



by Bhante Seelananda
Chief Resident Monk,
Mangala Vihara.
Principal -
Buddhist & Pali College

Buddhist morality, or *Sīla* is a fundamental aspect of Buddhist teachings that guides individuals towards ethical and moral conduct. *Sīla* is one of the three pillars of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the path towards enlightenment in Buddhism.

Sīla is often described as the foundation for spiritual development and is based on the principles of non-harming, compassion, truthfulness, and integrity. By adhering to these principles and cultivating a moral and ethical lifestyle, Buddhists aim to create harmony within themselves and in their relationships with others. *Sīla* is seen as an essential practice for purifying the mind, cultivating virtues, and ultimately progressing towards spiritual liberation and enlightenment.

Sīla means "morality". The Pali Text Society Dictionary gives the following meanings to the term *Sīla*: nature, character, habit and behaviour. The *Vissuddhimagga*; the Path of Purification, gives further clarification on *Sīla* as:

"What is virtue? it is the states beginning with volition present in one who abstains from killing living things etc., or in one who fulfils the practice of the duties..... There is a virtue 'as volition, virtue as consciousness-concomitant, virtue as restraint, virtue as non-transgression.'" [1]

Moral behaviour is an essential factor in any global religion. However, when we look at the Buddhist canon and commentary explanation, Buddhist morality or *Sīla* is different from other religions. In Buddhism, *Sīla* discusses in two ways: "*Veramani*", or refraining from immoral behaviours and "*Samadāna*", practising moral behaviours.

"When he has thus gone forth, he lives restrained by the restraint of the Pātimokkha, possessed of proper behaviour and resort. Having taken up the training rules, he trains himself in them, seeing danger in the slightest faults. He comes to be endowed with wholesome bodily and verbal action, his livelihood is purified, and he is possessed of conduct. He guards the doors of his sense faculties and is endowed with mindfulness and clear comprehension and its content.[2]

to be continued....



Sīla

2

Restraint means abandoning unhealthy destructive behaviours which make the person himself suffer and his friends, family, and other external world suffer and *Samadāna*, or practising and developing good behaviour which makes the person and his external world happy. For example, the five precepts or the five basic principles are:

1. *Pānātipātā sikkhāpadam samādiyami* - I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures.

This precept emphasizes the importance of avoiding causing harm or taking the life of any living being. It promotes compassion and respect for all forms of life.

2. *Adinnādānā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi* - I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given.

This precept encourages individuals to refrain from stealing or taking anything that is not rightfully theirs. It promotes honesty, integrity, and respect for others' property.

3. *Kāmesu micchācārā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyami* - I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct.

This precept advises individuals to avoid engaging in harmful or unethical sexual behavior. It promotes respect, responsibility, and maintaining healthy relationships.

4. *Musāvādā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi* - I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech.

This precept emphasizes the importance of truthfulness and avoiding deceitful or harmful speech. It promotes honesty, integrity, and clear communication.

5. *Surāmerayamajja pamādatthānā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyāmi* - I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness.

This precept advises individuals to refrain from consuming substances that can cloud the mind and lead to unwholesome actions. It promotes clarity of mind, self-control, and awareness.

Furthermore, Buddhist ethical practices can be divided into several groups as follows.

Precepts	Practitioner
Five Precepts	Ordinary Layman and Laywoman
Eight Precepts	Layman and Laywoman (<i>Upasatha</i> day)
Ten Precepts	Novice Monks and Nuns (<i>Samanera</i> and <i>Samaneri</i>)
The 227 Rules of the <i>Bhikkhu Patimokkha</i>	Fully-Ordained monks (<i>Bhikkhu</i>)
The 311 Rules of the <i>Bhikkhuni Patimokkha</i>	Fully-Ordained nuns (<i>Bhikkhuni</i>)

Each and every practitioner of the precepts are supposed to restrain from immoral behaviours and at the same time they are encourage to practice and develop moral behaviours.

The second aspect is that Buddhist *Sīla* forms the foundation of the Buddhist spiritual journey[3] beginning with *Sīla* or moral conduct, concentration or "*Samādhi*," and ending with *Paññā* or insight wisdom. However, according to *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta*, *Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā* are interconnected: they cannot be isolated, but they should be understood separately only to understand its fundamental functions and realities.

to be continued.....



Sīla

3

“For wisdom is cleansed by ethics, and ethics are cleansed by wisdom. Ethics and wisdom always go together. An ethical person is wise, and a wise person is ethical.”[4]

The stages of Sīla depend on the progress of a person's spiritual journey. Samaññāpala Sutta, the second sutta of the Dighanikāya, mentions it very clearly. There are three stages or sections in the sutta where it explains the Sīla as:

1. *Chula Sīla* – The small section on Moral discipline
2. *Majjima Sīla* – Intermediate section on moral discipline
3. *Maha Sīla* – The extensive section on Moral discipline

The first level/stage, discusses the ordinary person's behavioural patterns and how to change those destructive behaviours and cultivate good behaviours. At the second level/stage, it covers the disciplines suitable to the person who has gone through his spiritual journey to some level. The end level/stage discusses the disciplines used by the person who has gone up to the highest level of the spiritual journey.

Another vital point of Buddhist *Sīla* or morality is its moral reasoning and moral judgment. Without destroying free will and a judgmental mind, Buddhist practitioner can choose their spiritual journey. Nevertheless, that should not cause any suffering to himself or others.

“Whenever you want to do a bodily action, you should reflect on it. This bodily action I want to do would it lead to self-affliction, the affliction of others, or both? Would it be an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences and painful results? If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or both, it would be an unskillful bodily action

with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily action of that sort is unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction...it would be a skilful bodily action with pleasant, verbal action with pleasant, mental action with pleasant.”[5]

In conclusion, Buddhist morality, also known as *Sīla*, refers to the ethical principles and guidelines that Buddhists follow in their lives. These principles are based on the teachings of the Buddha and are aimed at cultivating a sense of virtue, compassion, and mindfulness and restraining from the destructive behaviours. Practicing Buddhist morality can bring about various benefits such as inner peace, compassion, positive relationships, reduced negative *kamma*, enhanced mindfulness, and the support for spiritual development. These benefits contribute to the overall well-being and happiness of individuals on their Buddhist journey.

Works Cited:

- Sujato, B. (2022, 06 30). Retrieved from *Sutta Central*: <https://suttacentral.net/>
- Thanissaro, B. (n.d.). Retrieved from Access to Insight: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/>
- Bodhi, B. (2012). Numerical Discourses of the Buddha. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Bodhi, B. and Nanamoli, B. the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Walshe, M. (1995). The Long Discourses of the Buddha. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Nanamoli, B. *Vissuddhimagga* – The path of purification. The Corporate Body of The Buddha Educational Foundation .

Footnotes:

- [1] *Vissuddhimagga* –page 7
- [2] *Sudha Sutta* – *Dighanikāya*
- [3] *Kutadanta Sutta* – *Dighanikāya*
- [4] *Sutta* SD 30.5 D 4/1:111-126
- [5] *Ambalatthika-Rahulovāda Sutta*, MN61, PTS; M I144,



In the Footsteps of a Samaneri

Mangala Vihara held a 12-day novice programme from 1st to 12th December 2023. Nine samaneras (male novices) and Six samaneris (female novices) participated in the temporary ordination program. Though the ordination was held at MV, the actual program was held at Samadhi Meditation Centre (SMC) in Pontian, Johor, under the guidance of our monks and the monks of SMC. Four nuns from Indonesia were also invited to assist in guiding the samaneris. Below, Samaneri Dhīrā, shares her experiences as a temporary nun.

“Donning robes in a place without mirrors, is indeed an opportunity to practice and examine the “sense of self” in the present with the *Dhamma* as the mirror. Shaven, I have to mindfully observe the *Sekhiya*. This is the 75-monastic training rules on etiquette of actions, speech and thoughts. Immersed in a sense of renunciation from secular matters, I experienced a sense of calm and blamelessness.

Teachings from *Bhante* on Reflections for the Monastics, *Paccavekkhaṇā*, on robes(衣), food(食), lodging(住), and medicine(药) reminded us that these elements are meant for our basic sustenance. From this reflection, contentment and understanding of impermanence and non-self arose. In this way, our approach to life is simpler, with the burdens of attachments relinquished.

The 37-Factors of Enlightenment found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, was taught by the *Bhantes* to the novices for mental purifications. We learnt to observe the mind(观心) and investigate the nature of body and mind clearly. Daily sitting and walking meditation in the serene environment at SMC strengthened our *samādhi* and *vipassanā* meditation.

Pindapāta (alms giving) is an act that connects humans to the *Saṅgha*. In *Theravada* Buddhism, it signifies a relationship between the two communities. In Pontian, where we practised *Pindapāta*, laities and the *Saṅgha*, forged a close and respectful relationship.

Stepping bare-footed on the sand-grained path for the first time as an alms seeker was a mixed emotional experience. Silently confronting the pain thrust by the sharp grains that constantly poked the soles of my feet, forced me to walk mindfully with eyes casted on the rugged road, while contemplating the life of home to homelessness, and the interdependency of laity and the *Saṅgha*.

to be continued.....



In the Footsteps of a Samaneri

5

Fortunately, the physiological pain diminished quickly and I was wrapped in gratitude when friendly and earnest alms givers greeted us. They respectfully placed their *dana* into our closely held alms bowl while we nodded humbly in appreciation of their support to the *Sangha*. This allowed both alms giver and alms seeker, to dwell in thankfulness, as our hearts sowed the fields of merit that interconnected all of us.

Without doubt, the zealous faith and devotion of the laity-volunteers from SMC were inspiring. Their spirit of giving is deserving of utmost respect and gratitude. In return, we strived harder in our practice, grateful for their presence. The *Bhantes* also shared daily *Dhamma* teachings with the laity to gladden and bless them.

To conclude, this was a rare experience for me to live the life of a novice under the patient tutelage of the Venerables and *Ayyas*. Their well-intended teachings formed the foundation for me to mindfully weave *Dhamma* i.e., loving kindness into my social and daily living, and to mindfully practise daily meditation and the Noble Eightfold path towards emancipation.

I would like to express my sincere gratefulness to *Mangala Vihara* for the opportunity to be part of this life changing event.”

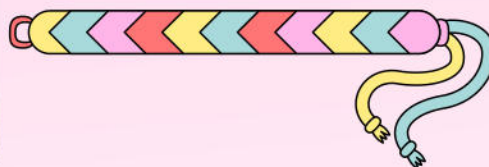
VISIT BY HIGH COMMISSIONER OF SRI LANKA TO MV



Picture(L- R):

Mervin Phua, Lim Ah Swan, U Ahamed Razee, *Bhante* Seelananda, Anthony Loy, Senarath Nissanayake, Ng Beng Hee, Rosalie Boon, Ann Lee, Hema Teo and Kosala Perera.

Photo is courtesy of Sis Hema Teo



His Excellency Mr Senarath Nissanayake, the new High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Singapore, paid a visit to MV on the morning of 18 Jan 2024. Following the tradition of past High Commissioners, the new Sri Lankan High Commissioner paid a courtesy visit to *Mangala Vihara* to introduce himself. The chairman of MV's management committee, Lim Ah Swan, together with other committee members, were on hand to welcome Mr Nissanayake and his two assistants, Mr Kosala Perera and Mr U Ahamed Razee. MV hosted a tea reception to welcome the distinguished guests.





1st January 2024 New Year's Day

6



The chants by the nine Bhantes resonated throughout the shrine hall, calming troubled minds



Happy New Year



Devotees form eight queues to have the holy thread tied onto their wrists by the monks.

MV welcomed 2024 with a Blessing *puja* for her members and devotees on the first day of the New Year. In his welcome speech, *Bhante* Seelananda wished all congregants a happy, healthy and blessed New Year. The most Reverend Dr S Pamarathana *Nayaka Thera*, chief monk of Pittsburgh Buddhist Center, Pennsylvania USA, who was visiting MV, gave a short *Dhamma* talk.

Ven Dr Pamarathana exhorted everyone to “upgrade” ourself for a better tomorrow by putting in efforts to regulate our minds with good positive thoughts. For when efforts are made, the mind can be unpolluted and unburdened. The mind then becomes calm and happy. Negative thoughts stick to the mind like “Velcro” material while good thoughts are positive and are liken to “Teflon” material which do not cling to the mind. Ven Dr Pamarathana also encouraged everyone to practice the attributes of appreciation and gratitude to overcome pride and conceit, as this helps the mind positively. In this way, we can have a chance of having a “better version of ourselves” by the end of 2024.

After the *Dhamma* talk to appease the mind, the *Maha Sangha* of nine monks chanted a series of *suttas* in unison to bless the congregation who had specifically come early for the 10am ceremony. The regular morning *puja* followed thereafter. At the end of *puja*, devotees were each given a bottle of holy water and had a colored thread tied onto their right wrists by the monks. *Sanghika* lunch *dana* was offered to the monks, who shared the merits with *devas* and departed relatives before partaking the food. After the meal, another round of Blessings was conferred on the devotees. All devotees were also served a meal of steamed rice with various vegetarian dishes, fruits, deserts and orangeade.

It was indeed a great way to start the first day of a brand-new year, for all participants left happy that their venture out to MV on a wet morning had brought rewards of blessings and joy.





UPCOMING EVENTS!

7

MANGALA VIHARA CELEBRATION
64th Anniversary
APRIL 1ST 2024
Distribution of Holy Water and Holy Threads

MARCH 31ST 2024
10:45 am Morning Pūja
Sanghika Dana
Sharing of Merits
6:30 pm Bodhi Pūja
6:45 pm Buddha Pūja
8:00 pm Whole Night Chanting

7 Apr : Cheng Beng Day
22 May: Vesak Celebration
8 Jun : Memorial Service in
Memory of Late Bhante
M.M. Mahaweera & Late
Bhante P. Gnanarama

MONTHLY DHAMMA TALKS

- 22 Apr: Four Noble Truths in Plain English by Sister Sylvia Bay**
13 May: By Bhante Anoma (Topic of Talk to be confirmed)
24 Jun: Preparing One's Mind for Meditation by Sayalay Sujata

MV DHAMMA TALKS

CONDUCTED BY
VENERABLE PANADURE CHANDARATANA

FROM RENOWNED MITIRIGALA NISSARANA VANAYA, SRI LANKA

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION TALK

APRIL 27 APRIL 28 (2 HOURS) SHRINE HALL

UPCOMING MEDITATION EVENTS

conducted by Venerable Panadure Chandaratana

Meditation Retreat 29TH, 30TH APRIL

Sīlasamādāna 1ST MAY

open only to members, students & regular volunteers

- Follow 8-precepts
- Lunch is provided
- 8 am to 6 pm
- White attire

Register by **22nd April 2024**

98355257 Brother Kelvin





Weekly Activities

8

MONDAY

7.30pm – 9.00pm

BPC Alumni Taiji, Level 1 Mangala Hall

8.00pm – 9.30pm (July – November)

Path of Emancipation Chanting (for Beginners)

TUESDAY

7.30pm – 9.30pm

BPC Diploma/GAQ/BA1/BA2/MA/Chinese Diploma

Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall & Level 3 Room 3, 4, 5 & 6

7.30pm – 9.30pm, (July – October)

Big Sutta Chanting Class Part 1 & 2

Level 2 Meditation Hall

WEDNESDAY

7.00pm – 9.00pm

Yoga (Intermediate), Level 3 Savatthi Hall

7.30pm – 9.30pm, July – September

BPC Introduction to Buddhism Course (English)

Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall

7.30pm – 9.00pm, July – October

Big Sutta Chanting Class Part 3 & 4

Level 2 Meditation Room

7.30pm – 9.00pm (September – October)

Meditation Class (Beginner)

Level 1 Shrine Hall

THURSDAY

9.00am – 10.30am

Yoga (Morning Session), Level 3 Savatthi Hall

2.00pm – 5.00pm, January – October

Dhamma Kaki, Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall

7.00pm – 9.30pm

Regular Meditation Practice @Meditation Hall

7.30pm – 9.00pm

The Essence of Buddhist Teaching

Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall

7.30pm – 9.30pm

BPC GAQ/BA1/BA2 – Level 3 Room 3, 5 & 6

7.30pm – 9.30pm

Qigong (Beginners), Level 1 Mangala Hall

FRIDAY

7.00pm – 9.30pm, January – November

TBSC-Theravada Buddhist Studies in Chinese

上座部原始佛教课程

Classes at Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall & Level 3

7.30pm – 9.00pm, July – October

Big Sutta Revision Class Part 1, 2, 3 & 4

Level 2 Meditation Hall

7.30pm – 9.30pm

Qigong (Advance)

Level 1 Mangala Hall

SATURDAY

9.00am – 10.30am

Yoga (Morning Session)

Level 3 Savatthi Hall

2.30pm – 4.00pm

Abhidhamma In Daily Life (English) by Bhante Cakkapala

Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall

2.30pm – 4.00pm

Abhidhamma In Daily Life (English) by Sister Siang Cheng

Level 3 Subhadda Room

4.30pm – 6.30pm

DAY Society (Devotional Associates of Yogeshwar)

Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall & Level 3 Rooms 3 & 4

7.45pm – 8.30pm

Bojjhanga Recitation

Bodhi Tree Shrine

SUNDAY

9.30am – 12.00pm

Sunday Dhamma Class – YMBA Buddhist Studies Classes (English)

Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall & Level 3 Classrooms (Lunch provided at 12noon in Mangala Hall)

12.30pm – 2.00pm, July – October

Maranasati Chanting Class in English

Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall

2.00pm – 5.30pm

BPC Diploma/GAQ/BA1/BA2/MA/Chinese Diploma

Diploma Class, Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall

GAQ/BA1/BA2/MA, Level 3 Rooms 3, 4, 5 & 6

5.00pm – 8.00 pm

Burmese Dhamma Class

Level 2 Chew Quee Neo Hall and

Level 3 Subhadda Room

Publisher & Distributor:

Mangala Vihara (Buddhist Temple), 30 Jalan Eunos, Singapore 419495 Tel: 6744 4285 Fax: 67441912

Website: www.mv.sg

Printer: Yung Shung Printrade Pte Ltd

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in whole or in part, without written permission from the publisher.