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**NATURE'S PRESCRIPTION FOR NATURAL ACCEPTANCE OF  
MORAL VIRTUES: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Natural Acceptance infers unrestricted acknowledgment of oneself, individuals and environment. It likewise alludes to the shortfall of any special case from others. When we completely and genuinely submit ourself based on natural acceptance, we feel a comprehensive feeling of inward concordance, peace and satisfaction. It is almost same everywhere irrespective of class, creed and sex. The decisions we make, the thoughts we generate usually demand for natural acceptance for implementation.

Not only one moves towards the path of the humanitarian way when he follows the rules as laid down by the philosophy, but also, creates a society where everyone has peace and moral upliftment. The acceptance of these virtues is to hundred percent. Only fact is that it has to be prescribed theoretically in daily living too.

The theory of Buddhist ethics finds its practical expression in the various precepts. These disciplines are only broad guides to show the instructions in which the Buddhist should go on one's way to final liberation and natural acceptance of moral virtues. Although many of these precepts are expressed for Buddhists, but are easily being adapted by the other communities as well. The simplicity of understanding makes it favorite amongst new and old generations of human beings. The paper describes the Buddhist morality in details.

Sīla, the morality, is one of the terms occupy an imperative point in the ethical language of Buddhism. "The Dictionary gives the meanings 'nature', 'character', 'habit', and 'behavior' to the term."<sup>1</sup>

In Buddhism, Sīla is used as a practice proceeded by faith. A regular way of life or a mode of conducting oneself is considered in Buddhism as sīla. The sīla was used in Buddhism to refer to any practice that was adopted by a given group of religious seekers to guide their way of life. When the term sīla was used in Buddhism in the context of the exposition of Buddhist morality, the term was used normatively. In such uses of the term, it acquired a commendatory meaning.

The Buddhist formulation of the path of liberation represented consists of three-fold training in which sīla occurs as the first step and the institution in place of the other two steps. This point is emphasized in the Sīlakkhandhavagga of the Dīghanikāya. The path of liberation is presented in these suttas in the three stages called higher training in good practices, higher training of the mind and higher training of insight.

"The significance of sīla as the foundation of the Buddhist Path of liberation is highlighted in two verses of the Sagāthakavagga of the Saṃyuttanikāya is reported"<sup>2</sup>

Discourse of the Buddha emphasizing the significance of sīla as the preliminary stage and the foundation of the Buddhist goal of moral perfection is scattered in many contexts in the scriptures. The Buddha points out that in his scheme of training, "There is a graduate training, procedure and path. In this path, a disciple is first advised to cultivate sīla so that he could proceed with greater facility to the other two stages consisting of samādhi and paññā."<sup>3</sup>The idea is that, sīla is in a way a precondition for the development of samādhi and paññā is often emphasized.

In the MahāparinibbānaSutta, "The Buddha's repetitive emphasis on the requirement of perfecting sīla as a ground for the fruitful cultivation of samādhi, which is grounded on the perfection of sīla, is immensely fruitful and beneficial."<sup>4</sup>It is also maintained that seven continuous steps can be identified in an individual's gradual progression towards the goal of liberation and that the first in this successive order is sīla.

Although sīla is considered such as the institution for the development of insight, the relationship between sīla and paññā are considered to be mutually supportive, "Where there is sīla there is paññā and where there is paññā there is sīla. "Paññā is purified by sīla and sīla is purified by paññā."<sup>5</sup>

The ultimate goal of liberation is conceived as the attainment of a morality incorruptible state of mind leading to the appeasement of all unwholesome character traits of a person.

“This ultimate freedom is described as a consequence of perfection of seven purifications beginning with the purification of *sīla*.”<sup>6</sup> All modes of higher moral cultivation are expected to be practiced on the foundation of *sīla*. “All activity pursued in the path of moral perfection laid down in terms of eightfold path, the 7 elements of enlightenment, besides the four fundamentals of mindfulness have *sīla* as their support.”<sup>7</sup>

The Buddha describes, “*Sīla* is the foundational practice that helps in the attainment of all wholesome states.”<sup>8</sup> The emphasis in the cultivation of *sīla* is on the restraint from physical and vocal deeds. The purity of conduct is to be an expected Buddhist monk who has get relinquished the pleasures of the household life. The full list of *sīla* enumerated in the *Brahmajāla* and *Sāmaññaphala* sutta consists of numerous observances aimed at transforming the lifestyle of the *bhikkhu* that it marks a difference from the lifestyle of the layperson. The monk, to refrain from the practice of all the mundane arts is contemplated.

Despite the fact that *sīla* is extolled as the indispensable foundation for progress in the Buddhist path, the Buddha warns his disciples not to consider *sīla* as an end up in the issue, and against the possibility of clinging to *sīla* and becoming victims of spirituality that become a hindrance to their moral development.

“After attaining the goal, a person becomes one who is endowed with *sīla* because of spontaneous nature of one’s behavior.”<sup>9</sup> (Ma-N, Vol. II) One who is perfect in *sīla* does not have to make any resolve to be free from remorse. Freedom from remorse comes as a natural product of perfection in *sīla*.

“One who is at fault with regard to *sīla* has destroyed the foundation of right composure of the mind.”<sup>10</sup> (An-N, Vol. III) Whenever one reflects on one’s perfection in *sīla* one’s mind is not overwhelmed by the roots of evil. As a consequence, one experiences a sense of spiritual delight and joy conducive to the attainment of *samādhi*.

*Sīla* helps the Buddhist to overcome the psychological tensions resulting from rough and unrefined patterns of behavior. Due to big changes in the societies in the last 100 years, it is presumed religion is no longer so important, especially for many younger people. In Europe, more than 50% of the population is atheists. For young people, the problems of alcohol, drugs and addiction are important in the twenty-first century. Alcoholism in burning social problems of modern society. It ruins the physical and mental health of the addicts. Drug abuse is even more injurious. Values have become so prevented that it is the teetotaler who gets cornered in society today.

Fully realizing the harmful effects of intoxicants, Buddhism has included abstention from it among the basis moral precepts. The dangers of intoxicants are enumerated in the Buddha’s discourses. The most popular of which is the *Siṅgalovādasutta*. Luxury in intoxicants sources breakdown of income. “One who wasted a tremendous fortune by drinking with detestable

companions and was diminished to beggary in his mature age, is an exemplary model related in the Pali texts of a well-off man destroyed by alcohol"<sup>11</sup> (Dha-A, III,)

Intoxicants can source quarrels, arguments and issue violence. Disruption of family life is often caused by addiction to liquor and drugs and this brings about a whole chain of other related social problems. The Buddha said that a terrible notoriety is brought about by the propensity for taking intoxicants, which also destroys precepts and weakens wisdom. Most of the misconducts in modern culture have alcohol and drugs as the main cause.

The precept against the use of intoxicants attempts to protect the mental faculty from degenerating through a bad habit. One, under the influence of intoxicants has no control over oneself, and thus fails to keep the other precepts as well. "What Buddhism can contribute here is a deeper knowledge of laws of interdependence as well as contributing means for an education of the heart and the mind."<sup>12</sup> (Unedited transcript of talk by professor Samdhong Rinpoche, 23 July 2006, France)

So, one does have a strong need for refreshing ethical values for children and young people, and as the societies have become more far from the religious values, it becomes more and more difficult to share ethical values with children. The best way to share with them is as always, to set a good example. And among all religions, Buddhism has a bridge function towards sciences and atheistic world views. In the strengthening of Buddhist education cooperation with modern sciences develops greater humanist ethics, allowing for a possible great future. Buddhist ethics have to be the promising factor to become the origin for a general ethic system of mankind.

The Buddhist way of salvation and eternal bliss cannot be obtained unless man purifies himself by becoming a perfect one. One has to find out the way to control his sense and the mind through self-training, discipline and restraint. Not many people have apprehended that the reason of suffering is because of their own affection and craving towards various things. They are not in a position to understand that someday they might have to depart from everything they now hold in this world. People have to ascertain to attain contentment and detachment.

"If a person observes at least five precepts from young, it will greatly benefit the family, village, city and the country at large. If everyone observes the five precepts the entire world be the heaven."<sup>13</sup> (Pemaloka, K Sri, A Buddhist Handbook, Singapore) In the Buddha's teachings, the five precepts have an important relevance to modern society. One in the modern world lives in a dangerous state of illness rooted in moral carelessness. The five precepts from the backbone of Buddhist ethics offer a correction for that illness because it discovers the source of the problem. The five precepts are regarded as an integral part and of personal morality, a stepping stone along the path to liberation. One must firstly abstain from all evil deeds and words in order to establish moral purity. It is only by laying the firm foundation of moral purity as the first step, will one acquire the mental and emotional maturity to proceed towards the higher stages of concentration (Samādhi) and then to wisdom (Paññā).

It is described in the Visuddhimagga thus, "A wise man, well established in morality, develops consciousness and understanding and as a bhikkhu, ardently and sagaciously, succeeds in disentangling this entanglement."<sup>14</sup> (Vi-M-A, Vol. I) If one studies Buddhism it will be found that it is amongst the previous religions that is still being practiced in the world today. While the names of many other religions which existed in India have been forgotten today. This is on the grounds that the Buddha has established itself as a religious teacher whose significance was meant to promote the happiness and well-being of other mankind. The Buddha's main point was to help the disciples to live an ordinary life not going to the extremes of self-discipline or to sensual cravings, that is "the Noble Eightfold Path is the true of the morality or 'natural morality', in contradistinction to 'prescribed rules'."<sup>15</sup> (Nyanatiloka Thera, The Buddha's Path to Deliverance, 2000)

Buddhist morality is not the invention of human minds. Nor is it dependent on tribal morals which are gradually being exchanged by humanistic codes. It depends on the universal regulation of cause and logical results (kamma), also considered a good and bad action in the matter of its affects to oneself and others. An action conveys prosperity to oneself, can't be considered a good activity, if it causes physical and mental pain to another living being.

Buddhist ethics finds its foundation not on the changing social customs but rather on the unchanging laws of nature. Buddhist moral values are essentially a part of nature and the invariable law of cause and effect. The basic actuality that Buddhist morals is established in natural law makes its moralities both suitable and acceptable to the modern world. The statistic says that the Buddhist moral conduct was originated over 2500 years ago.

In Buddhism, Morality is basis practical way to the final goal of ultimate happiness that is means leads to Nibbāna. On the Buddhist way to liberation, every individual is contemplated responsible for one's own prosperities and disasters. Every individual is supposed to work one's own deliverance by one's understands and exertion. The Buddha said. "You should train yourself thus: we will think no ill of our fellows in the godly life."<sup>16</sup>(An-N, Vol. III)

In Buddhism, the separation between what's good and what's bad is actual simple: all actions that have their roots in lobha(greed), dosa (hatred) and moha(delusion) that spring from selfishness foster the harmful delusion of self-identity. All those actions that are rooted within the virtues of generosity, love and intelligence, are meritorious. The paradigm of good and bad apply whether or not the actions are unit of thought, word or deed.

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