

THE FIVE PRECEPTS

The Middle Path = **Virtue (*Sila*), Meditation (*Samadhi*), Wisdom (*Panna*)**

Five Precepts = Five basic ethical guidelines to be observed by Lay Buddhists

For cultivating wholesomeness in thought word and deed.

Wholesome means = non greed, non hatred, non delusion

The Five Precepts

- 1. I undertake the training to refrain from destroying living beings**
- 2. I undertake the training to refrain from taking what is not given**
- 3. I undertake the training to refrain from sexual misconduct**
- 4. I undertake the training to refrain from false speech**
- 5. I undertake the training to refrain from intoxicants which lead to confusion and carelessness**

Not to be seen as commandments but undertaking a training to refrain from unwholesome conduct. Based on wisdom to understand what is beneficial to oneself, and compassion for others.

At a personal level the precepts help to lead a moral life which is the foundation of the spiritual path. At a social level the precepts help to promote peace and security.

Referred to as “The Five Gifts” – to oneself and others
giving immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, oppression and
thereby he himself will enjoy immeasurable freedom from fear....
(Anguttara Nikaya VIII, 39)

Difficult to observe but gradual development occurs with daily renewal of precepts, with the right attitude.

A precept is violated if there is both intention, action (to kill/steal/sexual misconduct/deception/taking of intoxicants) and result.

Positive counterparts of the five precepts:

1. Non harm > friendliness & compassion
2. Not stealing > right livelihood, respect others' property, non- greed
3. Refrain from sexual misconduct > contentment, restraint of sense desire
4. Refrain from false speech > truthfulness
5. Refrain from intoxicants > mindfulness

The ceremony for formally undertaking the Buddha's teachings as our guiding principle is the act of “Going For refuge” followed by “Taking the Five Precepts”. This ceremony chanted in Pali dates back 2500 years.

Homage to the Buddha:

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma-sambuddhassa

Homage to the Blessed One, the Noble one, the Perfectly Enlightened One. (three times)

Going for Refuge:

Buddham saranam gacchami (to the Buddha I go for refuge)

Dhammam saranam gacchami (to the Dhamma I go for refuge)

Sangham saranam gacchami (to the Sangha I go for refuge)

Dutiyampi (for the second time) *Buddham saranam gacchami*

Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami

Dutiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami

Tatiyampi (for the third time) *Buddham saranam gacchami*

Tatiyampi Dhammam saram gacchami

Tatiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami

Five Precepts:

Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadhiyami

Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam samadhiyami

Kamesumicchachara veramani sikkhapadam samadhiyami

Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadhiyami

Suramerayamajja pamadatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadhiyami

I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures / taking what is not given/ sexual misconduct/ lying /intoxicating liquors & drugs that lead to carelessness