

Sila - Virtue, moral conduct, moral discipline

Sila as inner virtue

Sila as virtuous actions

Sila as rules of conduct

Three trainings:

- training in *sila* or virtue
- training in *samadhi* or concentration
- training in *pañña* or wisdom

Reasons for moral/ethical conduct:

- Mind training (*bhavanā*): Transforming and purifying the mind.

„The Pali word *sila* originally meant simply conduct (...) Upon inspection *sila* thus reveals itself to be a two-dimensional quality: it contains an external dimension consisting in purification of conduct, and an internal dimension consisting in purification of character. (...) *Sila* as moral discipline, in other words, becomes the means for inducing *sila* as moral virtue.“ (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995, *Nourishing the Roots*)

- Laws of *kamma*/karma: For one's own and others welfare and happiness. Freedom from remorse.

*Speak or act with a corrupted mind,
and suffering follows,
as the wagon wheel follows the hoof of the ox. (...)
Speak or act with a peaceful mind,
and happiness follows,
Like a never-departing shadow. (Dhammapada, 1,2)*

- Expression of full awakening

From an early Buddhist perspective, an arahant epitomizes perfection in moral conduct. (Analayo, 2017, Encycl. of Indian Religions, 140)

Ānanda, I have unequivocally declared that immoral bodily conduct, immoral verbal conduct, and immoral mental conduct is not to be undertaken ...

Ānanda, I have unequivocally declared that moral bodily conduct, moral verbal conduct, and moral mental conduct is to be undertaken. (AN 2.2.8.)

Kusala: wholesome, skillful, right, good, meritorious, intelligent.

Akusala: unwholesome, unskillful, wrong, unintelligent.

Teachings on sila for lay practitioners

Noble Eightfold Path: (SN 45.8)

Three path factors:

- **Right speech:** abstaining from false speech, abstaining from slanderous speech, abstaining from harsh speech, and abstaining from idle chatter.
- **Right action:** abstaining from taking life, abstaining from taking what is not given, and abstaining from sexual misconduct.
- **Right livelihood:** earning one's living in a righteous way. Abstaining from kinds of livelihood that entail harm and suffering for others.

The Five Precepts (*pañca-sīla*) (AN 8.39)

Basic training rules of Buddhist lay practitioners:

- abstaining from killing any living being, having sympathy for all beings.
- abstaining from stealing, being honest and content.
- abstaining from misconduct in relation to sexuality and the senses, practising fidelity.
- abstaining from lying, speaking the truth.
- abstaining from the use of intoxicants, being heedful.

By abstaining from these five non-virtuous actions, a practitioner gives to an immeasurable number of beings freedom from fear, enmity, and affliction. Oneself in turn enjoys freedom from fear, enmity, and affliction.

Dasa Kusala Kamma and Dasa Akusala Kamma / Ten Wholesome Deeds and Ten Unwholesome Deeds

MN 41. The Brahmins of Sālā:

“Householders, there are three kinds of bodily conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct. There are four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct. There are three kinds of mental conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.”

1. Killing living beings, being merciless, violent
2. Stealing possessions belonging to others
3. Sensual/sexual misconduct
4. Lying, speaking falsehood
5. Slandering, creating discord
6. Speaking harshly, roughly, making other people angry.
7. Engaging in frivolous, useless talk and gossip.
8. Covetousness, greediness.
9. Illwill, hatred
10. Wrong view, distorted vision (inability to discern *kusala*/*akusala*, to understand karma)

Conduct in accordance with the Dhamma: To abandon the ten unwholesome deeds.