

**Chapter 2**  
**The Five Precepts**  
**(Pañca Sīla)**

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**Topics**

- To abstain from taking life (Pāṇātipātā veramanī)
- To abstain from what is not given (Adinnādānā veramanī)
- To abstain from sexual misconduct (Kāmesumicchācārā veramanī)
- To abstain from false speech (Musāvādā veramanī)
- To abstain from taking intoxicants  
(Surāmerayamajjapamādatthānā veramanī)

There are three fundamental modes of training in Buddhist practice; **morality**, **concentration** and **wisdom**. The English word **morality** is used to translate in the Palī term **sīla**, although the Buddhist term contain its own particular connotations. The word **sīla**, denotes of a state normalcy, a condition which is basically unqualified and unadulterated. When one practice **sīla**, one returns to one's own basic goodness, the original of state of normalcy, unperturbed and unmodified. Killing a human being, for instance, is not basically human nature; if it were, human being would have ceased to exist a long time ago. A person commits an act of killing because he or she is blinded by greed, rage or hatred. Such negative qualities as anger,

hatred, greed, ill will, and jealousy are factors that alter people's nature and make them in to something other than their true self. To practice **sīla**, thus to train in preserving one's true nature, not allowing it to be modified or overpowered by negative forces.

The Five Precepts (Pañca Sīla) are also recited in **Pāli**, and their meanings are generally known to most Buddhists. In the following, the original **Pāli** text is given in italics, and corresponding English translation is given side by side;

1. *Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

To observe the precept of abstaining from killing.

2. *Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

To observe the precept of abstaining from stealing.

3. *Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

To observe the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct.

4. *Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

To observe the precept of abstaining from false speech.

5. *Surāmerayamajjapamādatthānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

To observe the precept of abstaining from taking intoxicants causing heedlessness.

➤ **To abstain from killing (Pāṇātipātā veramanī)**

**Meaning**

The Buddha said, “Life is dear to all.” All beings fear death and value life, we should their respect life and not kill any thing. This precept does not only kill people but also any creature, especially if it is for money or sport. We should have an attitude of loving-kindness towards all beings, wishing them to be always happy and free. Caring for the Earth, rivers, forests and air, are also included in this precept.

**Five conditions of killing (Pāṇātipātā)**

1. The being must be alive.
2. There must be the knowledge that it is alive being.
3. There must be an attention to take life.
4. An act must be done to cause death.
5. There must be death, as the result of the said act.

If all the said five conditions are fulfilled, the first precept is violated.

**Reading Comprehensions on Wild Deer Park**

A long time ago, there was a beautiful forest. Many deer lived there. One day, a king took his men there to hunt. The king shoot an arrow and hit a mother deer. She ran away in pain. Later the king found her hiding in some bushes with her baby deer. Even though she

was bleeding and had tears in her eyes, she still fed her baby with milk. She soon died.

The king felt very sorry. He picked up the baby deer and said to it, "I will now take care of you." He then broke his bow in two and said, "I'll never hunt again."

In remembrance of that day, he named the forest *Wild Deer Park*.

**Like people, animals also have feelings, we should not kill them for fun of sport, it is unkind and selfish.**

### Exercises

**1. Choose the correct meaning from column B and fill in the blank in front of column A**

Column A	Column B
.....abstain	a. Way of worth
.....killing	b. A way of thinking or acting
.....loving-kindness	c. Not to do or take
.....creature	d. Show or feel admiration for
.....precept	e. Land cover with trees
.....fear	f. An animal or human being
.....value	g. Be afraid of
.....forest	h. Quality of being kind
	i. An act is done to cause death
	j. Sīla

➤ **To abstain from what is not given**

**(Adinnādānā veramaṇī)**

**Meaning**

We have the right to know things and give them away as we wish. However, we should not take things that do not belong to us by stealing or cheating. Instead, we should learn to give, to help others, and always take good care of the things that we use, whatever they belong to us or public. In broader sense, this precept means being responsible. If we are lazy and neglect our studies or work, we are said to be ‘stealing time’.

This precept also encourages us to be generous. Buddhists give to the poor and the sick and make offering to monks and nuns to practice being good. Buddhists are usually generous to their parents, teachers and friends to show gratitude for their advice, guidance and kindness. Buddhists also offer sympathy and encouragement to those who feel hurt or discourage. Helping people by telling them about the Dhamma is considered to be the highest form of giving.

**Five Conditions of Stealing (Adinnādānā)**

1. The property must be in the possession of another person.
2. There must be the knowledge that the property is in the possession of another person.
3. There must be an intention to steal.
4. There must be an act of stealing.

5. By that act the property must have been taken.

If all the said five conditions are fulfilled, the second precept is violated

### **Reading Comprehension on The Moon is Looking at You**

Once there was a very poor family. They often went to their neighbor's garden to steal some vegetables.

One night, the father took along his little son into neighbor's garden to steal some carrots. While the father was pulling out some carrots, his little stood beside him. Suddenly, his son whispered, "Daddy, someone is looking at us."

The father became afraid. He quickly looked around but could not see anyone. "Where? Who?" he asked.

The son pointed at the sky, "There, Daddy. It is the moon. The moon is looking at us."

The father was chocked by what his son said. He thought that nobody could see what he was doing at night. His son's words made him fell ashamed.

He threw the carrots down and took his son by the hand. They both walked back home in the moonlight. After that he never stole anything again.

**If we steal, people will know.**

**Exercise**

1. Choose the correct meaning from column B and fill in the blank in front of column A

Column A	Column B
.....stealing	a. Kind
.....responsible	b. A feel of pity
.....neglect	c. Having a duty
.....encourage	d. A feeling
.....generous	e. An act of giving
.....offering	f. The state of feeling
.....gratitude	grateful
.....advise	g. Take something that not
.....sense	belong to us
.....sympathy	h. Not give enough attention
	i. Victory
	j. Give support
	k. Imagination
	l. suggestion

➤ **To abstain from sexual misconduct**

**(Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī)**

**Meaning**

To abstain from sexual misconduct is respect for people and personal relationships. Much unhappiness arises

from the misuses of sex and from living in irresponsible ways. Many families have been broken as a result, and many children have been victims of sexual abuse. For the happiness of ourselves as well as others, sex should be used in a caring and loving manner. When observing in this precept, sexual desire should be controlled, and husbands and wives should be faithful toward each other. This will help to create peace in the family. In a happy family, the husband and wife respect, trust and love each other. With happy families, the world would be a better place for us to live in.

Young people should keep their minds and body pure to develop their goodness. It is up to them to make the world a better place in which to live.

### **Four Conditions to sexual misconduct**

#### **(Kāmesu micchācārā)**

1. There must be a man or a woman with whom it is improper to have sexual intercourse.
2. There must be an intention to have such sexual misconduct with such a man or woman.
3. There must be an act done to have such intercourse.
4. There must be enjoyment of the contact of the organs.

If all the said four conditions are fulfilled, the third precept is violated.



### Reading Comprehension on A habit of Committing Adultery

There was once a man who had the habit of committing adultery. Even though he had been arrested a number of times for his misconducts, he did not change his ways. In a desperation, his father brought him to the Buddha for advice. The Buddha pointed out that a person who indulges in sexual misconduct creates problems and suffering for himself as well as others. He not only squanders his money and loses his reputation but also creates enemies for himself.

**Serious consequences often result from sexual misconduct, but they are usually overlooked at the time when it is being committed.**

#### Exercise

**1. Choose the correct meaning from column B and fill in the blank in front of column A**

Column A	Column B
.....misuse	a. Wholesome
.....relationship	b. Bad deed
.....abuse	c. Calmness
.....result	d. Noticing
.....desire	e. Royal and true
.....observing	f. Statement
.....faithful	g. A wish
.....manner	h. Be relate to someone

.....peace	i. Compassion
.....goodness	j. To violate
	k. The answer is already done
	l. behavior

➤ **To abstain from false speech**

**(Musāvādā veramaṇī)**

**Meaning**

We should respect each other and not tell lies or gossip. This would result fewer quarrel and misunderstanding, and the world would be a most peaceful place. In observing the fourth precept, we should speak the truth.

The fourth precept is an important factor in social life and dealings. It concerns respect for truth. A respect for truth is a strong deterrent to inclinations or temptation to commit wrongful actions, while disregard for the same will only serve to encourage evil deeds.

The Buddha has said; “There are few evil deeds that a liar is incapable of committing” The practice of the fourth precept, therefore, helps to preserve one’s, credibility, trustworthiness, and honor.

**Four Conditions of telling Lies (Musāvādā)**

1. The thing said must be untrue.
2. There must be an intention to deceive.

3. There must be an effort made as a result of the said intention.

4. The other must know meaning of what is said.

If these conditions are fulfilled, the fourth precept is violate.

### **Read comprehension on the Buddha and Rāhula**

Rāhula, the only son of Buddha, became a monk. He was the youngest in Sangha. All the monks loved and spoiled him. Rāhula did whatever he liked. Sometimes, he told lies just for the fun of it.

One day, the Buddha said to Rāhula, “Please bring me a basin of water. I want to wash my feet.” He washed his feet in the basin of water and asked Rāhula, “Would you drink this water?”

“No, it’s dirty!” Rāhula replied.

Then the Buddha asked Rāhuka to throw the water away. The Buddha told Rāhula, “When water gets dirty, no one wants it. It is the same for those who tell lies, no one cares for them anymore.”

Tears of shame come to Rāhula’s eyes. He never told another lie.

**We should always tell the truth.**

## Exercises

1. Choose the correct meaning from column B and fill in the blank in front of column A

Column A	Column B
.....gossip	a. Not allowed
.....quarrel	b. Knowledge
.....factor	c. A person who does not tell the truth
.....deterrent	d. Unable
.....inclination.	e. An angry disagreement
.....temptation	f. Parents
.....commit	g. Attraction
.....liar	h. Perform
.....incapable	i. Truth or honesty
.....honor	j. Tendency
	k. Parts
	l. Talk about others

➤ To abstain from taking intoxicants

(Surāmerayamajjapamādatthānā veramaṇī)

### Meaning

The fifth precept is based on self-respect. It guards against losing control of our mind, body and speech. Many things can become addictive. They include alcohol, drugs, smoking and unhealthy books.

Using any of these will bring harm to us and our family. One day, the Buddha was speaking Dhamma to the assembly when a young drunken man staggered into the room. He tripped over some monks who are sitting on the floor and started cursing aloud. His breath stank of alcohol and filled the air with sickening smell. Mumbling to himself, he staggered out of the door. Everyone was shocked at his rude behavior, but the Buddha remained calm.

“Great Assembly!” he said, “Take a look at this man! I can tell you the fate of a drunkard. He will certainly lose his wealth and good name. His body will grow weak and sickly. Day and night, he will quarrel with his family and friends until they leave him. The worst thing is that he will lose his wisdom and become confused.”

By observing this precept, we can keep a clear mind and have a healthy body.

### **Three conditions of Taking Intoxicants**

#### **(Surāmerayamajjapamādatthānā)**

1. There is intoxicant.
2. There must be an intention to consume.
3. It is consumed.

If this condition is fulfilled, the fifth precept is violated. However, taking intoxicant for medical purpose does not violate this precept.

### Reading comprehension on A Fly and an Elephant

One day, a dump fly tasted a bit of liquor left in a coconut shell. After that, He felt heavier and stronger than before. So, he went back to the dump again. As soon as, he landed on the dump. The dump heap was lower a little. The fly thought.

"Look, I am so strong."

At this time, an elephant happened to pass by. The fly said, "My dear friend has you come here for a fight?" I am ready today." The elephant walked over to the dump. He did not say a single word but just have a big thump with its hoof and killed all the flies.

**Taking intoxicant drinks and drugs will make us lose our senses like the fly. That is why the Buddha wanted us to refrain from using them.**

### Exercises

- 1. Choose the correct meaning from column B and fill in the blank in front of column A**

Column A	Column B
.....intoxicant	a. Suffering
.....heedlessness	b. Speak not clearly
.....speech	c. Walk unsteadily
.....drug	d. Uncontrolled
.....unhealthy	e. Alcohol
.....harm	f. Carelessness

.....drunken	g. Saying words
.....stager	h. A substance used in
.....mumbling	medicine
.....stink	i. Not good-caring
	j. Very bad smell
	k. Cessation
	l. damage

### Conclusion

The five precepts are related to the spiritual quality that they are likely to produce and promote as follows; the first precept helps to promote good will, compassion, and kindness. The second precept can be instrumental in developing generosity, service, altruism, non-attachment, contentment, honesty, and right livelihood. The third precept helps to cultivate self-restraint, mastery over the emotion and senses, renunciation, and control of sensual desire. The fourth precept leads to the development of honesty, reliability, and moral integrity. The fifth precept helps to promote mindfulness, clarity of mind, wisdom.

### Vocabulary

ภาษาอังกฤษ	คำแปล
integrity	ความซื่อสัตย์
wisdom	ปัญญา

morality	การมีศีลธรรม
anger	ความโกรธ
greed	ความโลภ
preserve	รักษา, สงวน
condition	เงื่อนไข
violate	ละเมิด
intention	เจตนา, ความตั้งใจ
mental cultivation	ความเจริญด้านจิตใจ (สมาธิ)
denote	หมายถึง
unmodified	ไม่เปลี่ยนแปลง
hatred	ความเกลียด
jealousy	ความอิจฉา
intercourse	การร่วมประเวณี, ความเกี่ยวพัน
possession	การครอบครอง
property	ทรัพย์สินสมบัติ
consume	บริโภค, ใช้อย

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