral concerns-related to that which is, or may be, reprehensible by nature-to forms of self-discipline that reduce stimulating sense-inputs that disturb calm and concentration, and develop non-attachment.

The eight precepts are called the *aṭṭhasīla* or *uposathasīla*.³ Both the householders and the renunciation have the equal right of leading virtuous life, of course, the householders have some difficulties due to

¹ D. III. 235; A. III. 203, IV. 245-7; Vbh. 285.

² Peter Harvey (ed.), *Buddhism*, p. 195-196.

³ A. I. 212, II. 209, IV. 248.

variegated responsibilities. Sometimes, a householder finding himself well established in five moral precepts (*pañcasīla*), steps further and accepts three precepts in addition to those five. In such case, he follows eight precepts.

(6) *Vikālabhojanā veramaṇi sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*. (I observe the precept of abstaining from taking food after noonday).¹

(7) *Nacca-gīta-vādita-visūkadassana mālāgandha-vilepana-dhāraṇa- maṇḍana-vibhūsaṇaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi* (I observe the precept of abstaining from dancing, singing, music, unseemly shows, the use of garlands, perfumes, and things that tend to beautify, and adorn the person), and

(8) *Uccāsayanamahāsayanā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi* (I observe the precept of abstaining from using high and luxurious seats).²

Therefore, the difference between the eight and five precepts is firstly that the third precept is replaced by an undertaking to avoid *abrahmacariya*: ‘unchaste conduct’ or ‘conduct not of the holy life’, that is, sexual activity of any kind.

In the Southern tradition, the eight precepts are generally only taken by more pious people over forty: a few do so permanently, but more do so temporarily on some of the observance days (*uposathas*), while staying at a monastery for a day and a night, a practice which is also found in Chinese Buddhism. By taking extra precepts, lay people who are becoming less actively involved in the concerns of lay life undertake a discipline which approximates to that of monks.

¹ Vin. I. 83, IV. 274; D. I. 5; A. I. 212, II. 209; Sn. v400.

² A. I. 212, II. 209, IV. 248.

During special occasions, monastic retreats for lay followers, and such, a more stringent set of precepts is undertaken, usually for twenty-four hours, until dawn the following day. The eight precepts encourage further discipline and are modeled on the monastic code.

The three more precepts are connected with minimization of the desire of three senses, tongue, eye and nose and to inculcate and develop the attitude of "mere act only" and not indulging in or taking delight in the object etc.¹

The layman observing *aṭṭhasīla* must practise complete celibacy. A layman strictly observing the *uposathasīla* is confined to meditation and other religious performances in *vihāras*, woods, or separate apartments; for the period of observance he is dressed in the simplest of garments. But essentially, while observing *aṭṭhasīla* he must not live attached to his family since the observation constitutes a form of temporary renunciation.

IV. 2. 5. 1. 3. The Ten Precepts (*Dasasīla*)

The ten precepts or *dasasīla* are also called *dasa-sikkhāpada*. The Buddha specially laid down *dasasīla* for the laity and novices as well. Therefore, it shall be presented in the next *pabbajita* portion.

IV. 2. 5. 2. The Morality for the Monks (*Pabbajita*)

IV. 2. 5. 2. 1. The Morality for Novice

An extension beyond the eight precepts is found in the ten precepts. These are the same as the eight except that the seventh is split into its two parts, and there is the addition of an undertaking to 'abstain from accepting gold and silver'. While the difference seems a small one, in

¹ Harcharan Singh Sobti (ed.), *Mirror of Buddhism (Based on Pāli Sources)*, p. 299.

practice it is large, for the ten precepts are not taken temporarily, but only on a long term basis.¹ The extra precept precludes the actual handling of money, as in the case of monks. The ten precepts are those observed by novice monks. The ten precepts of the householder are seen as easier to maintain than those of novices as the lay person takes them individually, so that all are not broken if one is, whereas novices take them as a group.²

The *sāmaṇeras* (novice monks) observe the ten precepts, which are the basic precepts for monastic. The *sāmaṇeras* are means for those who just abandon the domestic life and living in the monastic order. They are the new entrants, technically called *sāmaṇera* (novice).³ The ten *sikkhāpadas* also laid down for the *sāmaṇerī* (a female novice of the *bhikkhū saṅgha*).

Hence, two more *sīlas* are added to the eight precepts (*aṭṭhasīla*) in which already stated. They are:

(9) *Uccāsayanamahāsayanā veramaṇī* (Abstention from the use of high couches and large couches) and,

(10) *Jātarūparajatapaṭiggahaṇā veramaṇī* (Abstention from accepting gold and silver).⁴

If any one of the training precepts except ten training precepts expellment (*dasa liṅga*) are committed by a novice, he will be made a punishment, that is, carrying water, carrying sand and cleaning of monastery etc.,. If he committes ten training precepts of expellment (*dasa liṅga*), he will have to disrobe. Besides, *dasasīla*, therefore, the Buddha

¹ B. J. Terweil, *Monks and Magic: An Analysis of Religious Ceremonies in Central Thailand*, p. 212.

² Tessa Bartholomeusz, "The Female Mendicant in Buddhist Sri Lanka" in *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*, Ed. by José Ignacio Cabezón, p. 73.

³ A novice of a monk; Vin. I. 82; also see C. S. Upasak, *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, p.231; T. W. Rhys Davids & William Stede (eds.), *Pāli-English Dictionary*, p. 704.

⁴ Vin. I. 83.

laid down 109 training precepts for the *sāmaṇera* and *sāmaṇerī* are as following:

- (1) Ten training precepts of expellment (*dasa liṅga*).
- (2) Ten training precepts of punishment (*dasa daṇḍas*).
- (3) Seventy-five training precepts (*sekhiya*) and
- (4) Fourteen kinds of duty (*cuddasakhandhakavatta*).¹

IV. 2. 5. 2. 2. The Morality for *Sikkhamāna*

In Buddhism, a *sikkhamānā* is a female novice (having crossed her *sāmaṇerī* stage) who is undergoing a training of two years² before her higher ordination (the *upasampadā*). During this period, she has to observe the following six precepts (*sikkhāpadas*). The *sikkhāpadas* are:

- (1) Abstention from killing (*Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*).
- (2) Abstention from stealing (*Adinnādānā veramaṇī*).
- (3) Abstention from unchastity (*Abrāhmacariyā veramaṇī*).
- (4) Abstention from falsehood (*Musāvādā veramaṇī*).
- (5) Abstention from intoxicants (*Surāmerayamjjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī*).
- (6) Abstention from taking meals after mid-day (*Vikālabhojanā veramaṇī*).³

The *upasampadā* or the higher ordination can only be conferred upon when the *sāmaṇerī* (female novice) completes her two full years as a *sikkhamānā* (unlike a *sāmaṇera* who can get his *upasampadā* without

¹ Vin. I. 84- 85, II. 207-230.

² Cf. The sixth of the eight in "Eight Important Rules", Vin. II. 255, IV. 52; I. B. Horner, *Women Under Primitive Buddhism: Laywomen and Almswomen*, p. 138ff.

³ Vin. IV. 319.

undergoing to any such probationary period). An offence of *pācittiya* is committed if the *bhikkhuṇīs* confer *upasampadā* upon a *sāmaṇerī* who has not completed her two years probationary period as *sikkhamānā*.¹

IV. 2. 5. 2. 3. The *Bhikkhu Pātimokkha* (*Bhikkhusīla*)

After *upasampadā*, one becomes a *bhikkhu* and as such one's life is governed by the complete set of rules which constitute the *pātimokkha*. The precise number of rules that make up the monk's *pātimokkha* varies; for the *Theravāda* there are 227 rules, for the *Mūlasarvātivāda* (followed by the Tibetans) there are 258, for the *Dhammaguptakas* (followed in East Asia) there are 250, but the basic structure of the rules and the individual rules involving serious offences are held in common.²

In principle, the rules simply elaborate a way of life based on keeping the ten precepts of the novice, distinguishing between serious and less serious breaches of these precepts. In this way, the rules fall into eight categories.

Four offences involve 'defeat' (*pārājika*), i.e. expulsion from the *saṅgha*: sexual intercourse, taking what is not given, killing another human being, and falsely laying claim to spiritual attainments of any sort.³

These four *pārājika* offences map out the theoretical basis of the monastic way of life: celibacy and reliance on the generosity of lay support. The failure to keep his vow of celibacy undermines one of the defining characteristics of the Buddhist monk: he has renounced the

¹ *Yā pana bhikkhuṇī dye yassāni chasu dhammesu asikkhitasikkhaṃ sikkhamānaṃ vuṭṭhāpeyya, pācittiyam.* (If any *bhikkhuṇī* should sponsor [for ordination] a trainee who has not trained for two years in the six rules, there is an offence entailing expiation), the rule no. 63, Vin. IV. 319; Pā. 184-185.

² See Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and their Contribution to Indian Culture*, p. 70.

³ Vin. III. 23, 46, 73, 91; Pā. 9, 11.

ordinary 'household' life of wife, children, and family; furthermore sexual abstinence is associated with channelling one's energies towards spiritual attainments. To seek to solve the problem of suffering by killing other human beings is the grossest manifestation of greed, hatred, and delusion. To take from society what is not freely given betrays the fundamental relationship of trust between the monk, who undertakes to live the life of the ascetic wanderer, and those who in good faith offer their material support. Since any monk thought to be spiritually accomplished is likely to become the object of lay admiration and even devotion, to lie about spiritual attainments equally betrays the trust of lay supporters.

The second category of rules comprises thirteen *saṅghādisesa* offences which are punishable by a period of probation involving loss of full status as a member of the *saṅgha*; these involve sexual impropriety of various sorts, as well as the building of certain types of dwelling, making false accusations, promoting schism in the *saṅgha*, refusing to accept the admonishments of the *saṅgha*, and corrupting families.¹ The thirteen *saṅghādisesas* are followed by two further rules concerning charges of possible sexual impropriety whose penalty is not fixed but must be determined by the *saṅgha* according to circumstances.

Next come thirty *nissaggiya* rules which mostly concern inappropriate use of robes, rugs, money, bowls, and medicines, 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", confess it, to a fellow *bhikkhu* or group of *bhikkhus*.²

¹ Vin. III. 112-184.

² Vin. III. 196-263.

A further ninety or ninety-two minor *pācittiya* rules prohibit various kinds of lying, physical violence, and abusive speech, as well as further regulating the use of the monk's requisites, and his conduct in a monastery or in the presence of women; breach of these rules only requires confession.¹

A further four miscellaneous offences merely require confession (*pāṭidesaniya*). The category of minor rules of training (*sekhiya*) varies from 66 to 113, depending on the recension of the *Vinaya*, and covers the general decorum and manners of a monk as he eats, walks, dresses and so forth. The *bhikkhu's pātimokkha* concludes with seven rules concerned with the settling of disputes. Traditionally, all members of the *saṅgha* in a given locality gather on the fortnightly *uposatha* days - the days of the new and full moon - to recite the rules that make up the *pātimokkha* and to confess any breaches.

IV. 2. 5. 2. 4. The *Bhikkhuṇī Pātimokkha*

The *bhikkhuṇī pātimokkha* contains 311 precepts, which have only seven classes, the same as above (the *bhikkhu pātimokkha*), except the *Aniyata*. Therefore, the list of rules for the *bhikkhuṇīs* is longer than that for the *bhikkhus*. The *bhikkhuṇīs* rules were drawn up on exactly the same lines as those for the *bhikkhus* with the exception of the two *Aniyata* rules which are not laid down for the *bhikkhuṇī* order.²

The *Garudhammā* (Eight Important Rules) were laid down by the Buddha to have been added to allow more acceptance of a monastic Order for *bhikkhuṇīs*. Hence, besides 311 rules are mentioned in the

¹ Vin. III. 188-194.

² See Chatsumarn Kabilsingh (tr.), *The Bhikkhuṇī Pātimokkha of the Six Schools*, p. 2.

seven categories above, *bhikkhuṇīs* must follow the 'Eight Important Rules'.

These are the training precepts laid down by the Buddha for *bhikkhuṇīs*. If a nun committed any one of the training precepts without the offences of defeat, she can amend for breaking *Vinaya* rules. But she committed any one of the eight offences of defeat, she will lose her nunhood. She cannot get nunhood again because of offence of defeat (*pārājika*).

IV. 2. 5. 3. The Moral Duties of a *Bhikkhu*

IV. 2. 5. 3. 1. *Pātimokkhasaṃvarasīla* (Disciplinary Observances)

A monk is required to be well-restrained according to the 227 disciplinary rules of the *pātimokkha*. He should also be discreet in his conduct and movements, i.e., he must not commit any wrong physically, either in carrying on the affairs of his daily life (*ācāra*), or in frequenting places (*gocara*) unfit for a Buddhist recluse. He must always be apprehensive of the commission of the slightest offence (*aṇumattesu vajjesu bhayadassāvī*) and in general be observant of all the moral precepts (*samādāya sikkhati sikkhāpadesu*).¹

IV. 2. 5. 3. 1. 1. Restrained with the *Pātimokkha*

A *bhikkhu* who has gone forth out of faith and is so styled because he sees fear in the round of rebirths (*saṃsāre bhayaṃ ikkhanatā*). Here *pātimokkha* is the virtue of the training precepts; for it frees (*mokkheti*) him who protects (*pāti*) it, guards it, it sets him free (*mocayati*) from the pains of the states of loss, etc., that is why it is called *pātimokkha*.

¹ Vism. 15; Vbh. 246-8.

'Restraint' is restraining; this is a term for bodily and verbal non-transgression.¹

IV. 2. 5. 3. 1. 2. Possessed of the Proper Conduct

There are proper conduct and improper conduct. The proper conduct is bodily non-transgression, verbal non-transgression, bodily and verbal non-transgression. The improper conduct is bodily transgression, verbal transgression, bodily and verbal transgression.²

IV. 2. 5. 3. 1. 3. Possessed of the Proper Resort

There are proper resort and improper resort. The improper resort is someone has prostitutes as resort, or he has widows, old maids, eunuchs, *bhikkhuṇīs*, or taverns as resort; or he dwells associated with kings, kings' ministers, sectarians, sectarians' disciples, in unbecoming association with laymen; or he cultivates, frequents, honours, such families as are faithless, untrusting, abusive and rude, who wish harm, wish ill, wish woe, wish no surcease of bondage, for *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhuṇīs*, for male and female devotees. The proper resort means that someone does not have prostitutes as resort ... or taverns as resort; he does not dwell associated with kings ... sectarians' disciples, in unbecoming association with laymen; he cultivates, frequents, honours, such families as are faithful and trusting, who are a solace, where the yellow cloth glows, where the breeze of sages blows, who wish good, wish well, wish joy, wish surcease of bondage, for *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhuṇīs*, for male and female devotees.³

¹ Vism. 17.

² Vism. 17.

³ Vism. 18-9; Vbh. 246-7.

IV. 2. 5. 3. 1. 4. Seeing Fear in the Slightest Fault

Seeing fear in the slightest fault and he trains himself by undertaking the precepts of training: One who has the habit (*sīla*) of seeing fear in faults of the minutest measure, of such kinds as unintentional contravening of a minor training rule of the *pātimokkha*, as an unprofitable thought. He trains himself by undertaking (*samādāya*) the precepts of training: whatever there is among the precepts of training to be trained in, in all that he trains by taking it up rightly (*sammā ādaya*).¹

IV. 2. 5. 3. 2. Indriyaṣaṃvarasīla (Restraint in Sense-organs)

The word "*indriya*" refers to the six senses operating in the process of day-to-day life with reference of their respective objects. They are the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. There are six respective objects as visible, audible, odorous, sapid, tangible and ideational object.

IV. 2. 5. 3. 3. Ājīvapārisuddhisīla (Food-observances)

The common *Pāli* expression for propriety in food as found in the *Piṭakas* is *bhojane mattaññu*, i.e., a *bhikkhu* should know the measure of his food, in other words, should exercise sufficient self-restraint with regard to his food. He must always remember that he takes food not for making his body good-looking but just for its maintenance in order to be able to fulfil his mission. His food is to be of such a type that he should not develop a taste for new sensations (*vedanam*) and at the same time get rid of the old ones.²

¹ Vism. 20.

² Vbh. 249.

IV. 2. 5. 3. 4. *Paccayasannissitasīla* (Restraint in Requisites)

After dealing with the likely transgressions that a monk may commit in course of his daily life, the Buddhaghosa dilates on what should be the aims and objects of monks in wearing robes, accepting alms for food, using seats and beds, or seeking medicaments. In short, it is meant that the whole attention of the monk should be fixed on his goal and he should remain unmindful of his worldly necessities except so far as they are required to keep him fit for reaching the goal.

IV. 2. 5. 3. 5. *Dhutaṅgas* (Ascetic Practices)

The Buddhaghosa, after thus dealing with the *sīlas* in a general way, passes on to the *dhutaṅgas*, the thirteen rigorous practices permitted to some monks. It will be apparent from what has been said above that, according to the Buddhists, purity is more mental than physical, and hence, in Buddhist ethics, emphasis has been laid more on mental than on physical discipline.¹ The monks, as a rule, were not required to undergo unnecessary physical discomforts except what was necessary for concentration of mind, i.e., a little food and cloth, a bare bed and seat, medicaments and a resting place.

IV. 3. The Importance of Morality

Morality should be practiced not only by monks but also by all lay people. But especially for a monk, even one who has a small offence, it is a stumbling-block to the four steps of *Jhāna*.² So, in the *Uposatha* Day, the *pātimokkha* is recited by an experienced and competent monk. When the monks listen and pay attention thus: "I will recite the *pātimokkha*

¹ In the M. I. 238, it is stated that the ascetic practices do not even lead to *kāyabhāvanā* (physical discipline) not to speak of *cittabhāvanā* (mental discipline).

² The four steps of *Jhāna*: *Paṭhamajhāna*, *duṭṭiyajhāna*, *tatiyajhāna* and *catutthajhāna* (M. I. 40).

(while) one and all of us present listen properly and pay attention to it. He for whom there may be an offence should reveal it. If there is no offence, you should become silent. By your becoming silent I shall thus know that the venerable ones are quite pure."¹ Thus, *sīla* is necessary to be practised by monks. Moreover, *sīla* is one of three factors² of training in Buddhist practice: "When the *Ariyan* virtue, the *Ariyan* concentration, the *Ariyan* wisdom and the *Ariyan* release are understood and penetrated, cut off is the craving for becoming, destroyed is the cord of becoming, there is now no more again of becoming."³

Through the aforesaid statements, we can see why morality should be observed. Furthermore, regarding morality, *Rathavinīta Sutta*⁴ states seven roles of morality thus: (1) *Sīlavisuddhi* (purification of morality); (2) *Cittavisuddhi* (purification of mind); (3) *Diṭṭhivisuddhi* (purification of view); (4) *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇavisuddhi* (purification by overcoming doubt); (5) *Maggāmaggañāṇadassanavisuddhi* (purification by knowledge and vision of path and not path); (6) *Paṭipadāñāṇadassanavisuddhi* (purification by knowledge and vision of way); (7) *Ñāṇadassanavisuddhi* (purification by knowledge and vision).⁵

Here, in *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, is another simile to indicate the importance of morality:

“Just as in the case of a tree, possessing branches and leaves, its shoots, its bark sapwood and core come to maturity. In the same way, in the moral and virtuous, right concentration perforce thrives; when there is right concentration, true knowledge and

¹ Vin. I. 103.

² Morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*).

³ A. II. 1; D. II. 84.

⁴ See the *Sutta* No. 24, M. I.

⁵ M. I. 147.

insight perforce thrive in one who has right concentration; when there is true knowledge and insight, aversion and dispassion perforce thrive in one who has true knowledge and insight; when there is aversion and dispassion, emancipated knowledge and insight perforce thrive in one who has aversion and dispassion.”¹

So if someone wants to purify his mind, the observance and practicing of *sīla* is the first thing. *Sīla* is the way to realize final liberation, *nibbāna*. Though one should live a hundred years, immoral and uncontrolled, yet better, indeed, is a single day's life of one who is moral and meditative.²

To sum up, *sīla* plays a very important role for the *pabbajita* and *gahaṭṭha* in Buddhism. In daily life, the *sīla* is to apply and it is considered the first thing. Moreover, *sīla* is lifestyle which always brings peace and happiness for practitioner. As in The *Dhammapada*, observing *sīla* is to be watchful of speech, well restrained in mind, let him do not evil with the body; let him purify these three ways of action, and attain the path made known by the Sages.³ And this becomes the beginning here for a wise *bhikkhu*: sense-control, contentment, and restraint with regard to the Fundamental Code (*pātimokkha*), association with beneficent and energetic friends whose livelihood is pure.⁴

¹ A. III. 19, 200; A. IV. 99, 336.

² Dh. v110.

³ *Vācānurakkhī manasā susaṃvuto*
Kāyena ca akusalaṃ na kayirā
Ete tayo kamma pathe visodhaye
Ārādhaye maggaṃ isippaveditaṃ. (Dhp. v281).

⁴ Dh. v375.

IV. 4. The Benefits of Observing Morality

Venerable Buddhaghosa has explained the eight benefits of morality in *Visuddhimagga*¹ as following: (1) The Waters of the biggest rivers including the Ganges, Yamuna, etc., cannot purify the stain of lust in all world beings, but the waters of *sīla*, well preserved, can purify the stain of lust which accumulates in the minds of all beings; (2) Wind and rain falling to land comfort and cool all beings, but only on the outside, they cannot calm the internal discomfort caused by defilements such as lust. Only *sīla*, well preserved, can purify inside; (3) Red sandalwood decorated with seven gems and the pale light of the moon can make beings calm, but they cannot cool the mental discomforts caused by defilements. Only *sīla*, well preserved, purifies and cools all beings' mental discomforts; (4) No smell but that of *sīla* can spread both with and against the wind; (5) *Sīla* is the ladder that leads beings to heaven and to the gate of *nibbāna*. There is nothing comparable to *sīla*; (6) Great kings who have their bodies decorated with seven gems are not as beautiful as one who is decorated with pure *sīla*; (7) A meditator with pure *sīla* will eliminate danger. He cannot criticize himself and others cannot criticize him. This meditator will always be joyful and praised; (8) *Sīla* has huge benefits which eliminate unwholesome states rooted in evil.

In any moral system, whereas violation of negative moral rules such as abstention from killing is necessarily required, its opposite, i.e. showing active compassion, as a matter of law, is not required. According to Buddhaghosa, the consistency or regularity in strictly following the moral rules brings lots of benefits to the moral agent, which, in other words, can be achieved only by practicing virtues, moral conducts, right

¹ Vism. 10.

vision, and *dhammic* life. But these benefits are not available by simply belonging to a family lineage or by possessing wealth.¹ Only in this manner, we can talk of the purification and transformation of being.²

In Buddhism, like insight (*paññā*) and righteousness (*Dhamma*), moral conduct (*kamma*) is also linked to *nibbāna*, although moral conduct is intrinsically good. Thus well-grounding in moral conduct (*sīla patiṭṭhā*)³ is a basic requirement for both worldly and soteriological good. Actually, in Buddhism, moral life, i.e. the life of right speech, action, and manner of livelihood (*sīla*) is equated to the highest good, a life of bliss and freedom. According to Buddhism,⁴ the perfectly good life consists in the training of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, which require self-effort. Further, the benefits of being virtuous are tremendous.

As in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*, the Buddha taught us about the benefits of observing *sīla* as following:

(1) A virtuous man (*sālavā sīlasampanno*) is free from remorse (*avipaṭisāra*), enjoys a great fortune (*mahantaṃ bhogakkhandhaṃ*) and good reputation (*kalyāṇo kittisaddho*), welcome in any assembly (be it of *khattiyas*, *brāhmanas*, householders, or recluses), is met with an unconfused or peaceful death (*asammūlho kālaṃ*), and a life in the heaven (*saggaṃ lokaṃ*).⁵

(2) On the other hand, a non-virtuous man without rectitude (*dussīla, sīlavipattiyā*) lives in penury, his bad reputation spreads beyond

¹ See M. III. 262; Vism. 4.

² See Vism. 4. 26-27: *ekāyano ayaṃ bhikkhave, maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā.*

³ *Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño, cittaṃ paññañca bhāvayaṃ, ātāpī nipako bhikkhu, so imaṃ vijaṭaye jatan ti.* (S. I. 13).

⁴ M. III. 314, fn. 4.

⁵ D. II. 86.

the region, enters an assembly of men shyly and confused, meets a painful death, and suffers in a hell after death.¹

Further, the significance of virtues is such that no head of a family, community, or society without them can find footing in dispensation. Only virtues can cleanse the personal and social malaise and sin, which cannot be washed by the waters of so-called sacred rivers like Gaṅga, Yamunā, and Sarasvatī. Likewise, no other means like breezes, rains, balm of sandalwood, gems, and necklaces can extinguish the flame of human miseries. There is no scent like virtue. There is no other means that can climb to *nibbāna* or heaven. There is no other thing like virtue which can ornament a man in a better way. A moral man has a natural desire to be loved, to be held in respect, and honoured by his fellow beings, which can be fulfilled only by moral purity and virtuous conduct. As a matter of fact, moral virtues are the foundation of all other qualities (*guṇānāṃ mūlabhūta*)² and of every good being who wishes to excel in them (*sabbasampattimūlam*),³ and always gives happiness (*sīlaṃ sīlavataṃ sadā*).⁴ Above all, they are the source of every success (*sabbasampattiṃ upanāmeti*).⁵

In the Buddhist system of morality, the emphasis is on the synthesis of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* in right proportion. Therefore, the morality does not necessarily include service to humanity or concern and action to mitigate the suffering of others, rather mere meditation (*dhyāna*) and deep concentration (*samādhi*) are sufficient to achieve the ultimate good, which is extremely individualistic. Whereas in Buddhism,

¹ D. II. 85.

² D. I. 222-3.

³ Quoted from Hari Shankar Prasad, *The Centrality of Ethics in Buddhism: Exploratory Assays*, p. 198.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Th. vv608-819.

Brāhmaṇa is defined not in metaphysical sense but as the totality of four supreme moral conditions or states of mind, technically called Divine Abiding (*brahmavihāra*), which are preconditions of one's perfect moral purification and conduct (*sīla*) in the form of service to humanity. For it, if there is any heaven or the *Brahmā*-world, it is the world of the four divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*), namely, loving kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*).¹ These are both moral principles and social emotions backed by reason. The Buddhists tied rebirth to such *Brahmā*-worlds. Even an individualistic soteriological aspiration is fulfilled in this way. The Buddha deals in the similar manner with the sacrificial rites, religious rituals, and mystical claims, all of which lack moral contents and real good. He consistently changes or rejects the connotations of the words and concepts involved in the current beliefs, be they related to God, sacrificial rituals, mystical experiences, metaphysical self, divinely created social hierarchy, and so on, which are pernicious dogmas. In every case, he tries to ethicize man's every aspect of life.

The value of *sīla* as a precondition in the Buddhist path is justified in Buddhism by appealing to certain psychological facts about the causal connection between *sīla* and other higher spiritual attainments. *Sīla* consists primarily of a conscious regulation of a person's bodily and verbal conduct that is morally reprehensible as an expression of underlying deep-rooted unwholesome tendencies of the human mind. Such unwholesome tendencies lie dormant or as latent tendencies (*anusaya*) of the mind. They may not be accessible to one's day-to-day consciousness. These latent tendencies have been nourished by repeated

¹ *Tevijja Sutta*, the *Sutta* No. 13, D. I.

forms of behaviour in the lengthy process of cyclic existence with no known beginning. A person desiring to weaken those tendencies could do so by exercising restraint in patterns of behaviour that continuously feed and nourish them. The overtly observable patterns of behaviour are evident to those who engage in them as well as others around them. They are much more tangible than the concealed tendencies of mind. Therefore, Buddhism recommends *sīla* as a psychologically feasible starting point in the endeavour of transforming behaviour. In other words, the emphasis on cultivation of *sīla* means to restrain bodily and verbal deeds.

Observing *sīla* is not only to fulfill *sīla* itself but also pronounce it at *uposatha* that helps the *saṅgha* to remember and know how to practise it. In *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, we are told that there are benefits when *sīlas* are pronounced:

“For the excellence of the Order, for the well-being of the Order; for the control of ill-conditioned monks and the comfort of well-behaved monks; for the restraint of the cankers in this same visible state; for protection against the cankers in a future life; to give confidence to those of little faith; for the betterment of the faithful; to establish true *Dhamma*, and to support the discipline.”¹

Herein, an Ariyan disciple who abandons and abstains taking, because of these abstaining, he gives without fear, without hatred, without ill-will, to unnumbered beings and in giving without fear, hatred or ill-will, he becomes a partaker in unbounded fearlessness, amity by discerning recluse and godly man. This is the fourth yield in merit and

¹ A. V. 69; Vin. V. 223.

goodness, the food of happiness.¹ Even so, whatever man abstains from taking life and so forth, however much a great multitude...might aspire...and pray for his rebirth in Purgatory, yet would he be reborn in the happy Lot, in the Heaven World.²

In addition, the *sīla* that one observes well will cause prosperity, good reputation, social poise, being mindful and dying without delusion, and rebirth in happy worlds. Those who observe *sīla* will receive its values, like a patient gaining benefit from taking medicine and getting cured.

To observe *sīla*, a Buddhist monk reaches the state of the release of heart by practice of amity, by making amity to grow, by making much of it, by making amity a vehicle and basis, by persisting in it, by becoming familiar with it, by well establishing it. By the practice, he gets eleven advantages in his life, as they are: (1) Sleeps happily; (2) Awakes happily; (3) Does not have nightmares; (4) Is liked by humans; (5) Is liked by non-humans; (6) Gods protect him; (7) Fire, poison or weapons do not hurt him; (8) Mind reaches concentration quickly; (9) Complexion of the face clears up; (10) Dies in consciousness; and (11) Gets reborn in a *Brahma*-heaven if no higher plain had been reached.³ The list of eleven benefits accrues to a person who practices loving kindness and the humanistic base of this list is another example of the Buddha's pragmatism.

For the householders who practise right conduct (rectitude) will also gain the five well-doers. In the first place, the well-doer, strong in

¹ A. IV. 168.

² S. IV. 310ff.

³ A. V. 340.

rectitude, acquires great wealth through his industry; in the next place, good reports of him are spread abroad; thirdly, whatever society he enters-whether of nobles, *brahmins*, heads of houses, or members of a religious order-he enters confident and self-possessed; fourthly, he dies without anxiety; and lastly, on the dissolution of the body, after death. He is reborn into some happy state in heaven.¹

For a Buddhist monk who fulfills *sīla* is always respected and supported by householders and gods as well. At the time having meal at the ministers' house, the Lord Buddha had taught these verses:

“Wheresoe'er the prudent man shall take up his abode.

Let him support the brethren there, good men of self-control,

And give the merit of his gifts to the deities who haunt the spot

Revered, they will revere him: honoured, they honour him again;

Are gracious to him as a mother to her own, her only son.

And the man who has the grace of the gods, good fortune he beholds.”²

And, again in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha declares that there are eight points that monks possessed to be worthy of offerings. It is the world's peerless field for merit. Herein, a monk is virtuous, abiding restrained by the restraint of the obligations, perfect in behaviour and conduct, seeing danger in the smallest fault; he accepts the precepts and trains himself accordingly. When they give him food, mean or choice, he eats it carefully without a murmur. He feels abhorrence; he abhors misconduct in deed, word and thought; he abhors entertaining evil and

¹ D. II. 85, III. 236; A. III. 252.

² D. II. 88.

unrighteous ideas. He is pleasing and easy to live with, he does not trouble the other monks. Whatever are his vices, tricks, faults or wiles, he shows them as they really are to the teacher or to some learned fellow-monk in the godly life; and his teacher or fellow-monk tries to correct them. As a learner, he thinks: “Well, let other monks train as they please, I’ll train in this way.” In going, he goes the straight way, and herein is that way: right view, right aim ... right concentration. Strenuous in endeavour he abides, thinking: Come what may, let skin and bone and sinew but remain, let flesh and blood dry up within my body;” until is won, what may be won by strength of man, by toil of man, by pains of man, there will become no stay in energy!¹

Another *Sutta* gives us the good requital of length of life-span by getting rid of onslaught on creatures in which one who abstains from onslaught on creatures; the stick laid aside, the sword laid aside, he lives scrupulous, merciful, kindly and compassionate to all living creatures. Because of that deed, accomplished thus, firmly held thus, at the breaking up of the body after dying he arises in good born, a heavenly world. But if, at the breaking up of the body after dying, he does not arise in good born, a heavenly world, but comes to human status, then wherever he is born (in new existence) he is of a long life-span.²

Even if the *Tathāgata* being human putting away the taking of life, refrained therefrom and laying the scourge and sword aside, dwelt gentle and compassionate, merciful and friendly to all living creatures, he by such doings and by the accumulating of that *kamma*, by the mass and the

¹ A. IV. 189.

² M. III. 249-251.

abundance thereof, was when the body perished, reborn after death in a bright and blessed world.¹

There is the way leading to being healthy when a certain woman or man does not have a tendency to injure living beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife. Or, if he does not reappear in the good destinations, in the heavenly world, but instead returns to the human state, then he is healthy wherever reborn.²

There is also the way leading to long life when a certain woman or man, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from the taking of life, dwelling with rod laid down, knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, sympathetic for the benefit of all living beings. From adopting and carrying out such actions, then on the break-up of the body, after death, this person re-appears in the good destinations, in the heavenly world. Or, if he does not reappear in the good destinations, in the heavenly world, but instead returns to the human state, then he is long-lived wherever reborn.³ Its benefits are the acquisition of the several special qualities beginning with non-remorse. For, this is said: “Ānanda, profitable habits (virtues) have non-remorse as their aim and non-remorse as their benefit”.⁴ And it is said further:

“Householder, there are these five benefits for the virtuous in the perfecting of virtue. What five? Here, householder, one who is virtuous, possessed of virtue, obtains a large fortune as a consequence of diligence; this is the first benefit for the virtuous in the perfecting of virtue. Again, of one who is virtuous, possessed

¹ D. III. 150.

² M. III. 205.

³ M. III. 204.

⁴ A. V. 1.

of virtue, a fair name is spread abroad; this is the second benefit for the virtuous in the perfecting of virtue. Again, whenever one who is virtuous, possessed of virtue, enters an assembly, whether of *khattiyas* (warrior nobles) or *brāhmaṇas* or householders or ascetics, he does so without fear or hesitation; this is the third benefit for the virtuous in the perfecting of virtue. Again, one who is virtuous, possessed of virtue, dies unconfused; this is the fourth benefit for the virtuous in the perfecting of virtue. Again, one who is virtuous, possessed of virtue, on the breakup of the body, after death, reappears in a happy destiny, in the heavenly world; this is the fifth benefit for the virtuous in the perfecting of virtue.”¹

There are also many benefits of virtue beginning with being dear and loved and ending with destruction of cankers as described in the passage as follows: “If a *bhikkhu* should wish, ‘May I be dear to my fellows in the life of purity and loved by them, held in respect and honoured by them,’ let him perfect the virtues.”² This is how virtue has, as its benefits, the several special qualities beginning with non-remorse.

Those who always practise *sīla* will also get three long term benefits: (1) Rebirth in happy worlds, (2) Prosperity, and (3) *Nibbāna*. The first benefit means heavenly-prosperity or happiness in one of the heavens. The second benefit means human prosperity in the present lifetime or when reborn as a human again. The third benefit, *Nibbāna*, means the ultimate prosperity, emancipation without rebirth. This does not mean that one who only observes *sīla* is guaranteed of all prosperity. But, the purity of *sīla* is the basic foundation for attaining higher levels of

¹ D. II. 86.

² M. I. 33.

virtue such as concentration and wisdom which are the path to attaining the ultimate prosperity of *nibbāna*. It is impossible for one who does not observe *sīla* or who breaks *sīla* to develop concentration and wisdom, because, his mind will always be distracted. Concentration and wisdom only come to one who has purified *sīla*. Therefore, *sīla* is the basic foundation for attaining the higher virtue of concentration, and concentration is the foundation for attaining wisdom. When *sīla* is purified, one can attain human prosperity, heavenly prosperity and the prosperity of *nibbāna*.

Sīla is important in the moral life. It is the stepping stones of the moral life.¹ "Having established oneself in the virtues, a sagacious one proceeds to develop thought (*citta*) and wisdom (*paññā*)."² Its benefits are the acquisition of the several special qualities beginning with non-remorse. For this is said: "Ānanda, freedom from remorse is the object, freedom from remorse is the profit of good conduct."³ In several discourses, the Buddha mentioned the following five advantages to the moral man through his success in virtuous conduct and the gain of the well-doer through his practice of rectitude.

(1) Acquires a great mass of wealth owing to zeal;

(2) A lovely reputation is noised abroad of one of moral habit, accomplished in moral habit;

(3) Approaches any company, whether a company of nobles, a company of *brahmins*, a company of householders, a company of recluses, he approaches it confidently, not being ashamed;

¹ A. V. 312.

² S. I. 13, 165.

³ A. V. 1.

(4) Passes away unbewildered;

(5) At the breaking up of the body after dying arises in the Happy-born, in a heaven-world.¹

Moreover, in *Vinaya Piṭaka* we are told that the beings whose deeds were good, whose speech was good, whose thoughts were good, who did not abuse the noble ones, holding right views, incurring the actions of right views. These at the breaking up of the body after death, have arisen in the good bourn, the heaven-world.²

There are also the many benefits of virtue beginning with being dear and loved and ending with destruction of cankers described in the passage beginning "If a monk should wishes: 'May I be agreeable to my fellows *Brāhma*-farers, likes by them revered and respected,' he should be one who fulfils the moral habits, who is intent on mental tranquility within, whose meditation is uninterrupted, who is endowed with vision, a cultivator of empty places."³ This is how virtue has as its benefits the several special qualities beginning with non-remorse.

Sīla also has the benefit of avoiding agitation and its own value even if no one practices it. It is like a medicine to cure disease. These are the values as to clean out stain, calm anxiety, spread a clean scent, lead to Heaven and *nibbāna*, be a beautiful ornament, protect one from danger, lead to a good reputation, and bring joy. Those who observe *sīla* will receive its values, like a patient gaining benefit from taking medicine and getting cured. The purity of *sīla* is the basic foundation for attaining higher levels of virtue such as concentration and wisdom which are the

¹ Vin. I. 228; D. II. 86, III. 236.

² Vin. III. 5.

³ M. I. 33.

path to attaining the ultimate prosperity of *nibbāna*. Therefore, it is impossible for one who does not observe *sīla* or who breaks *sīla* to develop concentration and wisdom because his or her mind will always be distracted. Concentration and wisdom only come to one who has purified *sīla*. Hence, *sīla* is the basic foundation for attaining the higher virtue of concentration and concentration is the foundation for attaining wisdom. When *sīla* is purified, one can attain human prosperity, heavenly prosperity and the prosperity of *nibbāna*.

Regarding the advantages of morality, it has been said that the absence of remorse and the like may be called its advantages. A person being virtuous and endowed with morality acquires much wealth mainly due to the effect of non-negligence, gains a good report abroad, enters boldly and being unperturbed the assemblies of princes, *brāhmaṇas*, laymen and monks, dies undeluded and lastly on the dissolution of the body after death attains a happy destiny. Even in death, he becomes self-possessed.¹ Thus a wise man enjoys various advantages of morality, beginning with loveableness and preciousness and ending in the destruction of the intoxicants of the mind. That is why at one occasion the Buddha enjoins on his disciples to fulfil virtues, to be dear, precious to, respected and honoured by the fellow-monks.² But it may be noted that there lies a difference between morality (*sīla*) and mode of life (*ācāra*). When a man works diligently and shakes off either evil disposition (*kilesa*) or obstacles to spiritual progress, he adopts *ācāra* and not *sīla*.

¹ *Sīlavā sīlasampanno asammūḷho kālaṃ karoti.* (D. II. 86).

² M. I. 33.

On the other hand, morality may also be called the mode of life and *saṃvara* as it becomes bereft of ascetic practices (*dhutas*).¹ It is also said that a monk who observes morality will cultivate the noble eightfold path.² Just as the dawn is the fore-runner of the Sun, so possession of virtue (*sīla-sampadā*) is the harbinger of the origin of the noble eightfold way. The virtuous habits (*kusalāni sīlāni*), as the Exalted One observes, are those which appear through the cultivation of four stations of mindfulness.³ Thus a monk dwells in body when he contemplates body as transient, ardent, composed and mindful, and restrains the dejection in the world arising from coveting. He does the same as regards feelings, mind and mind-states.⁴ Further a virtuous person should consider the five grasping groups (*pañcupādānakkhandā*) as the conditions, which are impermanent (*aniccato*), suffering (*dukkhato*), sick (*rogato*), transitory (*palokato*), empty (*suññto*) and soulless (*anattato*). These five groups are called the group of body-grasping (*rūpupāpakkhando*) and the group of consciousness-grasping (*viññāṇupādānakkhando*). Thus, a virtuous monk thinking of these five groups of grasping realizes the fruits of stream-winner.⁵ Even a monk who is a stream-winner should think over these five groups of grasping because such a monk thinking thus over the groups attains the fruits of once-returning.⁶ Even a monk who is an once-returner will have to think over the same five groups because by doing so he realizes the fruits of never-returning.⁷ That is not all. Even a *bhikkhu*

¹ P. V. Bapat, *Vimuttimagga and Visuddhimagga: A comparative study*, p. 5.

² S. V. 30.

³ *Yāvad eva catunnaṃ satipaṭṭhānānaṃ bhāvanāya.*

⁴ *Bhikkhu kāye viñeyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ Vedanāsu ... Citte ... Dhātumesu dhammānupassi viharati, ātāpi sampajāno satimā viñeyya loke bhijjhādomanassaṃ. Yānimāni āvuso Bhadda kusalāni sīlāni vuttāni Bhagavatā.* (S. V. 171).

⁵ *Sotāpattiphalam sacchikareyyāti.*

⁶ *Sakadāgāmiaphalam.*

⁷ *Anāgānniphalam.*

who has attained the stage of never-returning should think over the five groups of grasping and realizes the fruits of *Arahantship*.¹ An *Arahant* also should think that these are impermanent, suffering, sick, transitory, void and soulless. But for him, there lies no possibility of rebirth. Nevertheless, having practised in such a manner a monk becomes worthy of a happy existence and self possession even in this present life.²

In conclusion, those who wish to have happiness, peace and prosperity should purify their own *sīla* and observe *sīla* at all costs, like a bird protects its eggs at all costs, a Yak protects its tail at all costs, a mother protects her baby at all odds, or like a one-eyed man protects his another eye in all circumstances.

IV. 5. Commitment and Penalization

IV. 5. 1. Commitment

Right after the benefits of observing *sīlas*, a discussion of the violation of the precepts may be in need. Because, apart from the reasons of Cause and Effect or faith religion, the presentation of commitment and penalty are the matters of ethical education in order to lead humankind to firm developed society and to attain peace here and now in their life.

In the discussion of the violation of the precepts, the *Vinaya* regards the precepts as laws of the *saṅgha* while its violation as more of the nature of a crime or an offence. The reason of this formal limitation lies in the maintenance of social and outer set-up of the *saṅgha*, where individual member *bhikkhu* is only a part of it. For the proper

¹ *Arahattaphalam*.

² S. III. 167-169.

maintenance of the *saṅgha* outer discipline is required and considered sometimes more important in the *Vinaya*.

Each of the *pātimokkha* codes is divided into eight chapters. Out of these eight, seven pertain to the transgression of all the rules about the daily life of the monk (which include the five precepts we are mainly concerned). The last one, called ‘*adhikaraṇasamatha*’, does not directly relate to the transgression of any of the rules. Offences have been dealt with in the descending order of their seriousness in the chapters of the two codes, that is the first chapter deals with the gravest, while the last with the least serious offences.

The violation of the precepts is made known to the Buddhist *saṅgha* through the recitation of the *pātimokkha* code on fortnightly *uposatha* days. It is here only that the confession of the offences takes place, and the *saṅgha* gets the knowledge of the intensity of the offence committed by the monk and inflicts the penalties accordingly. It is said that the *saṅgha* in cases of offences can inflict the prescribed penalty of ‘*parivasa*’ or ‘*mannatta*’ or any other punishment as the case may be, even against the will of the guilty *bhikkhu*.¹

The third *pārājika* is gravest transgression along with the other three, is repeated in the formula of warning addressed to the monks at their first admission in *Mahāvagga* too. There is a special reference to human beings in the *pātimokkha* rules prescribed for monks forbidding (1) sexual intercourse, (2) taking what is not given, i.e. theft, (3) killing a human being, and (4) speaking untruth. To break any of these rules,

¹ Pār. 277.

called *pārājika*, would result in life-long exclusion from the order, the most serious punishment for a monk.

Next to the category of *pārājika* comes what are called the ‘*saṅghādisesa*’ offences. The punishment given for this type of offence is not total excommunication like *pārājika*, but a temporary *parivasa* may be given when the offences are acknowledged before the *saṅgha*. After some time such a monk could be readmitted into the *saṅgha*.

Another major offence with regard to non killing is called *thullaccaya* (a grave offence). This offence does not occur in the *pātimokkha*, nor is its nature very clearly explained in the *Vinaya*, nor is anything known about it, except that when a monk is guilty of it, whatever he may wish to say, other monks would not speak to him, and he is left in an isolated state. Yet, it quite often occurs in the *Vinaya* texts. For example, a monk has been told that he has committed an offence; but, if he refuses to accept it, it is said that the monk commits the *thullaccaya* offence. This offence lies between *pārājika* or *saṅghādisesa* and other minor offences. It pertains not only to injury done to animals or small creatures but even to the killing of human beings. Actually, there seems to be a big gap in the *pātimokkha* with regard to non killing, i. e. from the gravest offence of *pārājika* one finds a comparatively much milder offence pertaining to the violence of small insects etc. as discussed in the *saṅghādisesā*. *Thullaccaya* (a grave offence) bridges this gulf; it can also be understood as a stage prior to *pārājika* offence. For example, if a monk fully prepares himself to commit a murder, makes everything ready for it, attacks the person or beats him atrociously, till he does not die,¹ it is a case of *thullaccaya*, but when the person dies it no longer remains a

¹ Pā. 9; Pār. 92-94.

thullaccaya but amounts to *pārājika*. Again, a *bhikkhu* commits a *thullaccaya* offence when he is ordered by another *bhikkhu* to kill someone and the order is carried out by him immediately so that the person is killed instantaneously or grievously wounded to end up in death.¹ Or, for example, when he tells a person about the approaching death so that he himself inflicts serious injuries upon himself and dies consequently.² Many more illustrations of this offence of murder can be found in the Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the *Vinaya* and the *pātimokkha*, viz. *Samantapāsādikā* and *Kamkhāvitaraṇī*. *Samantapāsādikā* points out that if a monk orders another monk to commit a murder, the order is carried out accordingly; both the monks are guilty of *thullaccaya* in the beginning, but if the person dies, both of them are to be accused of *pārājika*. But if, for example, the second monk murders someone else out of misunderstanding and not the one for whom the order was given, it is said that the first one is not guilty of *pārājika* but only of 'apūrva' offence. Here, as has already been pointed out, the difference is made purely on the basis of consequence and not the intention and the intensity of intention. All these details are interesting which show that how for the maintenance of order in the *saṅgha* the basic moral principle becomes so formal and outer and how the outer consequence is given importance.

A still minor category of offences are called '*pācittiya*'. *Pācittiya* holds the fifth position in the order of the code; there are ninety-two *pācittiya* rules. These rules depict more of the ceremonial side of the vow than the real moral one, but they do show consistency between the

¹ Pār. 91-92.

² Pār. 91-92.

original precept as discussed in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and the violation of the precept (however minor it may be).¹ Among these offences are, for example, the killing of small insects or living beings in digging a plot of land or in drinking unfiltered water which may contain living beings, etc.

Thus, the discussion of these offences in the *pātimokkha* and the *Vinaya* and also in the other allied texts are an interesting one, sometimes the offence is really grave, sometimes it takes the shape of a very formal offence, sometimes it is also noticed that it depends so much on the legal points that the concept of ‘virtue’ altogether seems to be missing and one does not even feel that a subject of morality is under discussion, as has been seen in the distinction made in ‘*apurva*’ offence and ‘*thullaccaya*’ offence. However, the code and the offences reflect the *saṅgha* of those times, and a frequent adoption of the middle path in Buddhism, whenever a decision was taken in connection with the violation of the rules and their corresponding punishments.²

IV. 5. 2. Penalization

In many *suttas* regarding lay practice, the Buddha explicitly warned of the five vices, which are dangers and enemies, and lead to hell. And they are: (1) Killing living beings; (2) Taking what is not given; (3) Sexual misconduct; (4) Telling lies; (5) Partaking of intoxicants.³

As the Buddha gave a simile:

“Just as in the case of a tree, devoid of branches and leaves, its shoots come not to maturity, nor its bark, nor its sapwood, nor its core. In the same way, who does bad action (*kamma*) so he lacks

¹ See *Brahmagāla Sutta*, the *Sutta* No. 1, D. I.

² Kamala Jain, *The Concept of Pañcasīla in Indian Thought*, p. 84.

³ A. III. 203.

the virtue (*sīla*). When the lack of virtue, right concentration is perforce destroyed; when right concentration is not, true knowledge and insight are perforce destroyed in one who lacks right concentration; when true knowledge and insight are not, aversion and dispassion are perforce destroyed in one who lacks true knowledge and insight; when aversion and dispassion are not, emancipated knowledge and insight are perforce destroyed in one who lacks aversion and dispassion.”¹

And the *Sutta* also affirms that One who has these five vices lives the home-life without selfconfidence. One who has these five vices breeds hatred in this life or breeds hatred in the life hereafter, feels in his mind pain and grief. One who has these five vices is termed 'vicious' and arises in hell.

It is stated that if a person lacks morals or fails in morals, he will have to face certain disadvantages. The *Aṅguttara Nikāya* enumerates five such disadvantages, e.g., (1) suffering from the loss of wealth through neglect, (2) hearing own's evil rumour, (3) approaching nobles, *brahmanas*, householders or recluses being confused and without confidence, (4) dying muddled in thought (*sammūlho*) and (5) taking birth in the hell at the breaking up of the body after death.² But a person who follows the moralities strictly has not to suffer such disadvantages and on the contrary may easily overcome all unfavourable circumstances.

According to the Discourse on the Bad Effects of Evil Deeds, breaking of precepts when pursued, practised, increased, causes one to

¹ A. III. 19, 200, IV. 99, 336.

² A. III. 252-253.

arise in hell, in the animal world and in the world of ghosts. If reborn as a human being, the following are the very least results:

Killing will lead to shortening of one's life.

Stealing will lead to loss of one's wealth.

Sexual misconduct will breed rivalry and hatred.

False speech will cause one to be falsely accused.

Partaking of intoxicants will cause one to be afflicted with.¹

It is stated that if a person lacks morals or fails in morals, he will have to face certain disadvantages. There are five disadvantages to one of wrong moral habit, falling away from morality:

(1) Suffers great diminution of wealth owing to sloth;

(2) An evil reputation is noised abroad;

(3) Approaches any company, whether a company of nobles, a company of *brahmins*, a company of householders, a company of recluses, he approaches it diffidently, being ashamed;

(4) Passes away bewildered;

(5) At the breaking up of the body after dying arises in the waste, the Bad-bourn, the Downfall, *Niraya* Hell.²

A person who follows the moralities strictly has not to suffer such disadvantages and on the contrary may easily overcome all unfavourable circumstances. With the purified deva-vision surpassing that of men, the Buddha knew beings as they pass away or come to be: mean, excellent, fair, foul, in a good bourn, in a bad bourn according to their actions

¹ A. IV. 247.

² Vin. I. 227; A. III. 252ff; D. II. 85-6, III. 236; Ud. 86.

(*kamma*).¹ So the Buddha stated that: "Indeed, those worthies whose deeds were evil, whose speech was evil, whose thoughts were evil, abusers of the noble ones, holders of wrong views, incurring the actions of wrong views. These at the breaking up of the body after death, have arisen in the waste, the bad bourn, the abyss, hell."²

Wrong moral habits are mentioned in many places of Buddhist scriptures. As in *Vibhaṅga* mentions that there are ten bases of corruption (*kilesa*): (1) greed (*lobha*), (2) hatred (*dosa*), (3) dullness (*moha*), (4) conceit (*māna*), (5) wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), (6) doubt (*vicikicchā*), (7) sloth (*thīna*), (8) distraction (*uddhacca*), (9) absence of sense of shame (*ahirika*) and (10) absence of fear of blame (*anottappa*).³

There are ten paths of bad action (*akusala-kammaṭṭhāna*): (1) Killing beings (*pāṇātipāta*), (2) taking that which is not given (*adinnādāna*), (3) sexual misconduct (*kāmesu micchācārā*), (4) false speech (*musāvāda*), (5) slanderous speech (*pisuṇāvācā*), (6) harsh speech (*pharusavācā*), (7) frivolous speech (*samphappalāpa*), (8) covetousness (*abhijjhā*), (9) ill will (*byāpāda*) and (10) false view (*micchādiṭṭhi*).⁴

There are ten fetters: (1) The fetter of lust for sense pleasure, (2) the fetter of repulsion, (3) the fetter of conceit, (4) the fetter of wrong view, (5) the fetter of doubt, (6) the fetter of adherence to habits and practices, (7) the fetter of lust for becoming, (8) the fetter of envy, (9) the fetter of meanness and, (10) the fetter of ignorance.⁵

¹ Vin. III. 5.

² Vin. III. 5.

³ Vbh. 391.

⁴ Vbh. 391; D. III. 269, 290; A.V. 264.

⁵ Vbh. 391.

There are ten types of falseness; (1) wrong view, (2) wrong thought, (3) wrong speech, (4) wrong action, (5) wrong livelihood, (6) wrong effort, (7) wrong mindfulness, (8) wrong concentration, (9) false knowledge and (10) false freedom.¹

There is "false view that has ten bases": (1) There is no alms-giving, (2) there is no sacrifice, (3) there is no offering, (4) there is no fruit or resultant of actions done rightly and done wrongly, (5) there is no this world, (6) there is no next world, (7) there is no mother, (8) there is no father, (9) there are no beings born spontaneously, and (10) there are not in the world recluses and *Brahmins* who have reached the highest point, who are well practiced; who themselves having fully known, realized this world and the next world make it known, having realized this world and the next world make it known to others.²

The Buddha is further aware of the dangers of the separation of morality (*sīla*) and insight (*paññā*) as the former without the other, i.e. morality without insight lacks true rectitude and conviction, and ends with mere rituals and formal adherence to moral rules. Whereas insight, which means knowledge of the thing as they are (i.e. impermanent, selfless, and unsatisfactory), without morality leads to scepticism, moral passivity, and exclusive egoism. The Buddhist notion of insight is radically different from the metaphysically loaded concept of intuition of the *Upaniṣads*, which is nothing but the mere act of speculation or intellectual culmination of thought. It is thus detrimental to the attempt of moral purification of life. The emphasis on and clinging to this kind of speculative and false knowledge-claim and its content (i.e. the ultimately

¹ Vbh. 391-2.

² Vbh. 392.

real world is nothing but the world of eternal *Brahman*) play against the interest of both individual and the society. What Buddhism says is that blind belief in and following moral rules or dogma-generated morality is dangerous.

A man who has violated a certain rule, he can escape and hide his retribution before an organization or government or the way of worship or chanting, but he cannot avoid it by the spirit of Cause and effect in which an action or event will produce a certain response to the action in the form of another event.¹ Therefore, a man is a taker of life, ... Although with much a great multitude, gathering and thronging together, might aspire and praise him and go about with uplifted palms, saying: “may this man, when body breaks up, after death be reborn in the Happy Lot, in the Heaven World,” yet would that man, when body breaks up, after death be reborn in the Woeful Lot, in the Downfall, in Purgatory.²

In the *Cūḷakammavibhaṅgasutta* we are told of the results of killing living beings:

“Some man or woman kills living beings and is murderous, has blood on his hands, is given to blows and violence, is without pity for living beings. Because of performing and carrying out such action, at the breaking up of the body, after death he reappears in a state of misfortune, an unhappy destiny, a state of affliction, hell.”³

There is the case where a certain woman or man is one who takes life-brutal, bloody-handed, violent, cruel, and merciless to living beings.

¹ Dh. v.127.

² A. IV. 311.

³ M. III. 203. *Ekacco itthī vā puriso vā pāṇātipātī hoti luddo lohita-pāṇi hatapahate niviṭṭho adayāpanno pāṇa-bhūtesu. So tena kammena evaṃ samatena evaṃ samādinna kāyassa bheda paraṃ maraṇā apāyaṃ duggatiṃ vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ upapajati.*

From adopting and carrying out such actions, then on the break-up of the body, after death, this person re-appears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. Or, if he does not reappear in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell, but instead returns to the human state, then he is short-lived wherever reborn. This is the way leading to short life, namely being one who takes life...¹

If a woman or man is not by nature harmful to creatures with his hand or with a clod of earth or with a stick or with a sword, because of that deed, accomplished thus ... he arises in ... a heaven world ... he has few illnesses. This course is conducive to few illnesses, *Brahman* youth, that is to say not being by nature harmful to creatures with his hand ... or with a sword.² And then the Exalted One addressed the Pataligama disciples that there is fivefold loss of the evil-doer. In the first place the wrong-doer, devoid of rectitude, falls into great poverty through sloth; in the next place his evil repute gets noised abroad; thirdly, whatever society he enters-whether of nobles, *brahmins*, heads of houses, or men of a religious order- he enters shyly and confused; fourthly, he is full of anxiety when he dies; and lastly, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he is reborn into some unhappy state of suffering or woe.³

And about vocal action towards a man full of talk, in *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha lays stress on five disadvantages: “He talks falsely, he talks maliciously, talks roughly, talks as a vain babblers and arises, after death, ... in hell. Monks, these are the five disadvantages to a person full of talk.”⁴

¹ M. III. 204.

² M. III. 203-204.

³ D. II. 84.

⁴ A. III. 253.

In the daily life, through being impatient man is also having five disadvantages: “Not to many folk is he dear or pleasing; he is hated much; is avoided by many; dies muddled in thought and rises in ... hell.”¹

Furthermore, there is the case where a certain woman or man has a tendency to injure living beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife. From adopting and carrying out such actions, then on the break-up of the body, after death, this person re-appears in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. Or, if he does not reappear in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell, but instead returns to the human state, then he is sickly wherever reborn. This is the way leading to being sickly, namely being one who has a tendency to injure living beings with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife ...²

In brief, the Buddha describes his sense of dismay at these three unwholesome roots (Greed and hate and delusion) in the world, together with his important discovery: that the only escape from human sufferings is to remove the causes of three positions from one’s own heart. To remove these causes, one must first refrain from the morality on the external level so as to create the proper karmic context-more peaceful and honest-for extracting the causes of *saṃsāra* on the internal level. In other hand, observing moral life is the best way to remove the causes of Greed (*lobha*), Hatred (P: *doṣa*; S: *dveṣa*) and Delusion or spiritual misorientation (*moha*) from human mind. Therefore, in order to understand how is the value of the moral life, what is its application

¹ A. III. 253.

² M. III. 204.

values to the monastic and lay lives, these issues are further discussed in the following chapter.
