

Everlasting Happiness,
as Buddha Attains 6

Presented by Venerable Da Shi

**Translated by
The Dharma Committee
Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)**

Preface

Buddha came into this world to lead all sentient beings away from suffering and towards enlightenment. He forsook his throne and worldly possessions for the pursuit of enlightenment. It was his wish to guide all sentient beings in their understanding of the karmic cycle and the path to Nirvana. After his passing into Parinirvana, his teachings were collected and compiled by his followers.

It is Venerable Da Shi's wish to continue the Buddha's teachings, spread the seeds of compassion, and carry on his wish for all sentient beings to attain Nirvana. Since his ordination, Venerable Da Shi has been actively involved in the teaching of the Dharma in many places, including Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore. In 2004/2005, Venerable Da Shi was invited by the Life Television Station in Taiwan to present talks on various Dharma topics. This book was written based on the consolidated content of Venerable Da Shi's televised talks, in hope that his compassionate wish would be furthered through the spreading of the Dharma.

Foreword

EVERLASTING HAPPINESS, AS BUDDHA ATTAINS

Editorial Notes

The Buddha was born into this world out of great compassion with the aim to help all mortal beings avoid sufferings and attain endless bliss.

The world of mortal beings is full of suffering. It is a surreal world of endless desires and yet fulfillment of all desires is impossible. We have to work hard to find fulfillment but it is all transient. It is like a trap where we relentlessly pursue wealth, appearance, fame, gastronomic satisfaction, and excessive sleep without ever pondering what all these could lead to. We repeatedly go through birth, aging, sickness, and death and in this continuous cyclic existence, we suffer immeasurably.

The Buddha is like an expert doctor with the ability to diagnose and treat all kinds of ailments. Indeed, he dispenses eighty four thousands procedures for as much trouble that mortal beings could possibly face in this world. All these are found in the Buddha's teachings. If we practice his teachings with complete faith and realization, besides saving ourselves

from suffering in this life, we can also find liberation in time to come.

There are very few fortunate beings that have the chance to hear the Buddha's teachings. The number of people who are able to hear and learn the Buddha's Dharma teachings is said to be like the amount of soil caught in one's nail if one were to use hands to dig into the ground.

Everlasting Happiness, as Buddha Attains is translated from a Chinese compilation of Venerable Da Shi's Dharma teachings on television in Taiwan, R.O.C. He has used the Agama Sutra as the central focus of these teachings, supplemented by relevant Dharma from Mahayana Sutras, including the Prajna Sutras, the Middle Way, the Maha-prajna-paramita-Sastra, the Dasabhumika-Vibhasa-Sastra, the Saddharma-Pundarika, etc. for better understanding. Through his skillful narration and explanation, Venerable Da Shi has made the Buddha's Dharma very easy to understand and at the same time, interesting. There are also many citations of examples where one can apply in one's life and practice.

It is the wish of Venerable Da Shi that these teachings should reach out to more people, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. For Buddhists who have sought refuge in the Triple Gem, these teachings serve to strengthen their understanding of the Dharma and improve practices. For non-Buddhists, may it serve as a guide to attain true bliss.

The focus of this book is on the upholding of precepts (Sila). This is the sixth installment of a translated series and it will also be made available on our website at www.mypty.sg. Other topics in the series will be published progressively in subsequent books.

The Dharma introduced in this series accords with the teachings in the Chinese Mahayana tradition, which have originally been translated from Sanskrit scriptures. Hence, Sanskrit has been used for the names and specific Buddhist terminologies in the text. Readers can find help from the footnotes on the relevant pages and Glossary at the end of this book for explanation of common Buddhist terms (first appearance in italics) and concepts.

The Dharma Editorial Committee at Miao You Pu Ti Yuan in Singapore wishes all readers blissful fulfillments in reading.

@@@ This work is an effort to uphold and support Venerable Da Shi's great vow of spreading the Dharma in gratitude of the Buddha's compassion. Please help to spread the wisdom and cheers of the Dharma by passing this book on to someone else should you feel that you do not need it anymore. As the Buddha taught, the gift of the Dharma excels all gifts! May all have the chance to know the Buddha's Dharma! @@@

The Dharma Editorial Team

Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)

UPHOLDING PRECEPTS (SILA) – (4)

The Connection between Upholding the Precepts and Giving

Practicing generosity will generate merits of wealth while being respectful to others will bring about merits of dignity. Affluent people with self-respect will not steal.

On the contrary, the less privileged out of desperation may resort to theft and robbery due to poverty. This could lead to social instability and unrest when leaders of places that are scarce of resources are unable to provide an acceptable living condition for its people.

Therefore, it is much easier for a person with good merits to uphold the precepts. We should thus continue to practice giving generously and dedicate the merits generated from the act of offering towards attaining *Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi*.

Example 1

Poverty may drive one to rob and one may end up hurting people or even taking their lives. Some who failed to engage a partner for marriage due to poverty may end up committing sexual misconduct by violating other women. In order to pull

through poverty, one may also resort to lying. Under such circumstances, one may even turn to drug consumption, alcohol, or try their luck on the gambling tables. These examples show that life is a great challenge for people who lack merits and it is difficult for them to learn the Dharma or to uphold the precepts.

Hence, the practice of giving helps us to be liberated from poverty so as to allow us to uphold the precepts diligently.

Example 2

There was once a rich miser in Buddha's time. When Buddha knew that the time to enlighten him had arrived, he requested the rich man to give five kinds of offerings. However, the wealthy man refused.

The Buddha then said, "You need not spend a penny to give these five kinds of offerings. All you have to do is to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, and taking intoxicants."

The rich man stated, "I am willing to give anything so long as I do not have to spend money."

So, the rich man accepted to give the five kinds of offerings (Five Precepts). At that moment, a wholesome thought arose in his mind and he went to his warehouse to find something to offer to Buddha. However, being the miser that he was, his intention was to offer a cheap roll of fabric to Buddha.

Nevertheless, Buddha used his supernatural powers to make the inferior rolls of fabric vanish, and only rolls of fabric that were of good quality remained. As a result, the wealthy man offered a roll of fine quality fabric to Buddha. After that, the rich man started pondering, "What other treasures can I offer to Buddha?"

Buddha then told him, "King *Sakra* was not focused during a battle with the Asuras and that led to his defeat. But when his mind was settled, he defeated the Asuras. Therefore, only a focused mind can defeat the enemy. Similarly, we can only overcome our inner enemies – defilements and suffering – when our mind is focused."

The rich man realized that Buddha knew what he was thinking and this strengthened his faith in the Buddha. He listened attentively to the teachings given by Buddha and immediately attained the Pure Dharma Eye. By then, his mind was in a wholesome state and he offered sustenance to the Buddha respectfully.

Hence, this shows that it is easier for a more privileged person with merits to grasp the Dharma and be liberated. In contrast, an underprivileged person with no merits could easily generate unwholesome thoughts.

Example 3

The Buddha was a toad in one of his past lives while Devadatta was a snake then. There was also a tortoise living with them beside the river and the three of them were good

friends. Excellent weather led to good harvests and everyone lived in peace. However, there was a year when the weather conditions were harsh and people suffered famine. The snake told the tortoise to invite the toad over and the tortoise did as told.

The wise toad said to the tortoise, "In times of famine, such invitation from the snake is hypocritical. A person could lose his kind loving nature during such crisis. My life would be at stake if I accepted the invite heedlessly."

Buddha in his past life already possessed insightful wisdom on the cause and conditions of everything. We could easily lose our kind loving nature when overwhelmed by our defilements.

Example 4

Precepts are the root cause of all forms of wholesome and meritorious deeds. The merits of precepts enable us to control our impulsions when defilements arise in our mind.

A same situation can have different outcomes and effects depending on whether we have observed the precepts.

Brahmacari Mrgasirsa was well versed in astronomy, geography, and medicine. He could tell the life and death of anyone, including the cause and conditions of their illness and death. However, he did not know that one could attain *Arahatship* and be liberated from Samsara. So the Buddha intended to enlighten him.

One day, Buddha and Brahmacari Mrgasirsa passed by a cemetery. The Buddha picked up a skull and asked him, "Does this skull belong to a man or to a woman?"

Brahmacari Mrgasirsa tapped on the bone and said, "It belongs to a man."

Buddha affirmed, "You are right! How did this man die?"

"He was very sick and died of illness," answered Brahmacari Mrgasirsa.

Buddha said, "Yes! Where did he take rebirth after his death?"

Brahmacari Mrgasirsa replied, "He descended to the three lower realms."

"Is there a way to cure him and prevent him from dying?" Buddha further enquired.

"Yes! Just use nectar to nurse his health and he would still be alive," Brahmacari Mrgasirsa stated.

Buddha then passed another skull to Brahmacari Mrgasirsa and asked the same questions. Brahmacari Mrgasirsa tapped on the second skull and proclaimed it belonged to a woman who had died during her pregnancy. Her fetus died as well. Upon her death, she took rebirth in the animal realm. However, if she had consumed a blend of curd and butter, her death would have been averted.

Buddha passed a third skull to Brahmachari Mrgasira and Brahmachari Mrgasira said it belonged to a man who was undernourished when alive. One day, the man received an abundance of food and died from binging. But if he had gone without food for three days, he would have survived. Upon his death, the man took rebirth in the hungry ghost realm as he was thinking of water when he voraciously ate his food.

Buddha took a fourth skull and gave it to Brahmachari Mrgasira. Brahmachari Mrgasira then proclaimed that the fourth skull was that of a woman who was feeble and had starved to death. However, she was reborn in the human realm.

This time, Buddha questioned, "A hungry person would be reborn in the hungry ghost realm. Why did this lady take rebirth in the human realm?"

Brahmachari Mrgasira agreed, "That's right! Why is this so?"

Brahmachari Mrgasira then meditated and observed, "The woman took rebirth in the human realm because she had observed and upheld the precepts."

The Buddha affirmed his conclusion, "Yes! The woman had observed the precepts. That is why she did not descend to the hungry ghost realm but took rebirth in the human realm instead."

Next, Buddha took a fifth skull and handed it to Brahmacari Mrgasirsa. Brahmacari Mrgasirsa stated that it belonged to a man who was murdered and who had taken rebirth in the heavenly realm upon his death.

The Buddha asked, "People who are murdered usually take rebirth in the three lower realms. Why did this man take rebirth in the heavenly realm instead?"

Brahmacari Mrgasirsa tapped on the skull and said, "He had observed the precepts and practiced the tenfold meritorious cause of action."

Buddha asked, "How many precepts did this man observe?"

Brahmacari Mrgasirsa tapped on the bone and observed mindfully. He then announced, "This man had observed the Eight Precepts. Thus, he took rebirth in the heavenly realm."

"You are right! This person observed the Eight Precepts and was reborn in the heavenly realm. Although he was killed, he did not descend to the three lower realms," said the Buddha.

At this juncture, Bhikshu Udayan from the south of Mountain Pu Xiang, which was situated in the Eastern Pure Land (东方境界), had just entered into Nirvana, and Buddha used his powers to bring the bone of Bhikshu Udayan to Brahmacari Mrgasirsa. Buddha then asked, "Does this belong to a man or a woman?"

Brahmacari Mrgasirsa tapped on the bone but could not distinguish if it belonged to a man or a woman. So he consulted the Buddha.

Buddha said, "This bone belongs to Bhikshu Udayan who was an Arahant. He had just entered into Nirvana. I have used my powers to bring his bone to you."

Brahmacari Mrgasirsa then realized that Arahants do exist. An Arahant has no distinct gender and has surpassed the cycle of arising and cessation. Thus, there is no way to foretell the rebirth of an Arahant. By now, Brahmacari Mrgasirsa was full of respect for the Buddha and stopped addressing Buddha by his last name, Gautama. With utmost respect, he beseeched the Buddha to accept him as a disciple.

The World Honored One agreed to his request and said, "Sadhu! Bhikshu! May your beard and hair let fall, and your body be covered with the kasaya."

Although Brahmacari Mrgasirsa was already endowed with the precepts and meditative concentration, he lacked wisdom. After he cultivated in accordance to the Buddha's teachings, he attained Arahantship.

Through the exchange with Brahmacari Mrgasirsa in this sutra, Buddha taught us that even if we were harmed, we would not descend to the three lower realms upon our death if we had observed the Five Precepts or Eight Precepts. We would take rebirth in the heavenly realm instead. Similarly, despite

poverty and hardship in life, we will not take rebirth in the three lower realms but be reborn in the human or heavenly realm as long as we uphold the precepts.

The Connection between the Observance of Precepts and the Practice of Endurance

The practice of precepts safeguards our speech and actions while the practice of endurance subdues our vexations and prevents us from thoughtless actions.

We practice endurance by not being attached to joyous circumstances nor do we become angry or troubled when suffering.

Example 1

The ascetic Ekasrnga had meditative concentration and possessed supernatural powers. However, after being tempted by a promiscuous woman, he could not overcome his desires and developed a relationship with her under the influence of alcohol. As a result, he broke the precepts and lost his meditative concentration and supernatural powers. Had he subdued his lust, he would not have transgressed the precepts.

Example 2

Respecting others helps us to uphold the precepts. Once, a man was told by a fortune teller that his life was about to end. He was very concerned and consulted other fortune tellers and was given the same answer.

Finally, he went to seek help from the Buddha to prolong his life. Buddha advised him to stand by the city gate and greet every passerby who entered or left the city. The man heeded the Buddha's advice and acted accordingly.

A few days later, a particular person who entered the city returned his greetings. In addition, this person also wished him longevity. When he went to see the Buddha, he was asked by the Buddha if there was indeed someone who had blessed him and he replied yes.

Buddha said, "That person was a ghost who bore a grudge against you in the past life. He was going to claim your life today. However, since you have shown utmost respect to him and all sentient beings, he forgave you and gave you his blessing instead."

This exemplifies that practicing endurance and being respectful towards others generate merits and this in turn makes it easier for us to observe the precepts.

Example 3

Endurance is like an elderly person's walking stick which aids him to walk steadily in the dark and prevents him from stumbling.

The Great Buddha returned to Kapilavastu after attaining enlightenment to expound the Dharma to the Sakyas. He urged them to observe the Five Precepts and the Sakyas practiced accordingly.

Then, King Prasenajit ascended the throne and asked for an aristocratic lady from the Sakyas. However, Mahanama of the Sakya clan betrothed one of his maids to the king instead. Soon after, the maid gave birth to a prince named Virudhaka.

When Prince Virudhaka turned eight, he went to learn archery from the Sakyas. One day, while the prince sat on the Buddha's Dharma seat, the Sakyas were ferociously furious. They thrust the prince to the floor and ridiculed him as the unworthy child of a servant who had tainted the Buddha's Dharma seat. The prince was infuriated and swore to his friend, Brahmachari Hao Ku (好苦梵志), "Bear this in mind. I vow to take revenge when I ascend the throne."

After King Prasenajit passed away, Prince Virudhaka succeeded the throne. Brahmachari Hao Ku instigated and reminded him of his past humiliation from the Sakyas. This instigation sparked King Virudhaka to set off his strong troop to attack the Sakyas.

The knowing Buddha had tried dissuading king Virudhaka twice from attacking the Sakyas, and managed to curb his spiteful intention. However, being deeply influenced by Brahmachari Hao Ku's malicious reminder of his past humiliation, the king could no longer contain his vindictive mind and took no heed of the Buddha's advice and proceeded with the attack. It finally happened on the third attempt, while The Great Buddha knew that the karmic retribution of the Sakyas had completely matured and that nothing could avert it.

The Sakyas were villagers, making a living as fishermen in their past lives when the Buddha was a little boy. Prince Virudhaka happened to be a big fish in his past life, with Brahmacari Hao Ku following beside as a small fish. When the big fish was caught by the villagers, he told the small fish to remind him to take revenge for his suffering in this incident. The big fish was then eaten by the villagers while the little boy, who was only a bystander, watched with delight. This act of rejoice subsequently manifested as the karmic result of headaches when the little boy became Buddha.

The mockery by the Sakyas had generated much resentment in Prince Virudhaka that he vowed to wipe out the Sakya clan when he ascended the throne. The past cause combined with the present conditions led to the eventual massacre of the Sakya clansmen.

The Sakyas were marksmen in archery but they heeded the teachings of Buddha and observed the precepts. So when King Virudhaka arrived with his troops, the Sakyas had no intention of harming the king and aimed the arrows only at his hair bob or his earrings.

Intimidated, King Virudhaka decided to retreat but Brahmacari Hao Ku told him evilly, "The fact that they are not shooting you indicates that they do not intend to hurt you. So my king, it is a good opportunity for revenge." Hearing this, King Virudhaka commanded his troops to attack Kapilavastu and killed all the Sakyas.

As the Sakyas had observed the Five Precepts, they took rebirth in the heavenly realm after they were killed. This is due to their strong faith and perseverance in the precepts even when facing death.

On the other hand, King Virudhaka could not endure the humiliation by the Sakyas and was filled with hatred. He was unable to uphold the precepts as he had bad company who constantly instigated and prompted him to commit unwholesome deeds. Thus, he descended to the hell realm seven days after the massacre.

Endurance helps us to observe the precepts. Likewise, the power of precepts can also further aid our fortitude. This is the connection between upholding precepts and practicing endurance.

Types of Precepts

- (1) Precepts of lay Buddhists:** This refers to the Five Precepts, tenfold meritorious cause of action, and Eight Precepts.
- (2) Precepts of the Sangha community:** This includes the Ten Precepts of a Sramenara, Ten Precepts of a *Sramanerika*, Six Precepts of a *Siksamana*, Two hundred and fifty Precepts of a Bhikshu, and Three hundred and forty-eight Precepts of a *Bhikshuni*.
- (3) Bodhisattva Precepts** – Both lay Buddhists and the Sangha community uphold the Bodhisattva Precepts. There are three sets of sutras on Bodhisattva Precepts, namely the

Brahma Net Sutra, Yoga Bodhisattva Precepts Sutra, and the Sutra of the Upasaka Precepts.

What are the Eight Precepts?

The *Madhyama Agama Sutra* (持斋经) cites three types of approach to practicing abstinence or purification.

- (1) The personality trait of a cowherd
- (2) The mentality of the Nirgrantha
- (3) The Eight Precepts of the Noble Ones

(1) The Personality Trait of Cowherd

A cowherd is always planning and seeking the next meadowland for his cattle. Similarly, some laity who undertake precepts are akin to a cowherd. Much as he wishes to observe the precepts well, his state of wandering mind is unable to curb his desires for food.

(2) Mentality of the Nirgrantha

The Nirgrantha in ancient India might perhaps want to protect sentient beings instead of harming them. However, in their state of troubled and confused moment, they would end up killing sentient beings. More often than not, they tend to mislead others by proclaiming the non-existence of parents or the Triple Gem. They also persist that there is no cause and effect, and insist on the non-existence of good and evil.

At times, we may also appear to be like the Nirgrantha, practicing inconsistency by telling lies every now and then, even though we have undertaken the precepts. We tend to disregard the precepts when our unwholesome mind arises or when we are absent-minded. This inconsistency is referred as the mentality of a Nirgrantha.

(3) The Eight Precepts of the Noble Ones

The Eight Precepts that laities uphold for one day and one night are:

- (a) Abstinence from killing.
- (b) Abstinence from stealing.
- (c) Abstinence from lust.
- (d) Abstinence from deceit, divisive speech, harsh language, and frivolous speech.
- (e) Abstinence from taking intoxicants.
- (f) Abstinence from resting on luxurious beds.
- (g) Abstinence from any form of entertainment including dancing, singing, and playing of musical instruments, and abstinence from adorning one-self with jewelry and wearing cosmetics.
- (h) Abstinence from food after mid-day; we avoid eating from mid-day till the following break of dawn (when the sun has arisen).

How Should We Uphold the Eight Precepts?

(1) Practice Five Kinds of Mindfulness

We need to practice five kinds of mindfulness while observing the Eight Precepts. These are the Mindfulness of the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, the Precepts, and the Heavens. We can even practice the Mindfulness of Generosity.

It is important to practice these five kinds of mindfulness. When we undertake the Eight Precepts, we should make a vow to uphold the precepts sincerely, "Although we laity are unable to renounce like the monastics, we should aspire to practice like the Buddha and Arahats for at least a day and night. During this time we cultivate to purify our body, speech, and mind. We should not harbor any thoughts of killing, stealing, lust, lying, harsh and divisive speech, or engage in frivolous talk. We also refrain from using any intoxicants. We instill self-discipline with a mind focused and practice to be wholesome like Buddha and the Arahats."

However, the mind of sentient beings is filled with defilements, wandering thoughts, greed, and anger. Such erroneous thoughts and views cause us to forget the basis of precepts. Thus sadly, we end up breaking the precepts easily. This is why the Buddha taught us to be mindful of the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, the Precepts, and the Heavens.

(a) Mindfulness of the Buddha – We are mindful of the wholesome virtues of The Great Buddha when we look at the Buddha's statue and think of the Buddha while

upholding the precepts. This will enable us to eradicate any defilements or unwholesome thoughts that may arise in our mind. The essence of the precepts is thus safeguarded and our mind is untainted. This is analogous to using shampoo to wash our dirty hair.

- (b) Mindfulness of the Dharma** – The Dharma guides us towards Nirvana, attaining ultimate liberation as the Buddha did. When our thoughts are focused on the Dharma, our mind is pure. Even if vexations and unwholesome thoughts may still arise, we can eradicate them with ease. This is like using soap to get rid of the dirt and oil on our body.
- (c) Mindfulness of the Sangha** – We are mindful of the *four pairs and eight categories of Sravaka practitioners* and we feel joy through contemplating on the purity and sincerity of these sages. When feeling vexed, we are able to put aside our unwholesome thoughts and think of the virtuous Arahats whom we have taken refuge in. We can then observe the precepts with an untainted mind. This is similar to washing soiled clothes with detergent.
- (d) Mindfulness of the Precepts** – We are mindful of the essence of the precepts – Five Precepts, tenfold meritorious cause of action, and Eight Precepts. Precepts are like beautiful clothes and exquisite jewelries which help to dignify our appearance. Similarly, upholding the precepts enable us to be reborn in the heavenly realm and to attain Nirvana. Being mindful of the precepts and being willing to

undertake the precepts, we can better control our defilements and generate wholesome thoughts.

A mirror that is covered with dust after being left untouched for a long time can be made shiny again after cleaning. Similarly, our defiled mind is just like the dusty mirror which is cleansable through undertaking and upholding the precepts.

(e) Mindfulness of the Heavens – We are mindful of the virtues of the heavens. Heavenly beings are extraordinary as they have luminous bodies, longer life span, dignified appearance, and respectable virtues. Heavenly beings were disciples of the Triple Gem in their past lives as humans. They had unshakable faith in the Buddha and offered generously to the Triple Gem. They also took care of the less privileged and respected their parents and teachers. Furthermore, they upheld the precepts willingly, listened attentively to the Dharma, and aspired to be liberated from Samsara. This is how heavenly beings acquire their present merits.

There are many opportunities for us to undertake the Eight Precepts and we should be mindful of the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, the Precepts, and the Heavens when we undertake the precepts. Undertaking the Eight Precepts will lead us to take rebirth in the heavenly realm and ultimately to attain liberation as the Buddha did.

We should be mindful not to transgress the precepts after undertaking them. Otherwise, we may eventually give in to the warmth and concern from our loved ones at home and break the precepts. This is certainly undesirable.

(2) Dedication of Vows

Vows made after taking the Eight Precepts should be dedicated towards attaining liberation and Buddhahood. Alternatively, we could also aspire to take rebirth in the Western Pure World of Amitabha Buddha, and not to aspire for rebirth in the heavenly realm or as a king in the human realm. We should also make aspirations to avoid taking rebirth in places without the Dharma, as well as the three lower realms. It is important to note these key factors when dedicating vows after receiving the Eight Precepts.

Example

Sakyamuni Buddha was a princess named Muni in one of his past life and Dipamkara Buddha was an elderly Bhikshu. One day, the elderly Bhikshu approached Princess Muni for alms. He lighted a lamp with the oil that was collected and offered it to the Buddha and made a vow at the same time. As a result, he was assured of future enlightenment.

Princess Muni on the other hand did not make a vow. So she did not receive assurance of future enlightenment then. When the elderly Bhikshu attained enlightenment as Dipamkara Buddha, Princess Muni took rebirth as a virtuous layman, Shan Hui (善慧童子). After Shan Hui made an

offering to the Buddha, he made a vow and thus he was assured of future enlightenment and eventually became Sakyamuni Buddha.

This shows that we must remember to make meaningful vows when upholding the Eight Precepts.

(3) Pursuit and Relinquishment of the Precept

The Eight Precepts are for lay Buddhists who are unable to renounce and join the monastic order due to career and family commitments. Laities would normally seek a course of six-day repentance for purifications before receiving the Eight Precepts from the monks at the monastery (upavasatha).

The Eight Precepts must be persevered for a day and night, and are to be upheld against all odds. The undertaking of the precepts will naturally end at the next break of dawn (when our palm lines are visible to the eyes).

(4) Upholding of Precepts

Amongst the Eight Precepts, the one on "taking one meal a day" is commonly perceived to be a challenge to most laities. We learn from the sutras that this precept was necessitated by the Buddha due to the following two cause and conditions:

- (a)** One day, when Venerable Kalodayin went for alms round at dusk, the sky was dark and he encountered a thunder storm. As he was knocking on the door of a house for asking alms, a pregnant woman came to answer the door.

She was terrified at the sight of Venerable Kalodayin as he had a dark skin tone, and she had mistaken the Venerable as a shadowy figure standing in her doorway. Unfortunately, this encounter led to her miscarriage.

News of the incident spread widely across the entire city and people started commenting, "The Bhikshus from the Sangha community of Sakyamuni Buddha are very greedy. They eat non-stop from dawn till dusk."

The Buddha then set down the regulation that Bhikshus should refrain from taking meals after mid-day.

(b) There was a Bhikshu named Bhaddali who once told the Buddha, "I cannot uphold this precept of having one meal a day as my body is weak."

The Buddha replied, "You may take two bowls on your alms round in the morning. Have one bowl for breakfast and the other for lunch."

Bhikshu Bhaddali answered, "Two meals are insufficient and I still cannot uphold the precept."

Buddha said, "You may have three meals a day then."

Bhikshu Bhaddali said, "But still, I cannot uphold the precept."

Buddha said, "The purpose of renouncing the secular life is to self-cultivate. We must control our food intake. Do not be greedy and over-eat."

As Bhikshu Bhaddali was unable to uphold the precept, he left the Sangha community and practiced on his own.

When the Buddha was on Varsa (summer retreat), Venerable Ananda went to Bhikshu Bhaddali and advised him out of compassion, "You need to see the World Honored One quickly. If the World Honored One enters into *Parinirvana*, you will not have the chance to see the World Honored One anymore."

Thus, Bhikshu Bhaddali returned and paid homage to the Buddha. He confessed to the Buddha and repented sincerely, "I could not uphold the precepts set by the World Honored One. May the World Honored One please accept my repentance and I promise not to break the precepts again."

The Buddha accepted his repentance and said, "When this world was initially formed, heavenly beings from the Abhasvara Heaven came to the human realm. At that time, there was no sun and moon but the body of the *Devas* were luminous and they saw an earthy fluid on the ground surface. Out of curiosity, some *Devas* tasted the liquid and found it delicious. As they continued to consume the liquid, they became heavier and their skin tone turned darker. These *Devas* began to transform into bodies of flesh and since then, they were unable to fly back to the Abhasvara Heaven and had to settle down in the human realm."

So here, we see that Buddhism does not talk about creationism teachings. Instead, we learn that sentient beings are formed through karma and ignorance.

Buddha told Bhaddali, "Among the heavenly beings that came down from the Abhasvara Heaven in the beginning of the Kalpa of Existence, you were the first to taste the earthy liquid. As a result of your greed, you were unable to return to the heavenly realm. Now that you have met Buddha and renounced the secular life, you will not be able to attain Nirvana and liberation if you continue to be greedy."

After hearing the Buddha's teaching, Bhikshu Bhaddali realized that nine small kalpas had passed since and he was still not liberated from Samsara due to his greed. He would not be liberated even after the thousand Buddhas of the Good Kalpa have come and gone in the world if he continued to be greedy. So he practiced diligently, ceased all afflictions, and eventually attained Arahatsip.

A layperson should persevere to uphold the essence of the Eight Precepts for that specific day and night. Hungry as we may be, we can still endure the hunger sensation through drinking water. This could help to ease and soothe the pangs. A monastic may need time to get adjusted but will soon appreciate the advantages of not eating at prohibited times. Wasting time indulging in various meals defeat the essence of precepts and deter our ability to renounce the secular life completely. Similarly, a layperson can never succeed in his

career achievement if he constantly indulges himself with exclusive food and alcohol. Moreover, excessive consumption could cause health problems such as hypertension, cardiac problems, and kidney failure.

The Excellence of the Monastic and the Bodhisattva Precepts

The Monastic Precepts consist of the Sramenara Precepts, the Sramanerika Precepts, the Siksamana Precepts, the Complete Precepts of a Bhikshu, and the Complete Precepts of a Bhikshuni. The excellence of the Monastic Precepts is marked in many sutras.

Example

Venerable Ananda heard from the Buddha that Elder Pi Luo Xian (毘罗先) would pass on after seven days and suffer in the *Hell of Screaming*. The only way to save him from this suffering was for him to renounce and be a monastic. So Venerable Ananda went to visit the elder, hoping to convince him to join the monastic order. However, Elder Pi Luo Xian was not ready to abandon his attachment to the five desires and procrastinated till the very last day. Only then was he convinced by Venerable Ananda to renounce and uphold the precepts for just one day; and he practiced the *Ten Kinds of Mindfulness* – Mindfulness of the Buddha, Mindfulness of the Dharma, Mindfulness of the Sangha, Mindfulness of the Precepts, Mindfulness of Generosity, Mindfulness of the Heavens, Mindfulness of the Cessation of Thoughts, Mindfulness of Breath, Mindfulness of the Impermanence of the Body, and Mindfulness of Death.

As a result, he did not take rebirth in the hell realm but was reborn in the *Heavens of the Four Deva Kings* instead. After which he would take rebirth in the *Trayastrimsat Heaven*, the *Yama Heaven*, the *Tusita Heaven*, the *Nirmanarati Heaven*, and the *Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven*.

Upon completion of the seventh cycle, alternating between the human realm and heavenly realms, he would return to the human realm where he will practice and cease all defilements and attain Arahatsip.

This shows that the merits of renouncing for just a day and night are indeed immeasurable.

Upholding the precepts is the basis to end suffering and attain everlasting happiness. Precepts are like the great earth which provides the foundation for skyscrapers to be built on. Similarly, the path to attain Nirvana and ultimate Bodhi begins from undertaking precepts. Upholding the precepts and cultivating diligently would enable us to reach the shore of Nirvana one day.

The essence of Bodhisattva Precepts for laities and monastics is similar – to safeguard the well-being of all sentient beings. It will hinder the Bodhisattva path towards Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi if a Bodhisattva deems that guiding sentient beings to liberation is an arduous task. Such contemplation is considered a transgression of the Bodhisattva Precepts.

Hence, the basis of Bodhisattva Precepts begins from undertaking the tenfold meritorious cause of action. If the thoughts of greed, anger, delusion, or pride rises, it would be deem as transgression of the precepts even if these thoughts have not been put into action.

A Bodhisattva should never harbor the thought of becoming an *Arahat* or *Pratyeka Buddha*. Such thoughts must be eradicated as they are also regarded as transgressions of the Bodhisattva precepts.

There is a form of repentance known as self-admonition of unwholesome thoughts. When an unwholesome thought or affliction arises in our mind, we are clearly mindful and aware that such thought is unwholesome and we are able to discontinue or cease such thoughts instantly. Henceforth, liberation from our defilements is through diligent practice of being mindful.

Abstinence from Killing	
Definition	To kill is to take the life of a sentient being. This includes abortion and suicide.
Sequence	(1) The key to success on the path of Bodhi is Great Compassion as humans are basically empathetic. This journey begins with abstinence from killing. Compassion enables us to be reborn as humans. (2) All sentient beings value their lives the most and desire to live. To save the lives of these beings, the first precept is to abstain from killing.
Conditions	<u>Five Conditions that Constitute Offense:</u> (1) Sentient being (2) Awareness (3) Intent to kill (4) Scheme (5) Termination of life
Severity of Offense	<u>Three Levels of Severity:</u> (1) Heinous offense: Killing one's parents, Buddhist teachers (Upadhyaya), Buddhist preceptors (Acarya), or Arahats. (2) Severe offense: Killing a human being. (3) Less severe offense: Killing an animal. <u>Severity is also dependent on:</u> (1) The intent to kill: Killing out of ignorance (severe offense), anger and greed (less severe offense). (2) The kind of sentient being that is killed. (3) Method of killing.
Exclusions	<u>Three Exceptions:</u> (1) To save the lives of the majority (2) To save the life of a sage – Hurting the killer out of compassion so as to prevent the killer from committing the Five Heinous Acts, even if this meant that one will take rebirth in the hell realm. (3) Insanity – Severe levels of mental illness equivalent to: – Touching fire like an ordinary person would seize gold. – Handling feces like an ordinary person would handle sandalwood. – Mental illness that is less severe is not considered insanity. Killing under such circumstances is not exempted and equates to severe offense.

Abstinence from Stealing	
Definition	Stealing is taking something without consent from the owner. It is categorized under six scenarios: (1) Thieving (2) Snatching (3) Swindling (4) Extortion (5) Deceit (6) Eviction
Sequence	(1) It is preceded by killing in the Ten Meritorious Deeds and the Ten Unmeritorious Deeds. (2) Killing and stealing generate detrimental results, first to the direct karmic result, and subsequently to the circumstantial karmic result. On the contrary, committing wholesome deeds will generate positive karmic results.
Conditions	<u>Six Conditions that Constitute Offense:</u> (1) Ownership (2) Aware that the object belongs to someone (3) Intent to steal (4) Valuables (5) Scheme (6) Removal from its origin
Severity Of Offense	<u>Three Levels of Severity:</u> (1) Stealing from the Sangha or the Sangha of the ten directions is an extremely severe offense. The sin is graver than killing eighty-four thousand parents or committing the Five Heinous Acts. (2) Stealing from the Triple Gem, teachers, parents and people who have generated Bodhicitta is a severe offence (3) Value of object: Severe Offense (equivalent to eight coins in ancient times) Less Severe Offense (Between three and five coins in ancient times) Least Severe Offense (Below three coins in ancient times) Severity of offense also depends on the degree of distress inflicted on the victim.
Exclusions	<u>Five Exceptions:</u> (1) Perception of being given (2) Perception of being the owner (3) Perception of worthless waste (4) Perception of transitory use (5) Perception of Kinship A Bodhisattva who punishes corrupt officials out of compassion by robbing from them and returning the loots to the respective victims is also an exception.

Abstinence from Sexual Misconduct	
Definition	Flirtation is an unethical conduct and it is unethical to have a sexual relationship with someone other than the legal spouse. An Upasaka who undertakes the Five Precepts should abstain from such misconduct. Laities can also abstain from all sexual activity voluntarily, and such laity is known as a Brahmacharya Upasaka. (Duration of abstention is according to one's will)
Sequence	A Bodhisattva acts for the benefits of others (parartha). Thus, the precept of abstinence from killing is foremost priority as killing goes against the nature of compassion. On the contrary, for a practitioner who self-cultivates for own benefit (svartha), the precept of abstinence from sexual misconduct holds priority as lustful thoughts taint the mind and hinder the practice of meditation and cultivation of wisdom. Unwholesome deeds that lead to suffering in Samsara will also be committed.
Conditions	<u>Five Conditions that Constitute Offense:</u> (1) Sentient being (2) Improper contact (3) Attachment derived from desire (4) Scheme (5) Unification
Severity Of Offense	<u>Severity of offense is dependent on:</u> (1) Intent: out of greed (severe offence), anger and ignorance (less severe offence). (2) Contact: Unethical conduct with a next-of-kin or someone respectable constitutes a severe offense. (3) Count of felonies (Offense from light to severe) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstaining from the misconduct after committing an offense • Abstaining from the misconduct after several offenses • Recidivating of the offenses • Constant violation of the precept
Exclusions	<u>Three exceptions:</u> (1) Asleep or unconsciousness (2) Without joyous feeling (3) No sexual desire An Upasaka should refrain from any sexual activity when observing the Eight Precepts. Likewise on the Six Purification Days, for the laity who has undertook the Bodhisattva Precepts. There is no exclusion for monastics who live in celibacy.

Abstinence from Lying	
Definition	Lying is false speech spoken in contradiction to one's thoughts, through dishonest words and deceptive speech. It includes harsh speech (scolding), divisive words (gossip), and frivolous conversation (content that is irrelevant to one's practice).
Sequence	The first three precepts are related to body actions while this precept is related to speech. It is easy to violate this precept as it includes four kinds of unwholesome speech and the offense is severe.
Conditions	<u>Six Conditions that Constitute Offense:</u> (1) Sentient being (2) Awareness (3) Intent to deceive (4) Conceal the truth (5) Clearly articulated (6) Comprehensible
Severity Of Offense	<u>Classified as heinous offense, major lies, and minor lies:</u> (1) Heinous offense: Proclaim Erroneous Views as Right Dharma and vice versa; sow discord among the monastics, and hinder monastics from propagating the Dharma. (2) Major lies (severe offense): Proclaim Arahatship or fruition of Bodhisattva practice when one has not attained. (3) Major lies (less severe offense): Proclaim false sighting of deities and ghosts; proclaim to be well-versed in Tripitaka, and the attainment of four meditations and eight concentrations, when one has not attained. These offenses obstruct Right View and Right Faith, and hinder one from attaining the Pure Dharma Eye. (4) Minor lies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claim not to have seen when one has seen and vice versa • Claim not to hear when one has heard and vice versa • Claim to be unaware when one is aware and vice versa • Claim not to know when one knows and vice versa • Claim non-existence when it exists and vice versa
Exclusions	<u>Exceptions of Major Lies:</u> (1) Conceit (adhimana) (2) Expounding Dharma and not self-proclaiming attainment (3) Said in jest (Everyone knows it is a joke) <u>Exceptions of Minor Lies:</u> To protect lives of sentient beings and prevent them from suffering, or for the sake of Dharma and spoken with no malicious intent. <u>Exceptions of frivolous speech:</u> (1) To alleviate one's troubles and sorrows (2) To safeguard sentient beings and help instill faith in the Dharma

Abstinence from Taking Intoxicants	
Definition	<p>Intoxicants include anything that has the appearance, odor, or taste of liquor, and the consumption of which could cause drowsiness or ecstasy.</p> <p>There are two categories of alcohol:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Grain based alcohol fermented from grains (2) Non-grain based alcohol fermented from flowers, fruits, seeds, roots, stems, leaves, or herbs.
Sequence	<p>Abstinence from taking intoxicants is a precept of precaution (prajnapiti-sila) to forestall the transgression of the first four precepts, which are also known as prakrti-sila (against values and integrity).</p> <p>The Bodhisattva Precepts state that the offense of selling liquor is graver than self-consumption, as intoxicating others is against the practice of Bodhisattvas.</p>
Conditions	<p><u>Five Conditions that Constitute Offense:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Intoxicating (2) Awareness (3) Intent to intake (4) No critical ailment that requires the intake (5) Swallowing <p>Each gulp down the throat counts as a violation of the precept.</p>
Severity Of Offense	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Self-consumption of liquor breaks the Five Precepts (2) Selling and brewing of liquor breaks the Bodhisattva Precepts and it is a severe offence
Exclusions	<p><u>Two Exceptions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Critical illness that requires the concoction of alcohol in medication (2) Apply externally on the wound (e.g. use of anesthesia in surgery)

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Altruistic Joy: Also known as Sympathetic Joy or Mudita. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Amitabha Buddha: The Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life, who presides over the Western Pure World, to which anyone can be reborn through single minded recitation of or meditation on the Buddha's name.

Anagamin: One who has attained the third stage of Liberation. Such a person has abandoned sensuous desires. Upon passing from the human realm, he will take rebirth in one of the five special worlds in the World of Form, called the Suddhavaśa worlds, or "Pure Abodes", from which he will attain Arahatship and will never return to the human realm. Hence, he is also known as a Non Returner. An Anagamin has abandoned the five lower fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatship.

Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi: The Supreme and Complete Enlightenment.

Arahat: One who has traversed the Eightfold Noble Path to reach the fourth and final stage of Liberation, called Arahatship. An Arahat has abandoned all ten fetters that bind beings to the cycle of existence. Also known as the Perfect One. See also Arahatship.

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Arahatship: The fourth and final stage of Liberation, in which one is fully liberated from Samsara and is no longer subject to death and rebirth. The four stages of Liberation are: The First stage known as Srotapanna; the Second stage known as Sakradagamin; the Third stage known as Anagamin; and the Fourth stage known as Arahat.

Avici Hell: Also known as the Hell of Uninterrupted Torture. It is the deepest and worst hell. Those born in this hell suffer, die, and are instantly reborn to suffering without interruption, until they have exhausted the retribution for their evil karma.

Bardo: A Tibetan term for the state of existence intermediate between two lives.

Bhikshu: A fully ordained male member of the Buddhist Sangha or monk observing two hundred and fifty Precepts.

Bhikshuni: A fully ordained female member of the Buddhist Sangha or nun observing five hundred Precepts.

Bhutatahata: The true character of reality. The inherent or true nature of phenomena or true suchness. (诸法实相)

Bodhicitta: Also known as the Bodhi-mind or the Bodhi-heart, in which "Bodhi" means "enlightened". It is the aspiration to attain supreme Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Bodhisattva: A being who has developed Bodhicitta and is striving for enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Brahma King: The King of the Brahma World.

Brahma World: In the widest sense, this is the name of the World of Form; in a narrower sense, it is the collective name of the first three heavens of the World of Form. See also Three worlds of existence.

Buddha: The Fully Enlightened One, who possesses perfect wisdom and compassion.

Compassion: Also known as Karuna. See also Four Divine States of Mind and Great Compassion.

Cycle of existence: See Samsara.

Dana: Charity; benevolence; generosity.

Defilements: The mental states of greed, hatred, and delusion which temporarily cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. These defilements are seen as the very roots of Samsaric existence and are known as the three poisons.

Deva: A heavenly being.

Dharma: The Teachings of the Buddha.

Dharma-kaya: The Dharma body, the truth body, the reality body.

Eight Precepts: Observed by lay Buddhists during certain retreats: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual activities; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not take intoxicants; (6) do not wear bodily adornments, use perfumes, engage in singing and dancing, and watching dances or plays; (7) do not sleep in a raised bed; and (8) do not eat after noon.

Eightfold Noble Path: The fundamental teaching of the Buddha that shows the path that leads to the cessation of suffering: (1) Right View or Right Understanding; (2) Right Thought; (3) Right Speech; (4) Right Action; (5) Right Livelihood; (6) Right Effort; (7) Right Mindfulness; and (8) Right Concentration.

Eighteen Forms of Emptiness: Eighteen aspects of emptiness as accorded in the Mahaprajnaparamita-sutra. (十八空)

Eighteen kinds of transformation: Includes (1) moving objects or even worlds; (2) emitting fire from the body; (3) illuminating innumerable worlds; (4) causing sentient beings in all the six realms to be seen; (5) changing an object into something different; (6) roaming freely by penetrating walls, mountains, water, air, and so on; (7) rolling anything into a minute size; (8) enlarging objects to gigantic proportions; (9) storing up swarms of people, mountains, or earth within the body; (10) entering any group, assuming their forms and voices, preaching to them, and then disappearing; (11) magnifying the body to a thousand fold; (12) hiding this magnified metamorphosis; (13) subjecting sentient beings to one's will; (14) controlling the supernatural powers of those below one in spiritual achievements; (15) endowing sentient beings with eloquence; (16) restoring memory to those who forget the Dharma; (17) giving joy to listeners; and (18) lighting up the creatures in all the worlds.

Eon: See Kalpa.

Equanimity: Also known as Upeksa. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

First Stage of Fruition: Also known as the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained the first stage of fruition is known as a Srotapanna or Stream Enterer.

Five aggregates: Form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness.

Five desires: Wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep.

Five Powers: Obtained through the practice of the Five Wholesome Faculties: (1) Power of Faith; (2) Power of Effort; (3) Power of Mindfulness; (4) Power of Concentration; (5) Power of Wisdom.

Five Precepts: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; and (5) Do not take intoxicants.

Five sensual pleasures: Pleasurable feelings derived from the contact between the five sense bases of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, and the five sense objects of form, sound, odor, flavor, and tactile object.

Five Wholesome Faculties: (1) Faculty of Faith; (2) Faculty of Effort; (3) Faculty of Mindfulness; (4) Faculty of Concentration; (5) Faculty of Wisdom.

Four Divine States of Mind: (1) Maitri or Loving-kindness; (2) Karuna or Compassion; (3) Mudita or Altruistic Joy; and (4) Upeksa or Equanimity.

Four Foundations of Mindfulness: (1) Contemplation of the body; (2) Contemplation of feelings; (3) Contemplation of the state of mind; and (4) Contemplation of phenomena. See also Right Effort.

Four Noble Truths: (1) The noble truth of suffering; (2) The noble truth of the cause of suffering; (3) The noble truth of the cessation of suffering; and (4) The noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Four pairs and eight categories of Sravaka practitioners: This refers to Sravaka practitioners who practice the Srotapanna path and those who have attained Srotapannaship; the ones who practice the Sakradagamin path and those who have attained Sakradagaminship; the ones who practice the Anagamin path and those who have attained Anagaminship; the ones who practice the Arahat path and those who have attained Arahatship.

Four Right Endeavors: (1) the effort to get rid of unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind, such as the desire to take another's property; (2) the effort to prevent the arising of unwholesome thoughts; (3) the effort to develop wholesome thoughts of loving-kindness and compassion; and (4) the effort to maintain and develop further wholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind.

Four Ways to Attain Samadhi: The basis to attain Samadhi: (1) Desire to practice Concentration; (2) Effort; (3) Mindfulness; (4) Contemplation.

Great Compassion: The aspiration to remove the sufferings and causes of sufferings of all sentient beings.

Heavens of the Four Deva Kings: Also known as the Heavens of the Deva Kings of the Four Heavens. This is the first of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three worlds of existence.

Hell of Screaming: One of the Eight Hot Hells. The other seven are: the Hell of Thoughts, the Hell of Iron Chains, the Hell of Crushing, the Hell of Great Screaming, the Scorching Hot Hell, the Extreme Scorching Hot Hell, and the Hell of Uninterrupted Torture (also known as the Avici Hell).

Kalpa: Also known as Eon. It is often used to denote a very long period of time. There are small, medium, great, and incalculable kalpas. A great kalpa indicates the length of time between the creation and recreation of a universe, spanning the period of the universe's formation, existence, destruction, and non-existence.

Karma: The deeds carried out by a person and their effects on the person's future, especially in relation to their succeeding rebirths. Karma can be classified as actions of the body, speech, and mind, each of which can have the moral quality of wholesomeness, unwholesomeness, or indeterminate.

Karuna: Also known as Compassion. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

King Yama: The King in charge of the hell realm.

Law of causality: Also known as the law of cause and effect. This is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations, in which all actions, which is a cause, will produce a corresponding

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effect. It is also stated as good begets good, evil begets evil; good will not beget evil, evil will not beget good.

Law of Dependent Origination: The principle that phenomena do not come into existence on their own but as a result of cause and conditions.

Loving-kindness: Also known as Maitri. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Maitri: Also known as Loving-kindness. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Mara: The Demon King who resides in the Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven.

Mudita: Also known as Altruistic or Sympathetic Joy. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Naga: Dragon or serpent. A beneficent divine being who governs the various water bodies, such as seas, lakes, rivers, and springs.

National Preceptor: The Religious Adviser to the King equivalent to the position of a Prime Minister.

Nirmanarati Heaven: This is the fifth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three worlds of existence.

Nirvana: The perfect state of mind that is free from greed, hatred, and delusion, and hence all suffering. See also Parinirvana and Residue-less Nirvana.

Non Returner: See Anagamin.

Once Returner: See Sakradagamin.

Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven: This is the sixth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Mara, the Demon King, resides in this heaven. See also Three worlds of existence.

Parinirvana: Also known as the Great Nirvana; it indicates the Buddha's entering into the state of residue-less Nirvana. See also Nirvana and Residue-less Nirvana.

Perfect One: See Arahant.

Prajna: Wisdom; insight; divine intuition.

Pratyeka Buddha: Also known as the Silent Buddha, or Self-enlightened One. The Pratyeka Buddha appears in an era when there is no Buddha or the Buddha's teachings. He lives apart from others and achieves enlightenment through self-contemplation and realization of dependent arising.

Pure Dharma Eye: The pure vision of the true Dharma.

Residue-less Nirvana: Also known as Nirvana without residue. It refers to the state of total liberation from all physical and mental conditions. This is in contrast with Nirvana with residue, where the body still exists. See also Nirvana and Parinirvana.

Right Action: To conduct oneself in moral, peaceful, and honorable ways, that is in keeping with the precepts of not killing, not stealing,

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and not committing sexual misconduct. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Concentration: To develop one's meditation according to the four Dhyanas. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Effort: To develop the Four Right Endeavors. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Faith: To develop faith in the Triple Gem and the Four Noble Truths, that through practicing Buddhism, all sentient beings can eventually attain liberation from Samsara.

Right Livelihood: To live honorably in a profession which is in no way harmful to sentient beings, and in keeping with the precepts. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Mindfulness: To practice the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. See also Four Foundations of Mindfulness and Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Speech: To abstain from telling lies, slandering, frivolous speech, and harsh speech. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Thought: To have only thoughts which are in line with Buddhist teachings. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Understanding: See Right View.

Right View: To develop the understanding or view that complies with the Buddhist teaching of causality or the law of cause and

effect; understanding the Four Noble Truths. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Right Understanding.

Right View of Dependent Arising: Also known as Law of Dependent Origination. It is the principle that phenomena do not come into existence on their own but as a result of cause and conditions. It is an elaboration of the Principle of Cause and Effect, highlighting the concept of inter-dependency of existence, and also the duality/non-duality.

Rupa-kaya: The material body.

Saha World: The secular world, which is known as the world that must be endured as it is full of sufferings.

Sakra: The King of Trayastrimsat Heaven.

Sakradagamin: One who has attained the second stage of Liberation. Such a person, upon passing from the human realm, will take rebirth in the heavenly realms, after which he will be reborn in the human realm one last time to attain Arahatsip. Hence he is also known as a Once Returner. A Once Returner has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. He is distinguished from the Stream Enterer by the fact that the Once Returner has weakened greed, hatred, and delusion to a greater degree. Therefore, he has fewer than seven rebirths. See also Arahatsip.

Samadhi: Meditative concentration. Often used to denote the deepest state of pure concentration, in which the mind is free from distraction and totally absorbed in the object of concentration. There are many levels and types of Samadhi, such as the Samadhi of Loving-kindness and Compassion.

Samsara: Also known as the Cycle of existence or cyclic existence. This refers to the endless cycle of suffering caused by birth, death, and rebirth in the six realms of cyclic existence.

Sangha: The Buddhist monastic order or community.

Seven Factors of Enlightenment: (1) Mindfulness; (2) Discriminative investigation of the Dharma; (3) Effort; (4) Joy; (5) Ease of body and mind; (6) Concentration; and (7) Equanimity.

Sila: The precept; code of morality; Buddhist ethics.

Siksamana: A female novice nun in waiting observing Six Precepts.

Six consciousnesses: The consciousnesses of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

Six Paramitas: The Sanskrit word Paramita means to cross over to the other shore. Paramita may also be translated as perfection, perfect realization, or reaching beyond limitation. Through the practice of these six Paramitas, we cross over the sea of suffering (Samsara) to the shore of happiness and awakening (Nirvana); we cross over from ignorance and delusion to enlightenment. The six Paramitas refer to:

- The Perfection of Generosity (Dana Paramita),
- The Perfection of Ethics (Sila Paramita),
- The Perfection of Patience (Ksanti Paramita)
- The Perfection of Joyous Effort / Enthusiastic Perseverance (Virya Paramita),
- The Perfection of Concentration (Dhyana Paramita),
- The Perfection of Wisdom (Prajna Paramita).

Six realms: The realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, asuras, and heavenly beings.

Six sense bases: Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Six sense objects: Form, sound, odor, flavor, tactile object, and phenomena.

Sramanera: A male novice monk observing Ten Precepts.

Sramanerika: A female novice nun observing Ten Precepts.

Srotapanna: One who has attained the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained this stage is said to have entered the Stream that leads to Liberation, hence he is also known as a Stream Enterer. Due to the fact that the Stream Enterer has attained an intuitive grasp of Buddhist teachings ("Right View") and has complete confidence in the Triple Gem, he will not be reborn in the three lower realms again, and will take at most seven cycles of rebirths alternating between the heavenly realm and the human realm before attaining the final stage of Liberation, Arahatsip. A Stream Enterer has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatsip.

Stream Enterer: See Srotapanna.

Supernatural powers: The six supernatural powers are: (1) Divine eye or clairvoyance; (2) Divine ear or clairsaudience; (3) mental telepathy or ability to read the thoughts of others; (4) psychic travel or telekinesis; (5) knowledge of the past and future; and (6) ending contamination. The first five supernatural powers can be acquired by one who practices deep concentration,

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but the sixth supernatural power is only attainable when one has attained Arahatsip.

Sympathetic Joy: Also known as Altruistic Joy or Mudita. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Ten directions of space: The directions of North, South, East, West, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, Zenith, and Nadir, thus covering all spaces.

Ten epithets: The ten honorable titles of Buddha. These ten epithets are common to all Buddhas.

- Tathagata - Thus-Come One or Thus-Gone One,
- Arahat - Worthy of Offerings,
- Samyak-Sambuddha - Equally, Perfectly Enlightened One,
- Vidyacarana-Sampanna - Knowledge and Conduct Perfected,
- Sugata - Well-Arrived One or Well-Gone One. Tathagata is completely in control of his own births and deaths,
- Lokavid - Understanding the World,
- Anuttara - Unsurpassed One,
- Purusa-Damya-Sarathi - Tamer of Men,
- Sasta Deva-Manusyanam - Teacher to Gods, Humans, and heavenly beings,
- Buddha-Bhagavan - Buddha the World Honored One.

Ten Kinds of Mindfulness: (1) Mindfulness of the Buddha; (2) Mindfulness of the Dharma; (3) Mindfulness of the Sangha; (4) Mindfulness of the Precepts; (5) Mindfulness of Generosity; (6) Mindfulness of the Heavens; (7) Mindfulness of the Cessation of Thoughts; (8) Mindfulness of Breath; (9) Mindfulness of the Impermanence of the Body; and (10) the Mindfulness of Death.

Ten Stages of Bodhisattva Practice: According to the Prajna sutras, the ten stages of Bodhisattva Practice are:

- the stage of dry wisdom,
- the stage of nature,
- the stage of the eighth person,
- the stage of insights,
- the stage of diminishment of afflictions,
- the stage of freedom from desire,
- the stage of completion of discernment,
- the stage of the Pratyeka Buddha,
- the stage of the Bodhisattva, and
- the stage of the Buddha.

Tenfold meritorious cause of action: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not slander; (6) Do not engage in frivolous speech; (7) Do not engage in harsh speech; (8) Do not bear greed; (9) Do not bear hatred; and (10) Do not stay deluded.

Three lower realms: The three lower realms refer to hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals; as opposed to the three upper realms of humans, asuras, and heavenly beings. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

Three periods: The past, present, and future.

Three poisons: See Defilements.

Three Upper Realms: This refers to humans, asuras and heavenly beings; as opposed to the three lower realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

Three worlds of existence: The World of Sensuous Desires, the World of Form, and the Formless World. All beings in the six realms of cyclic existence can be found in the World of Sensuous Desires as these beings are plagued by various sensuous desires. Beings in the World of Form have abandoned sensuous desires but still cling on to physical forms, while beings in the Formless World have even relinquished the physical forms and exist only in mental states.

Trayastrimsat Heaven: Also known as the Thirty-Three Heavens. It is the second of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three worlds of existence.

Tripitaka: The three main collections of the Buddhist canon – (1) sutra-pitaka (sermons collection); (2) vinaya-pitaka (rules collection); (3) abhidharma-pitaka (philosophical treatises collection). Also known as the Three Baskets.

Triple Gem: The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Tusita Heaven: This is the fourth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Maitreya Bodhisattva is currently residing in this heaven, awaiting for the cause and conditions to ripen for him to descend to the human realm and become the next Buddha to save and liberate all sentient beings. See also Three worlds of existence.

Twelve Links of Dependent Origination: The twelve links of dependent origination provide a detailed description on the problem of suffering and rebirth. They are: ignorance, mental formation, consciousness, name and form, the six senses, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, becoming, birth, aging and death. There is no existing phenomenon that is not the effect of dependent

origination. All phenomena arise dependent upon a number of casual factors, called conditions.

- Ignorance is the condition for mental formation.
- Mental formation is the condition for consciousness.
- Consciousness is the condition for name and form.
- Name and form is the condition for the six senses.
- The six senses are the conditions for contact.
- Contact is the condition for feeling.
- Feeling is the condition for craving.
- Craving is the condition for clinging.
- Clinging is the condition for becoming.
- Becoming is the condition for birth.
- Birth is the condition for aging and death.

Upeksa: Also known as Equanimity. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Western Pure World: Also known as Sukhavati in Sanskrit. It refers to the Pure World of Amitabha Buddha.

Wheel Turning Monarch: Also known as Chakravartin. A universal emperor and protector of Buddhism. It is a term used for an ideal universal ruler, who rules ethically and benevolently over the entire world. Wheel turning literally means whose chariot is rolling or whose Dharmachakra (Wheel of the Dharma) is turning everywhere without obstruction.

Yama Heaven: This is the third of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three worlds of existence.

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Acknowledgement

We would like to thank all who have contributed to the translation of this series of works into English.

Title: EVERLASTING HAPPINESS, AS BUDDHA ATTAINS 6
Presenter: Venerable Da Shi
Editor: The Dharma Editorial Committee,
Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Taiwan, R.O.C.)
Translator: The Dharma Committee,
Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)
Publisher: Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)
Address: 15 Lorong 29 Geylang
#02-01 PTH Building
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Website: www.mypty.sg
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Publish date: May 2014
ISBN: 978-981-09-0112-7

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