



A Study of the Five Precepts Regulation for the young at Bat Mau temple, Hanoi, Vietnam

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Abstract

The article aims is to study the five Precepts regulation for the young at Bat Mau temple, Hanoi, Vietnam. The objectives of the study are classified into three categories as the following: 1). To study the state of the problems of Five precepts practically at Bat Mau temple, 2). To study an essential and training process of Five precepts for the young, and 3). To propose the five precepts regulation for the young at Bat Mau temple, Hanoi in Vietnam. As a result, the researcher found that young still have a lack of knowledge of cultivation Five precepts and Basic Buddhism. After all, five precepts are very potential for the young to practice practically in their daily life. The Five Precepts are hugely helpful for young to enhance or uplift to reveal and develop their moral life.

Keywords: Study, Five Precepts, Regulation, Young, and Bat Mau Temple.

1. Introduction

The Pali word most often translated as “morality” is “*Śīla*”. “It can refer to inner virtue such as kindness and truthfulness. It can also refer to the discipline of acting in a moral way. “*Śīla*” is best understood as a kind of harmony. The most basic list of Precepts is called in Pali the “*pañcasīla*” or “five precepts.” In Theravada Buddhism, these Five Precepts are the basic precepts for lay Buddhists.

“The Buddhist texts explain that “*sīla*” has the characteristic of harmonizing our actions of body and speech. “*Śīla*” harmonizes our actions by bringing them into accord with our own true interests, with the well-being of others, and with universal laws. Actions contrary to “*sīla*” lead to a state of self-division marked by guilt, anxiety, and remorse. But the observance of the principles of *sīla* heals this division, bringing our inner faculties together into a balanced and centered state of unity. This is why five precepts regulation is very important for the young to get the proper knowledge of understanding that young should need to study deeply along the basic teaching of Buddhist the Five Precepts. The Five precepts can guide and show the direction to them to follow the right path. By truly understanding the Five precepts, it is hugely profitable and beneficial for the young to develop their moral life.

2. The Five Precepts Regulation for the young at Bat Mau temple

According to *Aṅguttara nikāya*: the Buddha said that undertaking the Five precepts is a gift to oneself and others; in undertaking the precepts, he gives freedom from dangers, freedom from animosity, free from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. He gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression. This is the highest gift, the great gift, original long standing traditional, unadulterated from the beginning that is not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, is not faulted by knowledge contemplative and priests. This is the reward of merit, reward of skillfulness, nourishment of happiness, celestial, resulting in happiness, leading to heaven, leading to what is desirable, pleasurable, and appealing; to welfare to happiness. (Chau, Thich Minh, Vol. II, 1982: 16).

The Five precepts are not commandments on us. But the moral codes that we willingly undertake to observe out of clear understanding and firm conviction that they are good for ourselves as well as for our society. The first precept implies the rights of all living beings to protect and preserve their life. It also implies the importance of love and compassion for all. The second precept signifies an individual’s rights for the possession as well as the

protection of wealth rightly acquired. It is also stress the importance of right livelihood. The third precept not to indulge in sexual misconduct and we should respect each other. The fourth precept aims at preserving man's credibility, dignity, and trustworthy. It makes man honest and truthful. The last precepts avoid from taking any intoxicants drugs and alcohol. Therefore, the five precepts are not only good but it is absolutely necessary for a truly happy and peaceful society. (Phra Sunthorn Plamintr, 1999: 113).

“The Five Precepts” demonstrates to undertaking the precepts represent the practical application of faith. These are the most meaningful activities one can embark upon in life something truly gratifying and laudable. The precepts form the basis for everything good. Their essential character is one of non-violation; for it is by not violating others that one can be perfect the purity of the three karmas of body, speech, and mind. For many, the greatest advantage in human life is represented by the pursuit of fame and fortune, including all the money and wealth such pursuits entail. But in truth, all the advantages in the world added together would fall far short of the value gained by undertaking and practicing the five precepts. By undertaking the five precepts, we can develop faith, generate merit, and increase moral strength. By undertaking the five precepts we can enjoy peace and well-being in the human form, hone spiritual focus, and avoid acting in unwholesome ways. In other words, understanding the five precepts allows us to generate our intrinsic wisdom, obtain respect, and, ultimately, produce harmony. The merit from undertaking the five precepts is limitless and immeasurable. (Venerable Master Hsing Yun, 2011: 13).

The most basic set of precepts found in the Buddha's teaching is the five precepts, consisting of the following five training rules: (1) the training rule of abstaining from taking life; (2) the training rule of abstaining from taking what is not given; (3) the training rule of abstaining from sexual misconduct; (4) the training rule of abstaining from false speech; and (5) the training rule of abstaining from fermented and distilled intoxicants which are the basics for heedlessness. These five precepts are the minimal ethical code binding on the Buddhist laity. The precepts function as the core of the training in moral discipline. They are intended to produce, through methodical practice, that inner purity of will and motivation which comes to expression as virtuous bodily and verbal conduct. (Bhikkhuni Shin, 2011: 23).

3. The State of the Problems of the Five Precepts for the young

The main problem of *sīla* or moral conduct at Bat Mau temple, young still has lack of understanding the *sīlas*. It yields in particular, a very special benefit and important for the young. *Sīla* is the basic principles of Buddhism best known to most people. It is customary for them to be delivered during almost every religious ceremony and those present at the ceremonies generally make a formal declaration of their intention to comply with them. (Venerable Thanh Dat, 2018: 87).

Due to lack of understanding of Five precepts that young people are directly engaging in unsocial activity; intentionally killing people, stealing, and raping women and girls, and taking intoxicant drugs, which are very detrimental and pernicious for the young and others at Bat Mau temple Hanoi, Vietnam. Therefore, to overcome and conquer from these pertaining problems, that religious leaders have to take responsibility to provide and contribute proper knowledge of basic teaching of Buddhism of Five precepts to young, which will be enormously beneficial for them to change their life. (Venerable, 2018: 87).

In the modern society people, lifestyle is rapidly developing every day, besides that young people, lifestyle also enriching but becoming more crucially inhumane or merciless due to lack of knowledge of the regulation of practicing the along the five precepts practically, in Vietnam. Therefore, It is very immensely necessary in order to develop young life by providing to the proper and authentic regulation of guideline to practice of Five Precepts. It means that by providing proper regulation ways of practicing five precepts, which will contribute young to follow the righteous way and to become a better person in society. So, it can help to develop one's people live by the practical practice of Five Precepts.

Indeed, five precepts are to be viewed as a positive booster for the young, since in the working of, causality, and oneself is able to abandon unwholesome actions, which in turn creates a more positive impact for the young at Bat Mau temple, Hanoi, in Vietnam. In upholding the five precepts, young are able to maintain positive interpersonal relationships with each other. This is a key Buddhist value in cultivating compassion with one's family members, friends, and strangers. Buddhism stresses on the cultivation of loving-kindness, compassion, and if young is able to observe the five precepts which reinforce one's ethical conduct, it enables one to remain true to the Buddha path and be free from all suffering.

The training process encompasses faith, understanding, practice, experience and realization. First, we need to have a certain degree of faith to enter the path. We need to have faith that the Five Precepts will lead us to happiness and that we can uphold them. Next,

we need to learn the value of upholding the precepts, and how this can be accomplished by understanding their contents and principles. Learning the precepts helps us to understand the importance of becoming more ethical in our behavior and increasing our mental discipline. (Venerable Faxun, 2011: 14).

Buddhism is decreasing every day in Vietnam that young people are losing their interest in the practice of five precepts. Even, young has a lack of knowledge of Dhamma (the teaching of Buddha) and ignorance of to practice and undertaking the five precepts practically in their daily basic life. In spite of this fact, young people are involving directly into crimes such as killing, raping, stealing, and taking intoxicant drugs. It is to say that young are broke the basic rules, which is Buddha laid down for the laity to practice of five precepts. Considering the present condition, the five precepts are necessary and significant for the young to follow duly in order to overcome the breakneck situation. Therefore, the five precepts are very essentially beneficiary for young to enhance or uplift to reveal and develop their moral life.

4. Practicing Five precepts and develop the morality

It is a practice among Buddhists to bring to mind every day the Five Precepts while sitting with hands in Anjali in front of the shrine. At that time one should resolve as strongly as possible to practice them and not to depart from them.

The five main precepts are a prominent teaching in Buddhism. They are the foundation and the first step of practicing for both lay Buddhist initiation and regular lay Buddhist devotional practices. Anyone, even a non-Buddhist can undertake the precepts because they are kind of reflections to generate good and high quality human beings. The precepts are also known as five precepts. Five Precepts is derived from the word ‘Pañca’, and ‘sīla’, ‘Pañca’ means five and sīla means moral, principle, behavior, ethics, etc. The manifest of the five main precepts is holiness. By practicing five precepts, we are generating holiness inside our mind, speech, and deed. If we violate it, holiness won’t be developed inside our mind, speech, and deed. Actually, things that can cause us to violate the precepts are evil mind, lust, dissatisfaction “(lobhā)”, attachment, ignorance “(Mohā)”, hatred “(Dosā)”, and delusion. (Chánh Kiên, , 2002: 12). The Five Precepts and the Three Jewels are worthy objects for our faith. They are not at all abstract-we can learn, practice, explore, extend, and check them against our own experience. To study and practice they will surely bring peace and happiness to us, community, and society. We human beings need something to believe in, something

that is good, beautiful, and true, and something that we can touch. Faith in the practice of mindfulness-in the Five Wonderful Precepts and the Three Jewels-is something anyone can discover, appreciate, and integrate into his or her daily life. (Chau, Thich Minh, 1993: 24).

The precepts (Sila) indicate the basic norms of human behavior to which all people naturally aspire. The most fundamental of these were formulated as the five precepts: (1) not to kill; (2) not to steal; (3) not to engage in sexual misconduct; (4) not to lie; and (5) not to drink intoxicants. Even though they have been set out as rules, rather than simply preventing certain acts, the goal of these guides of behavior has always been to encourage a richer, more self-reflective inner life, to set the conditions for religious practice in the pursuit of enlightenment. (Tu, Thich Thanh, 1960: 12). The practice of ethics is one of the three principle forms of training that Buddhists engage in; the other two being meditation and wisdom. Ethical precepts (vows) guide a practitioner in examining cause and effect (karma), as well as how the renunciation, patience, and honesty required of this practice illuminate the teachings.(Damien Keown , 2001: 12).

5. Improving spiritual and moral life

The Buddha contributed and provided us with five precepts to guide us on our way to individual liberation. We are to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and taking intoxicants. Not just for Buddhists, these precepts are basic to the major spiritual traditions and ethical teachings in our world today. The term “keep practicing of Five Precepts” might sound challenging to some, but it doesn’t have to be. Some practice will be sure to increase your spirituality. Therefore, young can improve the spiritual life through practicing and observing the Five precepts. The reason is that all we really need to do observe and practice hardly in daily life. With practice, young are able to understand the important and value of Five precepts. In this case, young can develop their spiritual life.

The fundamental modes of training in Buddhist practice are morality. The English word morality is used to translate the Pali term ‘Sila’, although the Buddhist term contains its own particular connotations. The word morality denotes a state of normalcy, a condition which is basically unqualified and unadulterated. When one practices morality, one returns to one’s own basic goodness, the original state of normalcy, unperturbed and unmodified. Killing a human being, for instance, is not basically human nature; if it were, human beings 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 into something other than

their true self. To practice morality is thus to train in preserving one's true nature, not allowing it to be modified or overpowered by negative forces. (Dr. Peter D. Santina, 1984: 49).

It is quite probable that on the empirical level an action may appear to be a mixture of good and bad elements, in spite of the intention and the way it is performed. Thus, an action committed with the best of intentions may not bring the desired result for either the doer or the recipient. Sometimes an action based on negative intentions may produce seemingly positive results. Due to lack of knowledge and understanding, people may confuse one set of actions with an unrelated set of results and make wrong conclusions, or simply misjudge them on account of social values and conventions. This can lead to misconceptions about the law of kamma and loss of moral consciousness. This is why precepts are necessary in the practice of moral discipline: they provide definite guidelines and help to avoid some of the confusion that empirical observation and social conventions may entail. (Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, 2008: 17). Observance of the five precepts constitutes the minimum moral obligation of a practicing lay Buddhist. These five precepts enjoin against killing living beings, taking what is not given (or stealing), sexual misconduct, false speech, and use of intoxicating drink or drugs. The practice of Buddhist moral precepts deeply affects one's personal and social life. The fact that they represent a course of training which one willingly undertakes rather than a set of commandments willfully imposed by a God or Supreme Being is likely to have a positive bearing upon one's conscience and awareness. On the personal level, the precepts help one to lead a moral life and to advance further on the spiritual path.

The observance of this precept is also a natural precursor to the cultivation of mindfulness and wisdom, which are the essence of insight meditation. Each and every precept increases our awareness of how we may skillfully conduct ourselves in body and speech and helps us to see more clearly whether we are improving in this process of self-discipline. Self-reliance and responsibility are important features of the practice of Buddhist morality. Because these precepts are meant to be a course of training, it can hardly be expected that each and every practitioner will be able to follow them without committing the slightest error, any more than it can be expected of a music student not to make a single mistake in the course of his lessons. For people with certain temperaments or occupations, some precepts may appear more difficult to follow than the rest, but that should not be an obstacle to making an attempt to keep the precepts. If one is discouraged from practicing, one need simply consider that these precepts are a course of training; and training, by definition, implies imperfection and a gradual process of development (Shi, Ding An, 2000: 4).

One of the distinct features of the Buddhist moral precepts is the universal character in which they may be practiced with benefit by all members of society. For instance, non-

stealing can be universally observed with desirable results, and the practice will help to promote coexistence, peace, and harmony in society. If this precept were reversed and stealing were made a moral principle, we can immediately see that there would be so much conflict and confusion that society would eventually cease to function. Thus, stealing can never be made a moral act, no matter how ideal and noble the motivation. (Tue Phap, 2009: 14).

Basically, Moral precepts and moral integrity are matters that concern inner strength, fortitude, and conscientious practice, not fear and trepidation based on extraneous factors. Observance of the third Buddhist moral precept could greatly reduce the risk of infection or spread of this deadly disease. Acceptance of this fact may also lead to an appreciation of the value of morality and moral precepts as laid down by the Buddha, consequently strengthening conviction in the Dhamma practice.

6. Building Harmonious society

Buddhism can relieve strain and stress among people and between humans and nature, thus enhancing social accord. Advocating the Buddhist spirit of harmony, peace and benevolence will undoubtedly push forward harmony the world. Buddhism from across the world will exchange views at the five-day forum, focusing on the theme that a harmonious world begins in the mind.

Every great spiritual system offers guidelines for ethical conduct as a statement that spiritual life cannot be separated from our words and actions. A conscious commitment to virtue and no harming is the foundation for living a harmonious and compassionate life. At first, following a moral code can be seen as a protection for yourself and others. To Building the harmonious society that young have to practice precepts the Five precepts and an popular doctrine of Buddhism is “to do no evil, to do only good and to purify the will.” The Five precepts are not only the foundations to peaceful society the necessary foundations in the gradual path of self-liberation in following the Buddhist path. The Five precepts are skillful that extends beyond moral conduct at the core of observing the Five precepts at the individual level is actually a set of standards to enable a basic, universal code of societal discipline establishing harmony.

A peaceful harmonious society emerges when people rectify their thoughts and adopt wholesome standards of conduct (e.g. right speech, right action, and right livelihood). Personal training leads to personal transformation and, in turn, to the transformation of society. Moreover, good friendships represent the foundation of a harmonious society. The Buddha describes attributes of a good friend. The Buddha also teaches how to create a healthy

community. “Giving, endearing speech, beneficent conduct, and impartiality. These are the four means of embracing others. (David L. Phillips, 2014: 3).

On the personal level, the observance of precepts serves as the preliminary ground work for the cultivation of higher virtues or mental development. Sila is the most important step on the spiritual path. Without morality, right concentration cannot be attained, and without right concentration, wisdom cannot be fully perfected. Thus, morality not only enhances people’s ethical values and fulfills their noble status as human beings. On the social level, morality contributes to harmonious and peaceful coexistence among community members and consequently helps to promote social growth and development. In a society where morality prevails and members are conscious of their roles, there will be general security, mutual trust, and close cooperation, these in turn leading to greater progress and prosperity. Without morality there will be corruption and disturbance, and all members of society are adversely affected. Most of the problems that society experiences today are connected, directly or indirectly, with a lack of good morality.

Questions of morality always concern the issues of right and wrong, good and evil. For a moral life to be meaningful these issues must not remain mere theoretical principles, but translated into practice. Good must be performed, evil must be given up. It is not enough to know what is good or evil; we also need to take proper action with respect to them. Young need concrete guidelines to follow, and these are provided by the Buddhist moral precepts. Even the oft-quoted Buddhist ideals of abstention from evil, implementation of what is good, and perfect mental purification can be initially actualized through a consistent practice of moral precepts. The precepts can help young to live those ideals; they teach us to do the right things and to avoid the wrong.

Before delving into the Five precepts as a moral basis for the good of Society, the researcher will briefly outline building Buddhist Harmonious life as it is essential to understand the relationship between the Five precepts and how they reinforce one another in the practical aspects of being a Buddhist. Nevertheless, harmonious society depends on a virtuous self, which is already inherent in us. For the society to enjoy harmony has to work on the self to uncover one’s Tathagata Buddha therefore taught his followers to observe the Five precepts-abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxicants as a code of conduct in training one’s body, speech and mind.

7. Conclusion

As mentioned above, the key objective of the study is to discover the study the five Precepts regulation for the young at Bat Mau temple, Hanoi, Vietnam. The aim of the research was to look at the current level of the knowledge and understanding of young about the five precepts and basic Buddhism. The training process of five precepts for the young is immensely essential because it is a guide for the young to practice the five precepts authentically. In last, the researcher has pointed out the regulation that made for the young during they come to undertaking the five precepts for three months in the summer season at Bat Mau temple. Five precepts can help to build the harmonious life for young. It is always able to guide them to follow the righteous way. Five precepts are about not killing, not stealing, not lying, not sexual miss conduct and not taking intoxicant drugs. So, these above-mentioned Precepts whoever follows them strictly, definitely it will be helpful for him or her to build harmonious life.

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