

The Precepts



Some Preliminary Definitions

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2. a rule of moral conduct; maxim

The Four Noble Truths

Ethics versus morality

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Perhaps the best description is that ethical actions result from the application of moral principles.

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Depending on which precepts you're talking about, they're either a proper subset of *sīla*, or equal to *sīla*

Where Do The Precepts Fit

The Six Paramitas (Perfections)

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- Mahayana texts list them as follows, with the second being sīla:
 - Dāna pāramitā: generosity, giving of oneself
 - Śīla pāramitā: virtue, morality, discipline, proper conduct
 - Kṣānti pāramitā: patience, tolerance, forbearance, acceptance, endurance
 - Vīrya pāramitā: energy, diligence, vigour, effort
 - Dhyāna pāramitā: one-pointed concentration, contemplation
 - Prajñā pāramitā: wisdom, insight

Where Do The Precepts Fit

As part of the Four Noble Truths/Eightfold Path

The truth of suffering

birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.

The origin of suffering

it is this craving [taṇhā, "thirst"] which leads to re-becoming, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for becoming, craving for disbecoming.

The cessation of suffering:

it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.

The way leading to the cessation of suffering

it is this noble eightfold path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

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The Fourth Noble Truth is the Noble Eightfold Path

The Noble Eightfold Path (EFP)

General

The EFP is defined as 8 verbs, all working to bring about the end of suffering

Sammā (Pali) - commonly thought of as properly, rightly, thoroughly,

But also means 'to go along with', or 'go together with', or 'unite'.

The term path implies movement – these are things we continually do and they all work together to form a way of living.

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General

The groups

The moral virtue group (śīla) - Living harmoniously with others

The meditation group (samādhi) - Training the mind to develop clarity and insight into the nature of reality

The wisdom group (prajñā or paññā) – Understanding why this path should be followed and realizing wisdom as the culmination of the path.

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Division	Eightfold Path factors
Moral virtue(Sanskrit: <i>śīla</i> , Pāli: <i>sīla</i>)	1.Right speech
	2. Right action
	3.Right livelihood
Meditation(Sanskrit and Pāli: <i>samādhi</i>)	4.Right effort
	5.Right mindfulness
	6.Right concentration
Insight, wisdom (Sanskrit: <i>prajñā</i> , Pāli: <i>paññā</i>)	7.Right resolve
	8.Right View

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The elements' order

When viewed as three divisions, *śīla* (virtuous living) is first, and through *samadhi* we achieve culminating insight

When viewed as eight factors, view is primary because it is needed to understand why the path should be followed

The Five Precepts (or the Five Rules of Training)

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- They constitute the minimal standard of Buddhist morality.
- These rules are not philosophical – they are pragmatic.
 - Merriam-Webster formally describes pragmatic as:
 - ‘Dealing with the problems that exist in a specific situation in a reasonable and logical way instead of depending on ideas and theories’

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- I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking life
- I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking what is not given
- I undertake the training rule to abstain from sensual misconduct
- I undertake the training rule to abstain from false speech
- I undertake the training rule to abstain from liquors, wines, and other intoxicants, which are the basis for heedlessness

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 - The prohibition on intoxication was new in Buddhism and was based on Appamāda
 - Appamāda was also one of the last words of the Tathagata. The full sentence was:
 - “Come now, monks, for I tell you all conditioned things are subject to decay, strive on with heedfulness!”

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 - I undertake [to observe] the rule of abstinence from a tall, high sleeping place

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- They're very similar to the Eight Precepts with the addition of not accepting money

Other Precepts

Bodhisattva Precepts (aka the 'Ten Great Precepts")

These precepts are associated with the bodhisattva vow to save all beings

The first five are basically the Five Precepts

The five additional are:

Not to broadcast the misdeeds or faults of the Buddhist assembly, nor encourage others to do so.

Not to praise oneself and speak ill of others, or encourage others to do so.

Not to be stingy, or encourage others to do so.

Not to harbor anger or encourage others to be angry.

Not to speak ill of the Buddha, the Dharma or the Sangha (lit. the Triple Jewel) or encourage others to do so

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 - Sense impressions – Let mindfulness guard us from inadvertently feeding the negative seeds in our consciousness
 - Volition – Look deeply to ensure that your true volition is for the good of all beings
 - Consciousness – Be aware of what you are letting yourself think. To a great extent, you create your own reality – use your consciousness wisely

A Personal Anecdote



Thank You!

