

The Concept of The *Sīla*'s Disparity in Determining The Results and Impacts of Its Observance: A Theravada Buddhist Approach

Md Rakibul Hasan¹
Neeru Barua²

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<i>Article history:</i> Date of Submission: 24-07-2024 Date of Acceptance: 13-01-2025 Date of Publication: 30-10-2025 <i>Keywords:</i> <i>Sīla</i>, Buddhism, Peace, Self-control, Unwholesome actions	<i>Sīla</i> means moral discipline or ethical integrity. It is one of the main doctrines Buddhism advocates to sustain the path of well-being, peace, and liberation. The more a man engages himself in illicit deeds, the more he increases his suffering. Realizing human suffering, Gautama Buddha pioneered <i>sīla</i> as a way to relieve suffering. Buddhism posits that, akin to the rewards of virtuous actions, immoral actions yield repercussions. An escalation of malevolent actions will hinder spiritual emancipation and complicate the pursuit of tranquility. Consequently, the Buddha implored us to perform all virtuous deeds. The foundation of all virtuous activities is called <i>sīla</i>. This paper examines the advantages and disadvantages of violating <i>sīla</i> by analyzing its characteristics and categories. It primarily serves two functions: the ordinary and the extraordinary. The ultimate emancipation is the paramount objective of Buddhism, underscoring the significance of worldly existence. <i>Sīla</i> serves as the pathway to liberation and a mechanism for societal harmony. All Buddhist schools underscore the importance of <i>sīla</i>; yet this research examines discrepancies in the outcomes of <i>sīla</i> observance and the various issues investigated through a qualitative lens, drawing on the <i>Theravada</i> Buddhist <i>Tipiṭaka</i>.

¹ Lecturer, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Email: rakibulhasan66@du.ac.bd

² Associate Professor, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Email: nbaruadupali@du.ac.bd

Introduction

The founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, is one of the greatest architects of peace and non-violence doctrine. Born into a royal family in ancient India (modern-day Nepal) in 563 BCE, this great man attained enlightenment at the age of 35 under a Bodhi tree near Bihar, India. After enlightenment in the last 45 years of his existence, he has preached the doctrine consisting of human peace, happiness, amity, forbearance, virtue, meditation, etc. A society devoid of violence and characterized by serenity is neither sustainable nor peaceful. Wholesome actions performed by body, speech, and mind certainly make the process of peace sustainable. '*Sīla*' is a Pāli word that stands for morality, virtue, merit, and goodness. Sometimes it means ethics as well. The word '*Theravāda*,' which translates to "Doctrine of the Elders," is a branch of Buddhism that takes its scriptural guidance from the Tipitaka, also known as the Pāli Canon. Academics generally accept that this treatise contains the earliest extant account of the Buddha's teachings. (R.H Robinson & Bhikkhu, 2005). Gautama Buddha has on various occasions preached on the nature, duties, and functions of *sīla*, as described in the holy Tipiṭaka and highly relevant to all times and eras. *Sīla* is a developed state of mind, characterized by humanity, kindness, discipline, and pacification, achieved through the gradual cultivation of goodness. Abiding by the *sīla* is important; Buddhism elaborates on the consequences of observing it in this life and the hereafter. However, every day in the modern world, we witness war, strife, individual conflicts, and a lack of harmony. Corruption, inequality, injustice, the frantic killing of living beings, and falsehoods are destroying the path to peace in society. People are not repenting for these evil deeds; rather, they are opening the way for a new destruction of peace. The teachings of Buddha can serve as a catalyst for transforming these unwholesome practices into a sustainable, peaceful society. Socially and spiritually, we reward good deeds and condemn bad ones. Thus, the teachings of Buddha attribute the variety of abidance to *sīla*, or virtue. The outcomes of strict observance, moderate observance, lower observance, and non-observance vary. The entire Buddha's teachings comprise 84000 skandhas (divisions) briefly laid out in *Sīla* (virtue), *Samādhi* (pointedness), and *Paññā* (wisdom). These three basic principles, or three pillars of Buddhism, will lead us to ultimate peace. Hence, this research work is intended for revealing the nature of *sīla*, its intrinsic features, disparity, and results of the abidance of *sīla*, which makes an impact reflecting on spiritual attainment and social welfare.

Literature Review

There have been many studies in the past on the results of practicing Buddhist precepts (*sīla*). The theory of action (*kammavāda*) is closely related to the results of practicing precepts; the field is more extensive. Observance of precepts (*sīla*) brings peace and harmony. Undoubtedly, all faiths have assumed a social role alongside a personal

one. Regardless of their underlying theories, these faiths must address similar social issues in similar ways, which explains the numerous similarities among ethical systems worldwide. The Buddha, who only professed to validate the teachings of the most learned teachers in the sphere of ethics, acknowledged this. The rationale Jesus provides for moral behavior is what makes his doctrine unique (Dahlke, 1973). Buddhism maintains that achieving liberation requires gradual training, exercise, and practice. The several stages of a lotus in muddy water symbolize the long journey of emancipation. First, the lotus must develop in the muddy water. Afterward, it must rise above the dirt and stay smeared by the water. The growth of moral virtues (*sīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*) are the components of this gradualness. Living an ethical life (*sīla*) will eventually lead to mental awareness (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) (Nhan, 2017). Much of the research on *sīla* has emphasized its practical dimension; yet, a comprehensive examination of the diverse outcomes of its adherence, as articulated by the Buddha, remains inadequate. This study is unique and innovative as it addresses the diversity of outcomes and contexts in fostering societal peace constructions, influenced by varying degrees of adherence to Buddhist precepts (*sīla*).

Methodology

This study employs a methodological framework that illustrates the influence of peace on society through the cultivation of virtue and an examination of its repercussions from a Buddhist perspective. Essentially, a qualitative method has been employed for a comprehensive understanding of the *Tipiṭaka*. We collect primary data from the *Tipiṭaka*, together with its commentaries and sub-commentaries. This research elucidates the process of maintaining peace using significant insights derived from the Buddha's teachings and examine numerous discourses from the *Tipiṭaka* in relation to contemporary contexts. This papers also employs many articles, papers, and pertinent data from websites as secondary sources.

Discussion

Sīla constitutes one of the three fundamental pillars of Buddhism. *Sīla* encompasses multiple meanings; in essence, it refers to the foundation of all virtuous actions (*kusala dhamma*). Buddhism underscores spiritual enlightenment, which is wholly contingent upon *sīla*.

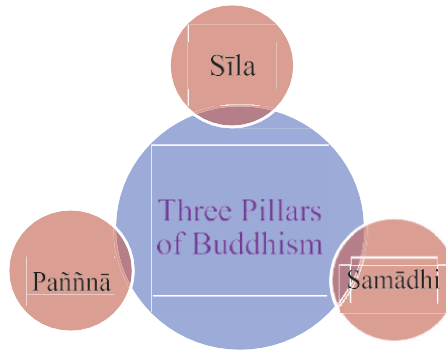


Figure 1: Three Pillars of Buddhism

In Visuddhimāgga (The Path of Purification) it has been said that,
 “Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño cittaṃ paññaṃ ca bhāvayaṃ,
 Ātāpi nipako bhikkhu so imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭanti” (Leon Feer, 2007)

That is to say,

An individual proficient in virtue (*sīla*) attains awareness and comprehension. He subsequently transforms into a passionate and astute individual who adeptly navigates this maze of challenges. This renowned Pali quotation from the Visuddhimagga emphasizes the importance of *sīla*. Enlightenment cannot be achieved without the foundation of sound principles. Observance of commandments is essential for the cultivation of consciousness (*Samādhi*) and elevated knowledge (*paññā*).

Definition of *Sīla*

The Pāli term ‘*Sīla*’ denotes morality, nature, habit, ethical code, and moral practice. The concept of *sīla* mitigates and alleviates the fervor of the mind. All virtuous actions are grounded in *sīla*, allowing them to thrive. By eradicating physical, verbal, and cognitive diseases, *sīla* regulates and constrains the senses. The blessed one said,

“The Dhamma, brahmin, is a lake with fords of virtue (*sīla*)-
 A limpid lake the good praise to the good-
 Where the knowledge-master go to bathe,
 And, dry-limbed, cross to the far shore.” (Bodhi B. , pp. 278-279)

The Buddha asserted that the cycle of reincarnation is a cause of misery. *Nibbāna* is the means to escape this cycle. Nonetheless, this trip might be arduous to traverse. The cultivation of *sīla* facilitates this challenging endeavor. Theravada instructor Joseph Goldstein defines “purity in speech, action, and livelihood” as “moral excellence, correct thought and behavior, and general goodness.” (Tricycle, 2024)

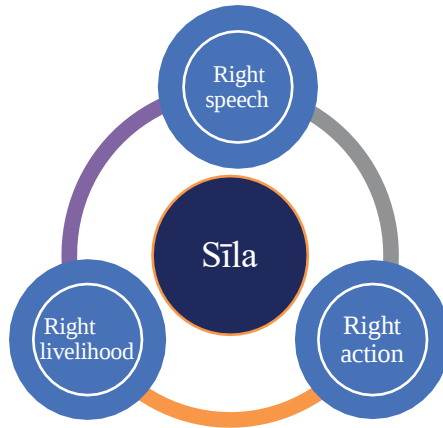


Figure 2: Components of *Sīla* (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 1995, p. 167)

Ethical behavior is “built on the vast conception of universal love and compassion for all living beings, on which the Buddha’s teaching is based. (Rahula, 1974)

Types of Sīla

Prior to examining the Buddhist *sīla*, it is essential to understand the characteristics of Buddhist society. There are discrepancies in the nature of *sīla* among Buddhist sects. Buddhist societies can be categorized into four distinct categories.

- Householders (Lay Follower)
- Upāsaka-Upāsikā (Lay adherent)
- Bhikku Saṅgha (Monk Community)
- Bhikkhūnī saṅgha (Nun Community)

Gautama Buddha identified ten varieties of *sīla* for four societal categories to enhance life and facilitate the attainment of liberation. They are enumerated as follows:

- Pañca Sīla
- Uposatha Aṭṭha Sīla
- Micchājīva samatha Aṭṭha Sīla
- Dasa sucārīta Sīla
- Pabajja dasa Sīla
- Patijagara Uposatha Sīla
- Patihariya uposatha sīla
- Caturparisuddhi Sīla
- Dhutāṅga Sīla
- Pātimokkha Sīla (Bhikkhu & Bhikkhuni Sīla) (Mahasthavir, 1959)

Pañcasīla

Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī (Abstaining from taking the life of any living being)
 Adinnādānā veramaṇī (Abstaining from unpossessed things or theft)

Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī (Abstaining from illegal sexual intercourse)
Musāvādā veramaṇī, (Refraining from Falsehood)

Surāmeraya, majja, pamādatṭhānā veramaṇī. (Refraining from taking any kind of intoxicants including liquor, wine, Marijuana, Yaba, phensedyl etc) (Bhikkhu B. M., 2016, pp. 29-31)

Uposatha Aṭṭhasīla

Pañcasīla in conjunction with

Vikāla bhojanā veramaṇī (Avoiding food during the prohibited period i.e. afternoon)
Nacca-gīta-vādita-visukkadassana-mālā-gandha-vilepanā-dhārana-mandana-vibhu-sanathāna veramaṇī (avoiding wearing garlands, wearing perfumes, attending performances, dancing, singing, and using makeup to enhance one's appearance).

Uccasayāna-mahāsayana veramaṇī (avoiding using a high-end or opulent sleeping surface) (Mahasthvir, 1959, pp. 63-64)

Micchājīva Samatha Atthasīla

Pañcasīla along with

Pisuna-vāca, Pharusa-vāca veramaṇī (Refraining from hostility speech)
Sampalāpa veramaṇī (Abstention from abortive Speech)
Micchājīva veramaṇī (Refraining from false-livelihood) (Mahasthvir, 1959, pp. 77-78)

Dasa Sucarita Sīla

Pañcasīla along with

Pisuna-vāca, Pharusa-vāca veramaṇī (Abstaining from hostility speech)
Sampalāpavāca veramaṇī (Abstaining from abortive Speech)
Abhiijjhaya veramaṇī (Abstaining from covetousness)
Vyapāda veramaṇī (Abstaining from hatred)
Micchaditthiya veramaṇī (Abstaining from false view) (Mahasthvir, 1959, p. 78)

Dasa Pabajjā Sīla

Uposatha Aṭṭhasīla along with

Uccasayana mahāsayana veramaṇī (refraining from lying on a high or luxurious sleeping place)
Jātarupa-rajata-patiggahana veramaṇī (refraining from accepting gold and silver (money) (Mahasthvir, 1959, pp. 78-79)

Patijāgara Uposatha Sīla

Keeping eight precepts (aṭṭha sīla) with advance care and systematically. As in,
Fourth lunar to sixth (3 days)

Till sixth lunar (3 days)

Seventh to ninth lunar (3 days)

Keeping from 13th lunar to next every lunar (11 days) (Mahasthavir, 1959, pp. 65-66)

Thus, keeping precepts (sīla) of total 20 days in a month.

Patihariya uposatha Sīla (Extraordinary)

Adhering to the eight principles in an exceptional manner. This precept is of 3 kinds

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Excellent | : | From asalah Purnima to Asvini Purnima (constantly 3 months) |
| Medium | : | From Asvini Purnima to Kattiki Purnima (constantly 1 month) |
| Low | : | From Asvini Purnima to Kattiki Purnima's 14th lunar day (constantly 15 days) (Mahasthavir, 1959, p. 66) |

Caturparisuddhi Sīla (Four Purified Precepts)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Pātimokkha saṃvara Sīla: | (Build and reconstruct religious institutions, observance of Dasa kusala (10 wholesomes) and exclusion of dasa akusala (10 unwholesomes). |
| Indriya saṃvara Sīla | : Restraint of six senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, sensing, cognizing). With six senses, one shouldn't act recklessly. |
| Ājiva Parisuddhi Sīla | : Abstaining from the 7 unskillful actions performed by body and speech, and the association of incantations and deceitful aphorisms. |
| Paccaya sannisita Sīla | : Not producing greed, hatred, delusion, being satisfied with little, not seeking more gain. (Mahasthavir, 1959, p. 80) |

Dhutaṅga Sīla (Extreme asceticism for Buddhist monk. It's of 13 kinds)

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Pāṃsukulik'anga | : Refusing to accept and wear ready-made robes supplied by householders, instead dressing in robes constructed from discarded or dirty material. |
| Tecīvarik'anga | : Possessing and donning just three robes; no more permitted robes may be worn |
| Pindapātik'anga | : Consuming only food that has been gathered on pindapāta or the alms round; never taking food that has been served in a layman's home or in the vihara. |
| Sapadāncārik'anga | : Not skipping a house when collecting alms; not limiting oneself to visiting wealthy homes or those picked as relatives for another reason, etc. |
| Ekāsanik'anga | : Consuming only one meal per day and turning down additional meals before lunch. (Those Gone Forth are not allowed to eat from noon until daybreak the following day, unless they are sick.) |

Pattapindik'anga	: Consuming meals from his combined bowl rather than from plates and dishes.
Khalupacchābhattik'anga	: Not eating any more food after indicating that one is full, despite the desire of laypeople to give more
Araññik'anga	: Not living in a town or village but instead being isolated and free from all distractions.
Rukkhamulik'anga	: Living without a roof and beneath a tree.
Abbhokāsik'anga	: Refusing a roof and a tree root, the ritual might be performed under the cover of a robe-covered tent.
Sosānik'anga	: Residing in or close to a cemetery, cremation site, or charnel field.
Yathā -santhatik'anga	: Being content with any residence provided for sleeping.
Nesajjik'anga	: Staying in three positions: sitting, standing, and walking—never lying down. (Bodhi B. , pp. 798-800)

Pātimokkha Sīla (Bhikkhu & Bhikkhunī Sīla) (Bhikkhu R. B., 2007)

Name of Sīla	Bhikkhu (Monk)	Bhikkhunī (Nun)
Pārājika	4	8
Sanghādisesa	13	17
Aniyata	2	- -
Nissaggiya pācittiya	30	30
Pācittiya	92	166
Paṭidesaniya	4	8
Sekhiyā	75	75
Satta Adhikarana samatha	7	7
Total	227	311

Distribution of Sīla Among Communities

Name of Sīla	Household-ers (Lay Follower)	Upāsaka-Up-āsika (Lay adherent)	Bhikkhu Saṅgha (Monk Community)	Bhikkhunī saṅgha. (Nun Community)
Pañca Sīla	✓	✓	✓	✓
Uposatha Aṭṭha Sīla	✓	✓		
Micchājīva samatha Aṭṭha Sīla	✓	✓		

Dasa sucarita Sīla	✓	✓		
Pabajja dasa Sīla			✓	✓
Patijāgara Upo-satha Sīla		✓		
Patihāriya upo-satha Sīla	✓	✓		
Caturparisuddhi Sīla	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dhutaṅga Sīla			✓	✓
Pātimokkha Sīla (Bhikkhu & Bhikkhunī Sīla)			✓	✓

Nature of Sīla

Buddhist precepts that bring mundane peace comprise mostly five precepts, eight precepts, and ten precepts. Monks and nuns follow other precepts to achieve celestial peace and ultimate liberation. Buddha exalts the nature of the five precepts, eight precepts, and ten precepts, which later commentators and scholars analyse.

First precept

The focus is on avoiding the killing of living beings. There are five aspects to the act of killing living beings. Buddha said,

‘Panobhabe panasanni vadhakacittamupakkamo,
Tena jibita naso ca anga panca badhassami’ (Bhikkhu B. M., 2016, p. 29)

The five limbs represent the conditions under which a transgression is considered to have occurred.

Object: The existence of any living thing, whether it is an animal or a human.

Knowledge: Understanding that the thing is a living being.

Intention: The intent or resolution to kill.

The Act: The act of killing.

Consequence: A resulting death. (Faxun, 2011, p. 22)

The crime of killing arises when these five elements come together.

The Second Precept

It is about theft. The Buddha identified five organs of theft as,

‘Manussa bhandam tathanni theyya cittamupakkamo
Teneva bhandaharanam pañca aṅgāni thenino’ (Bhikkhu B. M., 2016, p. 30)

In other words, there are five situations where a transgression is considered to have taken place:

Object: Anything that is lawfully the property of another

Knowledge: The idea that the object belongs to someone else

Intention: The thought/intention of stealing.

The Act: The action of taking the object.

Consequence: These five elements come together to form the true misuse of the article and thinking of it as our own, which is a complete act of stealing and a total breach of the commandment. (Faxun, 2011)

Third Precept

The nature of the third precept is described as

‘Ajjhacariya vatthunca tattha sevanamanasam
Maggenmaggabhajanam tini abrahmacārino’ (Bhikkhu B. M., 2016, p. 30)

There are specific conditions that determine when a violation occurs.

Object: An unlawful partner.

Intention: Lustful intent.

The Act: The action of engaging in sexual relations with a female partner, which is referred to as union.

Consequence: The union’s acceptance. This also includes the pleasure that comes from sensuality.

These four elements combine to form the offense of illegal sexuality.

Fourth Precept

The nature of the fourth precept is described as

‘Vatthuno bitathanceva visamvadanamanasam
Vayamata parinanam musāvadassa caturo’ (Bhikkhu B. M., 2016, p. 31)

In other words, four circumstances determine whether a violation has occurred.

Object: Someone who is not oneself.

Intention: The intention to lie and distort the facts.

The Act: The act of spreading false information via gestures, words, or silence.

Consequence: The individual understands the deception. If not, people will consider our statements to be idle chatter.

Fifth Precept

The nature of the fifth precept is narrated as:

‘Sura bhabe patukamo ajjhoharanāyogata
Teneva ajjhoharanāṃ surapanassa caturo’ (Bhikkhu B. M., 2016, p. 31)

In other words, a violation can occur under four different circumstances.

Object: The intoxicant

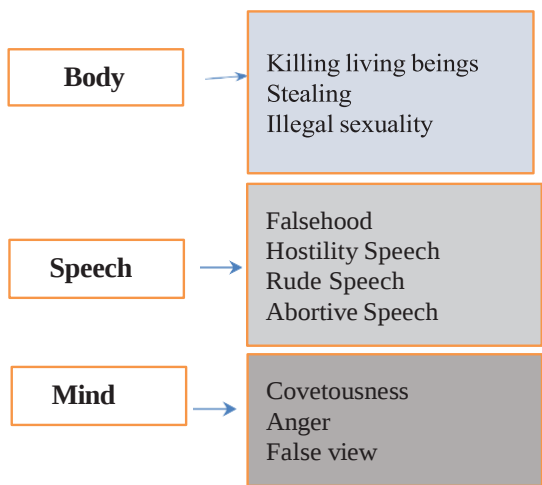
Intention: The intention of taking the intoxicant

The Act: Ingesting it

Consequence: The actual ingestion of the intoxicant

Dasa Akusala Actions

Ten unwholesome actions that are subject to dasa sucārita sīla. Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya (Bodhi B. n., 2009 : 4th edition, p. 133) describes as:



The antithesis of these actions is the practice of wholesomeness.

Pisuna Vāca or Hostile Speech

Speaks maliciously; in an attempt to split these people off from others who have unified, he repeats what he has heard here and elsewhere. As a result, he is one who splits people apart, one who makes divisions, one who takes pleasure in and likes causing strife, and one who speaks words that sow dissension. (Bodhi B. n., 2009 : 4th edition, p. 381)

Pharusa Vāca or Rude Speech

Speaks harshly and uses language that is harsh, hard, painful, or disrespectful to other people.

Sampalapa Vāca

Speaks at the wrong time, says things that are untrue, pointless, and against the Dhamma and discipline; at the wrong moment, he says things that are harmful, irrational, unreasonable, and worthless.

Abhijjhā

Immoral behavior, avarice, greed, and a desire for material possessions. Buddha described greed as the desire to own another person's riches or possessions, saying, "Oh, may what belong to another be mine!" (Bodhi B. n., 2009 : 4th edition, p. 381)

Vyāpāda

Intention of hate thus: may the beings be slain and slaughtered; may they be cut off, perish, or be annihilated. As the Buddha defined it, vyāpāda (ill will) is the desire to fail. It is fueled by animosity. The desire to harm, assault, push away, or turn away from something is how it shows up. It can function in a variety of ways, from the most subtle mental tendencies to the obscenest actions. (Fronsdal, 2024)

Micchādiṭṭhi

Wrong view, distorted vision. Not knowing something completely is also a false view. This refers to the act of expressing an opinion without fully understanding certain connected issues, occurrences, or facts.

Irrespective of religion, caste, race, and nation, Pañcasīla and Dassucharita sīla are very significant. These silas, prescribed by the Buddha, are one of the rules for establishing peace in society, the state, and the world through the purification of individuals.

Results and Disparity of Observance of Buddhist Sīla

Buddha mentions the benefits of observance of sīla in the Punnakiriyavatthu sutta of Anguttaranikaya (Bodhi B. , pp. 1170-1175) as:

Charity	Morality (Sīla)	Meditative Develop-ment	Results	Longevity	Example
A little	A little	None	After death, they are reborn in those who are unfortunate.	Less than 100 years	Laymen
Medium	Medium	None	After death, they are reborn in those who are fortunate.	Less than 100 years	Laymen
A superior extent	A superior extent	None	After death, they are reborn in Caturmaharajika.	9000000 years	Kosalaraḥ Payasi (Mahasthāvira, 2017, p. 843), King Bimbisara (Silabhadra, 1954, p. 188)
A superior extent	A superior extent	None	After death, they are reborn in companionship with the Tavatimsa devas.	36000000 years	Mitṭhakundali (Mahasthāvira, 2017, p. 837) Mollika (Mahasthāvira, 2017, p. 764) Asvakanthaka (Mahasthāvira, 2017, pp. 832-833)
A superior extent	A superior extent	None	After death, they are reborn in companionship with the Yama devas.	144000000 years	An Upāsaka of Rājgriha (Mahasthāvira, 2017, pp. 799-800)
A superior extent	A superior extent	None	After death, they are reborn in companionship with the Tusita devas	576000000 years	Mahāmāyā (Bhikkhu S. J., 2013)
A superior extent	A superior extent	None	They are reborn alongside the Nimmānaratti after death. (Delight in creation) devas	2304000000 years	Mahāupāsikā Visākhā (Mahasthāvira, 2017, pp. 774-775) Srimā (Mahasthāvira, 2017, pp. 723-725), Acama (Mahasthāvira, 2017, pp. 734-736)

A superior extent	A superior extent	None	After death, they are reborn in companionship with the Paranimmitavasavatti (Control what is created by others) devas.	9216000000 years	Subhaddā (Mahasthavira, 2017, pp. 757-758)
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Beings enjoy these benefits (born in six heavenly planes³) by the benefits of observance of Sīla.

Buddha also mentioned in Aṅguttara Nikāya Pañca Nipāta (Bodhi B. , pp. 823-826)

Sīla	Disparity	
	Benefits	Dangers
Virtuous behavior/ Deficiency in virtuous behaviour	● Accumulates much wealth ● Acquires a good reputation ● Whether it's an assembly of brahmins, khattiyas, householders, or ascetics, a virtuous person, accomplished in virtuous behavior, approaches it confidently and intellectually. ● Dies with intuition ● Reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.	● Loses much wealth ● Acquires disgrace ● Whenever a virtuous person, accomplished in virtuous behavior, approaches an assembly, whether of brahmins, khattiyas, householders, or ascetics, they approach it timidly and disconcerted. ● Dies with confusion. ● Reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the world, in hell.
Disparity of observance of sīla	● One whose behavior is virtuous possesses right concentration. ● Possesses knowledge and vision of things. ● Possesses disenchantment and dispassion. ● Possesses a vision of liberation.	● One whose behavior is immoral lacks right concentration. ● Lacks knowledge and vision of things. ● lacks disenchantment and dispassion. ● Lacks vision of liberation.

³ Six planes divide the celestial beings known as deva loka, where rebirth occurs as a result of extremely meritorious, skillful, and virtuous volitional activities carried out during one's previous existence. They are as follows: Catummahārājikā heaven, Tāvatiṃsa heaven, Yama heaven, Tusita heaven, Nimmānarati heaven, Paranimmita Vasavatti heaven. (The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha by Bhikkhu Bodhi, p. 294-302)

Benefits and Dangers of Sīla

In Janussoni Sutta of Anguttara Nikāya Buddha mentioned (Bodhi B. , pp. 1523-1525)

Dasa Sucarita Sīla	Benefits	Dangers
One who commits killing living beings, theft, sexual misconduct, falsehood, harsh speech, hostile speech, abortive speech, covetousness, hatred, and ill will, a false view, but he/she gives ascetic food and drinks, clothing and vehicles, scents, and garlands, performs almsgiving, and various other necessary things to the religious teacher—they are		Reborn in companionship with elephants, horses, cattle, dogs, etc.
One who doesn't indulge in killing living beings, theft, sexual misconduct, falsehood, harsh speech, hostile speech, abortive speech, covetousness, hatred, and ill will, false view, but he/she gives an ascetic food and drinks, clothing and vehicle, scents, and garlands, performs alms-giving, and various necessary things to the religious teacher—they	Gain the five objects of human sensual pleasure; gain the five objects of celestial sensual pleasure.	
One who commits killing living beings, theft, sexual misconduct, falsehood, harsh speech, hostile speech, abortive speech, Covetousness, hatred and ill will, as well as false views, permeate the body, mind, and speech.		Reborn in companionship with snakes, scorpions, mongooses, cats, owls, centipedes, mice, or any other animals that creep away.

One who doesn't indulge in killing living beings, theft, sexual misconduct, falsehood, harsh speech, hostile speech, abortive speech, covetousness, hatred, and ill will, false view and doesn't creep along with body, speech, and mind.	They either belong to the only nice heavens or to distinguished families, such as the wealthy Khattiyas, wealthy Brāhmins, or wealthy householders with a lot of wealth and property, a lot of gold and silver, a lot of treasures and possessions, and a lot of wealth and grains.	
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Results of Violating Precepts

Violating precepts can lead to one's downfall and a subsequent birth in hell.

Action	Results	Name of Hell	Longevity
Those who kill parents, teachers, religious teachers, and slander gentle people destroy trees and are ungrateful.	Reborn in hell endure intense torment. In this hell, sinners endure unending suffering; the body is penetrated by shells from both above and below, accompanied by intense burning heat and other sufferings.	Mahā-avici	1 kalpa ⁴
Those who engaged in theft, forcibly confiscated property, deceived others, and accepted bribes were perceived as judges of injustice.	They experience and reincarnate in hell, where they endure extreme torture. Sinners are burnt here.	Mahāroruva ⁵	230 crore 40 lakhs years is equal to one day in Maharoruva. Sinners will endure 8000 years in this hellish realm.

⁴ The Sanskrit term “kalpa” refers to an incredibly lengthy but valuable period of time that can symbolize the universe's creation, demise, and rebirth.

⁵ One of the eight hells mentioned in Buddhism.

Those who indulge in falsehood, cheat, etc.	They experience and reincarnate in hell, where they endure extreme torture. Sinners are burnt here.	Mahāroruva	230 crore 40 lakhs years is equal to one day in Mahāroruva. Sinners would experience 8000 years in this hell.
Those who indulge in illegal sexuality, who are angry and fraudulent.	They reincarnate in the company of hell and endure unending agony. Here, hell cuts the bodies of sinners into pieces, causing their blood to flow from them like a river. The body burns as fire emerges from the cut muscles.	Sanjiva ⁶	500 years. In this context, a single day is equivalent to 90 million years.
Those who are addicted to intoxicants, hurt others.	They are reborn in companionship with hell and will endure cruel pain. Here the sinners cry endlessly. Sinners inhale the smoke in this smoky hell, and the fire it creates burns them.	Rorūva ⁷	4000 years. In this context, a single day is equivalent to 576 million years

(Rev. Dhammatilaka Thera, 1936, pp. 379-387)

If people violate the five precepts and are reborn as human beings, he or she is afflicted and experienced (Rev. Dhammatilaka Thera, 1936) as follows:

- Killing living beings causes too short a life and premature death.
- The theft gave birth to the poor and helpless.
- Sexual misconduct causes impotence.
- Falsehood causes a stinky mouth, stuttering, and hoarseness.
- Taking intoxicants causes foolishness, stupidity, and ugliness.

⁶ One of the eight hells mentioned in Buddhism.

⁷ One of the eight hells mentioned in Buddhism.

Functions and Appearances of Sila

Sīla serves two distinct functions as:

1. Dusīlya—destroying misconduct.
2. Anavajja—keeping a person innocent. (Dhammaratna, 2011)

Although there are variations in the type of *sīla*, variations in observance, and variations in results, its function is mainly to destroy the person's inclination or engagement in all evil deeds. It aims to maintain the individual's purity and cleanliness. It is not limited to a religious aspect, such as a Buddhist perspective, but it is universal in nature. If one does not do bad deeds and prevents others from doing bad deeds and when the matter is going on, then, there will be no social problems at all but purity and cleanliness will come in the individual's mind and the society will be fulfilled with peace.

The appearances of *sīla* are characterized by purity (*soceyya*). Virtue is known by purity. This purity is threefold, as

Threefold purity
Kāya-soceyya: purity of bodily actions
Vāci-soceyya: Purity of verbal actions.
Mano-soceyya: Purity of mental actions
(Dhammaratna, 2011, p. 3)

The *kāya* (body) will purify itself if it commits no bad deeds. For example, it can be discussed that if someone wrongfully injures someone, the other person may be physically harmed, and even the person who does the injury may be harmed. Physical crimes include theft, rape, murder, disappearance, looting, and torture, among others. The Buddha originally introduced *kāyika sīla* to achieve purity by refraining from these evil deeds. Similarly, practicing speech etiquette leads to the attainment of speech purity. When a person is truthful, they should refrain from speaking words that could hurt someone, tell lies, cause division, be violent, use unnecessary words, or incite hatred. One is good-natured, one is sweet-natured, and then one attains purity of speech. Mindfulness is not to hurt anyone, not to harm anyone, not to be malicious, not to be greedy, not to hate, but to be friendly, tolerant, and forgiving and to have a positive attitude. Mindful activities bring purity of mind.

Role of Sila in Making Peaceful and Sustainable Society

A society cannot exist without moral principles and virtues. The Buddha intended his teachings to liberate people from the cycle of birth and death, as well as from worldly sorrow. Liberation, or the absence of suffering, is undoubtedly the ultimate goal of life, but it never permits a person to shirk their social obligations. (Thien,

2019, p. 125) A peaceful society is full of cooperation, sincerity, tolerance, kindness, sympathy, and forgiveness, but today's society is full of violence, hatred, and malice instead. Among the prominent Buddhist *sīla*, the contents of *Pañcasīla* (five precepts) are very effective in building a sustainable and peaceful society. The five precepts have the following social implications:

- Taking life—Don't kill or allow others to kill. Use all available tools to safeguard life. Don't pursue a career that endangers people or the environment.
- Stealing and cheating—never take anything that is supposed to belong to someone else or steal it. One should honour other people's property and keep others from profiting from the pain of people and other species.
- Sexual misconduct - The Precept aims to safeguard against lust and sexual desire, prevent abduction, rape, and adultery, and uphold one's own and others' sexual rights. Respect others' rights and obligations in order to maintain one's own and others' happiness.
- False speech (lying, slander, gossip) - Refrain from spreading rumors or making false statements.
- Alcohol and intoxicants (drugs) - Avoid using alcohol and other stimulants. Under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, we may lose control, become careless, and commit immoral actions like lying, stealing, killing, or adultery. These behaviors often cause significant problems in people's relationships. Furthermore, alcohol leads to the majority of crimes committed. Alcoholism in families frequently results in gambling and interpersonal violence, which eventually destroys family unity. Avoiding alcohol protects us from carelessness and its associated negative consequences, such as financial loss, conflict, shameful behavior, and carelessness. It also safeguards the welfare of the family and the community. (Faxun, 2011)

Quality of Human Life

The wellbeing, welfare, safety, and protection of an individual can be used to describe the quality of human existence. It encompasses certain elements

- Poverty/hunger-free
- High standard of livelihood
- Women's rights preservation
- Zero Discrimination

- Fundamental rights
- Human rights
- Social Dignity

Buddha introduced *sīla* to laymen, ensuring the quality of human life that sustains peace. If the appropriate authority maintains integrity, coordinates production, distribution, and deficit, ensures a balanced distribution of resources, and becomes aware of the rights of others, poverty will be eradicated. Consistency in ethics and a thorough understanding of societal issues firmly curb poverty. The quality of human life prohibits any discrimination against women. They should be respected. The third precept of the five precepts protects women's dignity. Ensuring the rights of women accelerates the development of society and nation. Equality of opportunity, fairness, non-discrimination, and inclusivity promote a high standard of livelihood. In a society that safeguards fundamental rights and human rights and maintains a high standard of living, it preserves the social dignity of individuals. Individual morality and the ethical integration of authorities will sustain the quality of human life.

Positive Mindset through Self-Control

The practice of moral discipline builds a positive mindset. The virtue of sensual faculties is restrained. By exerting control over the sense organs, it is completed. Our sensory organs provide us with information about the outside environment. This can be accomplished at first by practicing awareness. (Dhammaratna, 2011). First, the six sense organs are considered “doors” via which evils can enter the human mind. Therefore, everyone agrees that it is commendable behavior to guard, safeguard, conquer, tranquilize, and pacify them. A major aspect of Buddhist culture is the ability to master one's own sense organs and stop them from functioning naturally. (Tachibana, 2013) From a Buddhist perspective, positive thinking gives us the idea that mental, behavioral, and spiritual (moral) aspects overlap. The precept of sensual restraint aids in the development of a mind that leads to positivity in both action and perception.

Discipline for Social Organisation

Social organisations play an enormous role in establishing a peaceful and welfare society. Moral discipline is essential, given their substantial influence. If every social organisation is influenced by the principles of *Pañcasīla* least, the way of peace, solidarity will be sustainable. Buddha initiated and preached the first precepts of the five precepts, which are designed to protect the lives of all members of society. It also safeguards against any harm to others. In the long run, it safeguards a person's social dignity. The second precept of the five protects the wealth of every member

of society. It also safeguards against theft and substance-related damage. Buddha introduced the third precept, which ensures respect for women and their rights. Social organisations have a responsibility to ensure social safety. Sexual misconduct spreads fear and uncertainty toward society. If social organisations build institutional resistance against social lawlessness or adopt awareness activities, society will be peaceful.

Mindful Leadership

Buddhist precepts and mindful leadership are complemented by each other. Buddhist precepts assist in the development of mindful leadership. Total development of a caste, race, group, or nation depends on strong leadership. A mindful leader has certain features, such as:

- Uprightness
- Liberal mindfulness
- Modesty and honesty
- Justice and equity
- Truthfulness
- Tolerance
- Peaceful

A virtuous leader leads his community, society, or country with these qualities. Mindful leadership helps build dynamic strategies that benefit all its stakeholders. If the leader is corrupt, hateful, vile, or warlike, people will ultimately suffer the consequences. The quality of uprightiness, honesty, equity, justice, and tolerance of a leader inspired his fellows and followers. Mindful leadership is a process of practicing precepts. The practice of non-harming, non-rudeness makes a leader upright. Practice of non-falsehood makes a leader truthful. The practice of non-covetousness makes a leader honest. Refraining from illegal sexuality cultivates modesty and righteousness in a leader. The practice of abstaining from alcohol makes a leader more mindful and a man of justice and equity. The practice of non-greed, non-anger, non-envy, and non-intentional hate makes a leader tolerant and peaceful.

Religious Significance

Buddhism is fundamentally based on the achievement of *nibbāna*. One method to achieve *nibbāna* or liberation is to be firmly grounded in *sīla*. Alongside the regulations for laypersons, Gautama Buddha established distinct guidelines for Buddhist monks and nuns, which are essential and foundational to their journey toward *Nibbāna*. *Samādhi* (concentration) and *Paññā* (wisdom) levels cannot be achieved without the

observance of *sīla*. The practice of *sīla* fosters solemnity, complacency, contentment, moderation of desires, and gentleness. Therefore, the religious significance of *sīla* is boundless. The Buddha stated,

‘Samane kulaputtanaṃ patittha natthi yaṃ vinā
Ānisaṃsa paricchedaṃ tassa sīlassa ko bade?’
(Bhikkhu B. M., 2016, p. 36)

Without observing the virtues that firmly establish the patriarchs in the Buddha’s teachings, who can determine the greatness of the result? That is, the importance or greatness of the *sīla* is such that, unless it is held, the individual does not belong to Buddhahood.

‘Na gaṅgā Yamunā capi sarabhū va sarassati
Nimhaga va aciravati mahī capi Mahānadi;
Sakkunanti visodhetuṃ taṃ malaṃ idha paninaṃ,
Visodhayati sattanaṃ yaṃ ve Sīla jalaṃ malaṃ.’
(Mahasthavir, 1959)

Only virtue can wash away the dirt of defilements, which cannot be cleansed by the waters of the five major rivers (Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Aciravatī, Sarabhū, and Mahī). That is, *sīla* is portrayed as a purifier. Similar to how purifiers purify toxic germs mixed in water, *sīla* also eliminates sin and troubles from a person’s mind, promoting ethics and aiding in the attainment of nibbana. Buddha also said,

‘Saggārohana-sopanaṃ annaṃ sīlasamaṃ kuto?
Dvāraṃ va pana nivvana-nagarassa pabesane.’ (Bhikkhu B. M., 2016, p. 36)

Sīla is the only step to ascension. What else is equal to *sīla*? *Sīla* is the only gateway to the city of nirvana. Buddhism is the way to get rid of suffering in the eighth path, including *sīla*, *Samādhi* (concentration) and *Paññā* (wisdom). Liberation is freedom from all sorrows. Stability in *sīla*, or moral discipline, is crucial for achieving liberation. The prerequisite for attaining *Samādhi* (concentration) and *Paññā* (wisdom) is *sīla*. That is, *sīla* is the foundation of all beneficial deeds. The first act for *nibbāna* or heavenly attainment is the upbringing of *sīla*. Buddha mentioned,

‘Sobhatneva na rajano muttha-maṇi vibhusitā
Yatha sobhanti yatino Sīlabhusana bhusita.’ (Mahasthavir, 1959)

That is to say, kings crowned with jewels are not adorned as bhikkhus adorned with the embellishment of *sīla*. A Buddhist monk who observes and holds on to *sīla*.

Bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs have 227 or 311 *sīla* known as Pātimokkha sīla—basically for strong ascetic practice (Ñāṇamoli, 2001); (Horner, 1952). Realising human nature and tendencies, the Buddha introduced these precepts, which serve as perfect aids to the recluses’ path to liberation.

Gautama Buddha himself outlined 10 benefits of practicing monasticism Fairness of the association (Buddhist sangha)

- Increase peace of the association.
- Suppress the unruly monk.
- Stay in a peaceful settlement of virtuous monks.
- Disassociate currently arising cravings.
- Prevent the origin of the object of those who are unborn.
- Generate a sense of pleasure among those who are unpleasant.
- Increase pleasure among those is being gladdened.
- Stable the true doctrine (Saddhamma).
- Favor the Vinaya rules for welfare and betterment. (Bhikkhu R. B., Vinaya Pitake Parajika, 2007).

That is, *Pārājikā sīla* is not only effective for monasticism but also a durable safeguard of the Buddha's teachings. People of various castes and communities joined the Saṅgha during Buddha's time; there were differences of opinion, and there were differences of views. The monastic discipline introduced by the Buddha to lead all to a certain goal (*Nibbāṇa*) was pragmatic and far-reaching. Being highly concerned with the mind, monasticism can be challenging; there is a tendency to break the rules. However, the Buddha formulated monasticism in a way that is effective on the path to *Nibbāṇa* and attaining the noble life. These rites play a significant role in overcoming emotions such as jealousy, infatuation, hatred, and thirst, which impact not only religious life but also social life. Monks' actions and behavior have a significant impact on householders and common people.

Sīla is the second of the ten perfections (*Pārami*) that leads to attaining Buddhahood or enlightenment. Gautama Buddha has vowed to observe *Sīla* numerous times in the birth of a bodhisattva before attaining Buddhahood. Jataka stories provide numerous examples. In the Jayaddisa Jataka, the Buddha stated that, as the son of the king, he gave his life to protect his father from the cannibals. He could persist or prevent the cannibals with fear, but this might be the cause for breaking of *sīla*. Bodhisattva was steadfast in *sīla* and sacrificed his life in that situation. (Ghos S. I., 1984, pp. 12-20) Buddha mentioned in Mātanga Jātaka as: a Brāhmin kept cursing the bodhisattva, but he was not disturbed or even expressed his anger. Bodhisattva could have destroyed him if he wanted to. To protect the vows of *sīla*, the bodhisattva suppressed anger. (Ghos S. I., 1984, pp. 252-255) This vow of Gautama Buddha is slightly more significant in the current context. In any social and political situation, Buddhist monks should be steadfast in *sīla* and move forward on the path of liberation.

Conclusion

Sīla governs a virtuous and honourable existence. An individual residing in *sīla* serves as a peace ambassador throughout the community. The importance of *Sīla* in the establishment of a rich, developed nation-state is substantial throughout human civilization. Buddhism is built on *Kammavāda* (theory of action), so it emphasizes the practice of *sīla* or the establishment of all good activities. Social, economic, and political liberty also highlight the amazing usefulness of *sīla*. The definition of smartness, both beautiful and modern, incorporates every part of *sīla*. Primarily, spiritual purification is essential to elevate, awaken, and eliminate darkness. Corruption, discrimination, and oppression are actions that contradict spiritual purity. A person established in *sīla* not only prevents but also eradicates these unskillful activities. The *sīlas* of Buddhism are not only for the Buddhists, but they are observed regardless of caste, race, and religion. Emotions such as anger, greed, hatred, infatuation, and obscenity create societal upheaval. A deficiency in moral discipline is the sole contributor to social turmoil. There is no option to hold on to *sīla* to prevent or quell these unrests. *Sīla* operates in a more ordinary manner than an extraordinary one. The disparity in outcomes from adhering to precepts underscores that causing damage to others results in the deterioration of one's own happiness. Killing people is a question of sin or being born in hell as much as truth or wrong; more than that, the effects are quite intense in worldly life, as sorrow and remorse are certain. The practice of *sīla* eradicates fickleness and cultivates seriousness, diminishes indolence and promotes harmony, dispels dissatisfaction and encourages contentment, abolishes sloth and enhances energy and enthusiasm, and nurtures temperance, harmony, and benevolence.

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