

## Precepts as the Outline

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Good morning! Welcome to the International Buddha Dharma Society for Cosmic Law to listen to today's Dharma talk! Last time we talked about the beginning of precepts. Buddha Sakayamuni started to make precepts when 须提那 event happened. Later on, due to various other things happened, the Buddha made other various precepts.

Among them, lay people can hold the Five Precepts (no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no false speech, no wine drinking) or the Six Heavy and Twenty-Eight Light precepts for Upasaka and Upasika. The Five Precepts are the basic precepts. If one can hold the Five Precepts, then one will not slide down to the three evil realms and can be born as human again or be born to the upper heavenly realm. However, only holding the Five Precepts will not free one from the cycle of birth and death.

If one can hold the Ten Good Precepts (no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no false speech, no flattery or indiscriminate and irresponsible speech, no bad mouth, no blandishments, no greed, no anger, and no foolishness), then one can be born to the heavenly realm.

There are also other precepts, such as Ten Precepts for Novices, Two Hundred Fifty Precepts for Monks and Three Hundred Forty-Eight Precepts for Nuns. There are also the Ten Heavy and Forty-Eight Light Precepts for Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattva Precepts are the origin of all Buddhas and the basic for Bodhisattvas and all Buddhists. In addition, there are also Three Categories of Pure Precepts which are holding all the precepts, cultivating all good dharmas, benefiting all the sentient beings. The Three Categories of Pure Precepts are also the precepts for Bodhisattvas.

There are eighty-four thousand of dharmas, and there are also eighty-four thousand of precepts. Dharma is everywhere, so are precepts. Dharma is born under certain causes and conditions, so are precepts. In the ten realms of six ordinary realms and four holy

realms, the upper the realm, the stricter the precepts. The upper the realm, the lighter the bad habits of greed, the anger, the stupidity, the pride and the doubt. The upper the realm, the less the ego. We chose the realm ourselves. We chose which road to take. Causes determine the fruits/results. In the universe, all beings have different shapes and appearances, which are all related to the karmas created by themselves.

In the Discourse on the Ten Wholesome Ways of Action, the Buddha told the Dragon King, “All beings, because they have different thoughts and create different karma, are cycling in different courses of existence. Dragon King, do you see the variety of shapes and appearances of the beings in this meeting and in the great ocean? Are they not different from one another? For all of these, none is not due to the mind doing good or evil things. All are results of the body karma, mouth karma and mind karma.

Yet the mind is formless it cannot be grasped or perceived, but it is the unreal accumulation and arising of all dharmas which are ultimately without owner, without I and mine.

Although each being is manifested differently according to its own actions, there is nevertheless really no creator in these (actions). Therefore, all dharmas are inconceivable and inexpressible, their own nature is phantom like. The wise ones who know these ought to cultivate wholesome actions. So that the aggregates sense-bases and elements that will be given rise to, will all be upright and those who will see them will not grow tired of them.

Dragon King, you behold the body of the Buddha born from a hundred thousand of Kotis of merit, with all the marks adorned, the splendor of its radiance covering the whole of the great assembly. Even if there were immeasurable Kotis of Ishvara and Brahma devas, they all would not come again into appearance.

For those who look with reverence at the Tathágata's body, how can they but not be dazzled. You again behold all these great Bodhisattvas of marvelous appearance, dignified and pure. All this comes into being entirely through the merit of cultivating wholesome

actions. Again, all the powerful ones like the eight classes of devas and dragons, and suchlike they also come into being because of the merits of wholesome actions.

Now all beings in the great ocean are of course and mean shapes and appearances, they all whether small or large performed unwholesome bodily, verbal, and mental actions out of all kinds of thoughts from their own minds. Thus, each being receives its own result according to its action.

You ought to practice and to study constantly in this way, and also to bring beings to a thorough understanding of cause and effect and to the practice of wholesome actions.

In this you must have unshakable right view and you must not fall again into the views of annihilation and eternity. As to the fields of merit you rejoice in them, respect them and support them because of this you will also be respected and supported by men and devas.”

If you are not greedy, angry and ignorant, you will not be born in the three evil realms. If you are not combative, you will not be born in the Asura realm. Perform all good deeds and avoid all evil ones, you will not lose human body. You get what you cultivate. If you cultivated blessings and wisdom in the previous life, with all the blessings and wisdom, you will be born in a rich family. Everything will be all right. You will live long and have sweet and solemn appearance. If you did not cultivate blessings and wisdom in the previous life, you will be born in a poor family. Your life will be full of difficulties, maybe with an unhealthy body and ugly face. This is cause and effect.

Cultivate the five precepts and ten good deeds, purify the body karma, mouth karma and mind karma without greed, anger and ignorance, one will be born in the heavenly realm. But it's not every layer of heaven. For the higher heavens, samadhi power is needed.

To be born in the Savaka realm, one will need to cultivate the Four Noble Truth and find the source of suffering. Just as when the Buddha first turned the Dharma wheel and expounded the Four Noble Truth to the five disciples, the five disciples obtained Arhat fruit right away.

To be born in the Pratyeka Realm, one will need to observe the 12 Links of Dependent Origination. Find the root of ignorance and cut it off. Open the wisdom in the self-nature; observe the flowers blooming and fading; aware the impermanence of the circle of life. After breaking through the ignorance, the Dharma body will appear and this is Pratyekabuddha. How to be born in the Bodhisattva Realm? Being egoless and benefiting all the sentient beings is Bodhisattvas. Being selfish and benefiting the self is demons. Bodhisattvas have no ego and have cut off all the worldly constraints. Bodhisattvas do not have individual happiness. Bodhisattvas abide their mind on benefitting all sentient beings. Bodhisattvas transform sentient beings and they still have discrimination of sentient beings. In the Buddha Realm, in the mind of a Buddha, there are no sentient beings anymore because the Buddha knows that the Buddha and the sentient beings are ONE. Transforming sentient beings is also transforming the self. The Buddha is the sentient beings and the sentient beings are the Buddha. The Buddha has detached himself from all the form.

How to be born in the Buddha Realm? The Buddha is consciousness. Being able to be conscious is the Buddha. Not being able to be conscious is the sentient being. One moment of consciousness is one moment of Buddha; one moment of ignorance is one moment of sentient being. If you can be aware right and wrong of what you are doing, you are the Buddha; if you are not able to be aware of what you are doing, then you are an ordinary being.

If you hold one precept, you get benefit of holding one precept; if you hold ten precepts, you get benefit of holding ten precepts; if you don't hold precepts, you don't get benefits from them.

In the Discourse on The Ten Wholesome Ways of Action, the Buddha expounded the benefit of holding every precept of the ten good precepts. The Buddha said, “ Dragon King, if one gives up taking life then one will accomplish ten ways of being free from vexations.

What are the ten?

- 1]. One gives universally to all beings without fear.
- 2]. One always has a heart of great compassion towards all beings.
- 3]. All habitual tendencies of hate in oneself will be cut off forever.
- 4]. One's body is always free from illness.
- 5]. One's life is long.
- 6]. One is constantly protected by non-human beings.
- 7]. One is always without bad dreams, one sleeps and wakes happily.
- 8]. The entanglement of enmity is eradicated and one is free from all hatred.
- 9]. One is free from the dread of evil destinies.
- 10]. When one's life comes to an end one will be born as a Deva.

These are the ten. If one is one who is able to turn-towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will at a later time become a Buddha and attain to the ability peculiar to the Buddha, to live as long as one wishes.

Again, Dragon King, if one gives up stealing then one will attain to ten kinds of dharmas which can protect one's confidence. What are the ten?

- 1]. One's wealth will increase and accumulate and cannot be scattered or destroyed by Kings, robbers, floods, fires, and careless sons.
- 2]. One is thought of with fondness by many people.
- 3]. People do not take advantage of one.
- 4]. Everywhere one is praised.
- 5]. One is above the worry, that one oneself could be injured.
- 6]. One's good name spreads.
- 7]. One is without fear in public.
- 8]. One is endowed with wealth, long life, strength, peace, happiness, and skill in speech, without deficiencies.

9]. One always thinks of giving.

10]. At the end of one's life, one will be born as a Deva.

These are the ten. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will at a later time become a Buddha, and attain to the realization of the purified great illumination wisdom.

Again, Dragon King, if one gives up wrong conduct one will attain to four kinds of dharmas which are praised by the wise. What are the four?

1]. All one's faculties are tuned and adjusted.

2]. One is free from turmoil and excitement.

3]. One is praised and extolled by the world.

4]. One's wife cannot be encroached upon by anybody.

These are the four. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination one will at a later time become a Buddha, and attain the master sign of the Buddha, of a concealed organ.

Again, Dragon King, if one gives up lying then one will attain to the eight dharmas which are praised by the devas. What are the eight?

1]. One's mouth is always pure and has the fragrance of a blue lotus flower.

2]. One is trusted and obeyed by all the world.

3]. What one says is true and one is loved by men and devas.

4]. One always comforts beings with loving words.

5]. One attains to excellent bliss of mind and one's actions, speech, and thoughts are pure.

6]. One's speech is faultless and one's mind is always joyful.

7]. One's words are respected and are followed by men and devas.

8]. One's wisdom is extraordinary and cannot be subdued.

These are the eight. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will at a later time become a Buddha, and attain to the true speech of the Tathágata.

Again, Dragon King, if one gives up slandering one will then attain to five kinds of incorruptible dharma. What are the five?

- 1]. One attains to an incorruptible body because no harm can be done to one.
- 2]. One gets an incorruptible family because no one can destroy it.
- 3]. One attains to incorruptible confidence because this is in line with one's own actions.
- 4]. One attains to an incorruptible spiritual life because what one cultivates is firmly grounded.
- 5]. One gets incorruptible spiritual friends because one does not mislead or delude anybody.

These are the five. If one is one who is able to turn-towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will at a later time become a Buddha, and receive a holy retinue which cannot be corrupted by any Mara or heretic.

Again, oh Dragon King, if one gives up harsh language then one will attain to the accomplishment of eight kinds of pure actions. What are the eight?

- 1]. One's speech is meaningful and reasonable.
- 2]. All that one says is profitable.
- 3]. One's words are bound to be truthful.
- 4]. One's language is beautiful and marvelous.
- 5]. One's words are accepted by others.
- 6]. One's words are trusted.
- 7]. One's words cannot be ridiculed.
- 8]. All one's words are spoken in love and enjoyed by others.

These are the eight. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, he will be endowed with the perfect characteristic of the Brahma voice of the Tathágata.

Again, Dragon King, if one gives up frivolous speech then one will attain to the accomplishment of the three certainties. What are the three?

- 1]. One is certain to be loved by the wise.
- 2]. One is certain to be able to answer questions with wisdom and according to reality.
- 3]. One is certain to have the most excellent dignity and virtue among men and devas and one is without falsehood.

These are the three. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will at a later time become a Buddha, attain to the Tathágata's ability to predict everything, and none of the predictions are ever in vain.

Again, Dragon King, if one gives up lust, then one will attain to the accomplishment of the five kinds of freedom. What are the five?

- 1]. Freedom of bodily, verbal, and mental actions because one's six faculties are perfect.
- 2]. Freedom as regards property because all enemies and robbers cannot rob one.
- 3]. Freedom with regard to merit because whatever one wishes one will be provided with.
- 4]. Freedom of being in the position of a King, because precious, rare and marvelous things will be reverently offered to one.
- 5]. The things one will get will surpass in excellency by a hundred times that what one is looking for, because in times by-gone one was neither stingy nor envious.

These are the five. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will at a later time become a Buddha, be especially revered in all three realms and all of the beings of the three realms will respectfully make offering to one.

Again, oh Dragon King, if one gives up hatred then one will attain to eight kinds of dharmas of joy of mind. What are the eight?



- 1]. One's mind is free from the desire to injure and to annoy others.
- 2]. One's mind is free from hatred.
- 3]. One's mind is free from the desire to dispute and to argue.
- 4]. One's mind is gentle and upright.
- 5]. One has attained to the mind of loving kindness of a saint.
- 6]. One is of a mind that always acts beneficially giving peace to beings.
- 7]. One's bodily appearance is dignified and one is respectfully treated by all.
- 8]. Because one is kind and forbearing, one will be born soon in the Brahma World.

These are the eight. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will in later times become a Buddha, attain to the mind of the Buddha that is free from obstacles. People will not become tired of looking at him.

Again, Dragon King, if one gives up wrong views, one will attain to the accomplishment of ten meritorious dharma. What are the ten?

- 1]. One attains to genuinely good bliss of mind and one gets genuinely good companions.
- 2]. One has deep confidence in the law of cause and effect and one would rather lose one's life than do evil.
- 3]. One takes refuge in the Buddha only and not in devas or others.
- 4]. One is of a straight mind and right views, and leaves behind the net of doubts about good and evil fortune.
- 5]. One will not be born again in an evil course of existence but will always be born as a man or Deva.
- 6]. Immeasurable blessings and wisdom will increase sublimely from turn to turn.
- 7]. One will forever leave the wrong path and tread the holy path.
- 8]. The view of a personality will not arise in one and one gives up all evil actions.
- 9]. One will abide in unobstructed understanding.
- 10]. One will not fall into any difficult conditions.

These are the ten. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will at a later time become a Buddha, realize quickly all Buddha-dharmas and accomplish the mastery of the higher spiritual powers."

The road is in one's mind; the road is under one's feet. Everyone chooses their own road. No pain no gain. No sincerity no benefit. Practice from the present moment. Hold precepts from the present moment. No giving no gaining. Everything we do is for ourselves. The ten dharma realms are all in sentient beings' mind. Observe your own mind, and you will know what realm you are in. For those of you who have made the vow to become Buddha soon, you may dedicate the merits of holding every precept to anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, to becoming a Buddha soon, which is boundless beneficence.

Amitabha! Thank you for listening! See you next week!