

# PAÑCAŚĪLA: UNIVERSAL ETHICS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

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## ABSTRACT

*Buddhism is a pragmatic kind of teaching, which includes how we experience the world and also how we act in it. Buddha's teaching is a guide towards attaining enlightenment through three forms: ethics, meditation, and wisdom. To achieve the goal of Buddha's teaching, ethical dimensions or morality elements (cariyā dhammas) are at the top of the art of living for beings and they form the basis of the path leading to Nibbāna (true happiness). Pañcaśīla (five precepts) are the heart of Buddhist ethics, and therefore, provide the solutions to Industrial problems. Practicing pañcaśīla leads to liberation from negative mental attitudes, speech, and actions. Additionally, these ethical virtues allow people to coexist in a community justly, honestly, harmoniously and peacefully by universal ethics. The following writing will illustrate how pañcaśīla can solve these problems.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is a practical kind of teaching as the Buddha said that 'I turn the wheel of the Dharma by peaceful means' (Bodhi 2017, p. 253-4/ Sn 3.7.5-8). Especially, pañcaśīla is the Buddha's teaching to focus on both personal transformation and social transformation. These precepts are universal ethics and also the characteristic morality of a global citizen. The following will

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examine how pañcaśīla are universal ethics and their value in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

## 2. AN UNDERSTANDING THE PAÑCAŚĪLA IN BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

In Sanskrit, pañcaśīla (Pali: pañcasīla; Chinese: 五戒) are a combination of pañca (five) and śīla (morality). Pañcaśīla in Buddhist texts are five precepts or moral disciplines which are accepted in traditional Buddhism. They are (i) Abstention from killing living creatures (*pāṇātatiṭṭhā*); (ii) Abstention from taking what is not given (*adinnādānā*); (iii) Abstention from wrong conduct in sexual pleasures (*kāmesu micchācārā*); (iv) Abstention from false speech (*musāvādā*); and (v) Abstention from taking intoxicant drugs (*surāmeraya majjapamādaṭṭhāna*) (Bodhi 2012, p. 790-792/AN 10.178-79 or Guṇabhadra, T.24 No. 1476 p. 001). Pañcaśīla figure in other important moral disciplines, such as uposaḍhaśīla, śrāmaṇera, śrāmaṇerikā, daśaśīla, bhikṣu, bhikṣuṇī.

Now, let's review the position of pañcaśīla in Buddhist philosophy, three valuable of morality and pañcaśīla, and discuss how pañcaśīla in Buddhist texts highlight the first innovation of Buddhist ethics in the karma theory or show the approach of psycho-ethics.

Pañcaśīla has the vital figure in Buddhist philosophy because the five disciplines are the essence of other moral formulas by giving more details in the Buddhist morality (*prātimokṣa*). In the Theravada tradition, morality constitutes a part of the trīśikṣā (three trainings as well-known 'śīla samātha and prajñā') and taking a relative with right speech (*samyagvāc*), right action (*samyakkarmānta*), right livelihood (*samyagājīva*) in the noble eightfold path (*āryaṣṭāṅgamārga*). In the Mahayana, morality is taken the second part of the pāramitā (six perfections).

Śīla is called morality, which is three kinds of validity. First, it is regarded as the first steps in training to prompt virtuous actions (*kuśalakarman*). Second, it restrains immoral deeds of body and speech. Third, it corrects the intention or volition (*cetanā*) that inspires our actions. As a result, precepts accompany each moment of consciousness that control the intention of the mind toward salutary (*kuśala*) and remove all unsalutary (*Akuśala*). All action

is under the stimulus of volition. When one has an intention of something, they will operate through body and speech as *cetanā* functions in both the incentive and leading force behind actions. Therefore, practitioners who want to cultivate both concentrations (*samātha*) and wisdom (*prajñā*), must complete moral disciplines to correct volition, to prompt virtuous action, to remove unvirtuous deeds. It means that śīla is the foundation to achieve meditation and wisdom, and the first way to help an individual to obtain liberation, by obeying rules of moral disciplines. It also rules out all evil courses of thinking, speech, and action; and the list of prohibitions with detailed avoidance actions which can drive human beings into the lower realms of suffering. For that reason, the essential moral system in Buddhism is pañcaśīla, which is a basic form of Buddhist morality. They are fundamental principles to refrain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and drunkenness. In this sense, pañcaśīla are of extreme importance or necessary in the driving force (*cetanā*) of individual action with the positive or negative deeds itself. The relationship between pañcaśīla and *cetanā* are also the first innovation of Buddhist ethics in the karma theory or showing the method of psycho-ethics as well.

Here I discuss more details of the pañcaśīla as following:

The first moral discipline is abstention from killing living creatures (*pāṇātatiṭṭhā*: *pāṇā* means the living beings that have breath and consciousness; *atiṭṭhā* denotes striking down, to kill or destroy). Taking the life of living creatures is prohibited, as well as injuring, harming, maiming, and torturing. The process of killing beings has three stages: intention (the mental factor or volition responsible for action), commanding to take life by speech (writing, gesture, speaking), and complete bodily deeds to kill. By way of consequences, there prohibit all kinds of taking life such as capital punishment, suicide, abortion and euthanasia (Keown, 1998, p.400). Therefore, this precept protects the life of living beings.

Secondly, the precept includes abstaining from taking what is not given (*adinnādānā*: *adinnā* means what belong to someone or what is not giving signifies over which she exercises ownership legally). This precept prohibits the different acts of theft and fraud, as well as a broader scope of forgery, borrowing without permission, dealing,

gambling, fraud, bribery and cheating (Leaman 2000, p. 139). Various kinds of violations of taking what is not given are divided into stealing, robbery, fraudulence, deceit. The basic purpose of the moral discipline is to save the individual property from illegal confiscation by others. Hence, this precept encourages to live right and to be honest.

The third precept is the abstention from wrong conduct in sexual pleasure (*kāmesu micchācārā*) enjoining which requires abstinence from illicit sexual relations or misconduct in regards to sensual pleasures. Adultery is the intention with sexual volition appearing through the door of the body, causing violation with an illegal partner. The transgression precept is by force of lust motivation that is the underlying root of greed accompanied by delusion. The prohibition of many various kinds in this precept include rape, incest, masturbation, going with the husband or wife of another, and intercourse at an improper time or unsuitable place. Hence, the purpose of the precept is to protect any relative and to reinforce faithfulness with one's partner (Wijayaratna, 1990, p. 166-7).

The fourth moral discipline is the abstention from false speech (*musāvādā*). This precept prohibits all deeds of body and speech with the wrongful volition to deceive or lie. The sinful desire is understand the cause of transgression. There are many different kinds of false speech including: lying, malicious speech, gossip, and harsh speech (Segall, 2003, p. 169). It is also right speech [*samyagvāc*] (Guṇabhadra, p.0203b). The foundation of the precept is to protect honest, truthfulness, loyalty, and gratitude. As a consequence, this moral discipline is to eliminate untruthfulness that causes harm to living beings.

The fifth precept is the abstention from taking intoxicant drugs (*surāmeraya majjapamādaṭṭhāna*). In this case, precepts restrain intoxicants which are fermented and distilled liquors and by extension prohibit other narcotics such as the alcohol, drugs, opiates, hemp, psychedelics, etc. The discipline's purpose is to prevent heedlessness, to produce the virtues of heedfulness, awareness, mindfulness, responsibility, and meditation. Hence, the precept aims to avoid the causes of stupid acts, laxity, idleness, ill health and "madness" in mentality (Benn, 2005, p. 225).

Pañcaśīla create the foundation for the development mentality of individuals and community. All deeds carried out through the three doors of 'body, speech and mind' are prohibited by the moral disciplines – violence, killing, stealing, adultery, lying, etc. - are motivated by defilements or afflictions (*kleśa*: unwholesome mental factors). Hence, we take up the training by observing pañcaśīla to change the mind from unwholesome mental states to wholesome states is called 'a process of factor substitution or self-transformation.' This is a great miracle to develop the individual mind and social mentality. In Buddhist psychological views, pañcaśīla reduce all negative emotions which lead mankind to suffer situations or realms. In Buddhist text, there are six realms which are understood as different psychological processes or ways of understanding the world that have relative emotions of anger, greed, stupidity, desire, competitiveness, and pride (McLeod 2002, p. 146-51). This means that moral disciplines create the best development emotion that leads toward the better realm or a happier world. That is the principle of development through repetition by the process of self-transformation.

Pañcaśīla are psycho-ethics that is the most significant contribution of Buddhist ethics. Interbeing law (*pratītyasamutpāda*) is the basic notion of the conditionality of all existence which creates the bridge between psychology and ethics to explain the theory of action. Additionally, the dependent origination makes a specific rule in a relationship of three trainings, which are: morality (*śīla*), concentration (*samātha*) and wisdom (*prajñā*). Each depends on one another to encompass all forms of restraint on immoral deeds of body, speech, and mind. Because all problems or immoral actions originated from three poisons (*triviṣa*: three unwholesome roots), including greed (*rāga or lobha*), hatred (*dveṣa*), and delusion (*moha*), these mental factors disturb the mind and incite immoral actions of body and speech. Hence, pañcaśīla are moral principles which provide the method to remove negative mind or to conduct in a state of purity of mind. It also truly means full liberation from suffering and negative karma in deeds of body, speech, and spirit.

In short, pañcaśīla are given by monks to create a psychological effect (Harvey, 2000, p. 80), as an ethic of restraint on the three

poisons of the human mind. These moral disciplines make individual liberation (*mokṣa*) without defilements (*kleśa*) as the result of concentration and understanding which come together by the interbeing law (*pratītyasamutpāda*). Hence, pañcaśīla are the defense or support against immoral attack deeds, which are the essential morality of a global citizen.

### 3. PAÑCAŚĪLA AS UNIVERSAL ETHICS

Here, I would like to discuss pañcaśīla as part of the character of a global citizen, which is as following: universal ethics are necessary to modern time; the relationship of pañcaśīla with teleological virtues, utilitarianism, and Kant's categorical imperative; and the acceptable pañcaśīla as global ethics.

Universal ethics are the ethical principles or moral standards acceptable to a sentient being, which can apply to both religious and secular. It is also called the globalization of ethics that seeks serious ethical standards to resolve disagreements and conflict across national boundaries, religions, cultures, economies, and politics (Kymlicka 2007, p.1). According to Kant, deontological ethics or the principle of universalizability; moral law can apply to all people in all circumstances as the formulation of humanity. The rules of conduct solve the problem of ethical behavior — globalized ethical standards that consider being self-evident and throughout social history. The purpose of the moral system is to benefit society. John Locke (1988, p.271) said “the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it which obliges everyone; and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it that, being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions ...” It means that the universal ethic is an ethical rule independent with personal or cultural views, applying to all persons or acts, without any contradiction, and grounded in empirical reality.

From the above views, Buddhist ethics can be universal ethics. According to Suwanbubbha (2011, p. 131), Buddhist values can apply to both Buddhist followers and everyone, and can be of benefit to all human beings. There are three reasons why Buddhist ethics go hand in hand with the theory of action (P. kamma/ S.

karma); the identifying ethical values and behavior classified under the 'mantra' or rubric of performance and avoidance; Buddhist ethics is derived from natural law that is neither reward nor punishment (Suwanbubbha, 2011, p. 114-5). Additionally, Nosco said that pañcaśīla are universal ethics because the most basic ethical pronouncements are not killing, stealing, lying, coveting what others have, and monogamous fidelity. Compassion and altruism serve as foundational values in a newly globalization of ethics, using the same rationale of interdependence for all sentient beings and interconnectedness of all phenomena. Hence, Buddhist ethics can be more similar to a globalized system of ethics than any of the Abrahamic traditions and Confucians ethics as well (Nosco 2007, p. 90 & 92).

All action has three features such as the volition repairing or work, the act itself, and the result of the action. Each action is either good or bad. All deeds are directly influenced by pañcaśīla. It means that pañcaśīla can lead three aspects of the act to be morally right. The first aspect is the importance of good will in the ethics of Buddhism. The immense value is the will freely determined by moral law as Kant's ideas (Mittal, 1989, p. 1). Here, the moral code is pañcaśīla as the intention in non-violence, generosity, contentment, honest, mindfulness, etc. Hence, pañcaśīla are vital to the position because they cultivate the volition to be right that lead deeds to cease suffering or escape from the chain of rebirth. Secondly, it is a pure act that is the way to remove pain or aim at world-welfare with the absence of lust, hatred, and delusion. According to Nishijima (1998, p. 183), the Buddhist ethics is an 'ethics of action' ("real action" is completely different from the concept of action which could say "a treasury of the eye of truth or the true dharma eye"), which differ from 'ethics based on the mind' or idealistic ethics and 'ethics based on the senses' or materialistic ethics. It means that "when we act, we penetrate the dharma, becoming completely one with it... because action manifests itself just in oneness – the oneness of body and mind, the oneness of subject and object, and oneness of actor and action (Nishijima 1998, p. 185)." Buddhist action is recognized in the "here and now" as a real fact in the moment of the present. This makes Buddhist ethics different from both idealism and materialism. The pure act or

real act is always guided by pañcaśīla because dharma identifies with universal moral principles. Therefore, Buddhist ethics (pañcaśīla) is the teleological system which provides the framework for personal cultivation and accomplishment this time through a series of lives, structured by a specific conception of human nature and its goals (Keown 1992, p. 203 & 230). Lastly, the result of the act or its effect is an important standard in Buddhist ethics. Pañcaśīla are also acceptable in the situation ethics as utilitarianism because Buddhist virtue requires both overcoming attachment to self and compassionate regard for others (Swearer 1998, p.71). As Abe (1983, p. 60) said “Buddhist ethics is compassionate ethics ... based on the realization of emptiness, and it is absolute-present-oriented.” For example, one lies to help many people and it is called “skillful means” or expedient (*upāya*) that through the extraordinary pedagogical skills of Buddha or to breach the precepts by skillful means results in good karmic consequences (Keown, 1992, p.190). Hence, practitioners can use specific techniques to cease suffering and introduce dharma to living beings. *Upāya* must be along with wisdom (*prajñā*), two essential components of the way of happy living by practicing pañcaśīla.

Consequently, Buddhist ethics have given human beings to have responsibility in moral actions, as Buddha says:

“By oneself indeed evil is done;

By oneself is one defiled.

By oneself is evil avoided;

By oneself is indeed one purified.

*Purity and impurity depend on oneself.*

*No one can purify another.”* (Dhp, 165)

Pañcaśīla are the global ethics for the way of a harmonious life or joyful way of life. As per the Buddha’s teaching, an action is immoral because it is prompted by immoral roots such as greed, hatred, and delusion. In another way, an action is virtuous, when it is derived from moral volition, namely liberality, kindness, and wisdom. Given these facts, Buddha provides pañcaśīla that are technically known as the basic foundations of morality and harmony in society.

Because these moral disciplines generate the feeling of universal friendliness, non-covetousness, family-feeling in society, safely truthfulness, and maintaining a balanced state of mind (Shukla, 1989, p. 86). In further views, pañcaśīla are associated with virtues (Gwynne 2017, p. 79-80) and related to human rights (Keown 2012, p.33) as per the diagram below (Wikipedia, 2018):

Precept	Accompanying virtues	Related to human rights
1. Abstention from killing living creatures	Kindness and compassion	Right to life
2. Abstention from taking what is not given	Generosity and renunciation	Right of property
3. Abstention from wrong conduct in sexual pleasures	Contentment and respective faithfulness	Right to fidelity in marriage
4. Abstention from false speech	Being honest and dependable	Right of human dignity
5. Abstention from taking intoxicant drugs	Mindfulness and responsibility	Right of security and safety

In the same vein, pañcaśīla prohibits violence, theft, lust, dishonesty, and intoxication having in their various manifold forms. Similarly, these moral disciplines respect life, property, truthfulness, sexual propriety and sobriety as morally fundamental to humanity. Therefore, pañcaśīla are at the heart of ethical behavior in the modern period because “these five precepts lead with good behavior to bliss, with good behavior to wealth and success, they lead with good behavior to happiness, therefore purify behavior (Terwiel 2012, p.182).” In short, Buddhist morality goes beyond religious characters. Pañcaśīla shows the correct values which are not only practical theory to create individuals that are right but also universal laws.

#### 4. THE SOLUTIONS PROVIDED BY PAÑCAŚĪLA TO THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is unlike previous experiences

by humankind. The new technological revolution can be described as “cyber-physical systems” and has changes regarding their size, speed, and scope. There are many diverse and fascinating problems that are global challenges, such as violence, war, crime, inequality, the disintegration of the family, “fake news”, physical and mental illnesses, etc. The fundamental of the Fourth Industrial Revolution can affect and be influenced by all human beings in the world. According to Davis (2016), the Fourth Industrial Revolution has three big concerns: inequality, security, and identity. In the same way, Wells (2017, p. 5&13) asserted that the Industrial Age is conducive to a myriad of countervailing information flows, many of them conspiracy theories, ill-information, malicious at worst, fake news, amplified by the rising of cyber interconnectedness and reach of information sharing tools. Therefore, today’s environment creates conflicting cognitive-emotion, thrives in the interaction environment, dynamic, and the “weaponization of information” as a challenge to the established order or regulatory framework. The following is that Buddhist theory proposes to solve several significant problems in the world today: world peace, disarmament, economic justice, human rights, environmental protection, and universal coexistence (Weiqun, 2006, p.144). The following will discuss pañcaśīla as helpful ideas with a role to play in today’s affairs.

Pañcaśīla are useful in solving human problems, so practicing the five precepts of the Buddha leads to liberation from bad mental attitudes, speech, and actions. There are three criteria which pañcaśīla provide as life’s principle solutions to global challenges. First, the contribution of pañcaśīla is to educate the heart through training the mind, and making a pure mind. It is called ‘the embodiment of the commandments in the heart of the recipient’ (無作戒體/*Avijnapti*). To follow the right method of pañcaśīla is a practice of compassion (*karuṇā*), giving (*dāna*), patience (*kṣānti*), and vigor (*vīrya*) within the application of skillful means (*upāya*), and dependent co-origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). It means that increase in comprehensions and awareness today’s problems to control all challenges of the new technology revolution. Next, pañcaśīla are a framework for moral deeds in the technological life that outlines the core morality

and highlights the possible responsibility of humankind. The five moral principles form the base of Buddhist ethics that practices are undertaken voluntarily to abstain from: taking life, taking what has not been given, sexual misconduct, telling lies, taking intoxicants. Therefore, pañcaśīla cultivate inner values such as compassion, generosity, contentment, honest, and mindfulness. Lastly, they provide a platform to inspire coexistence, human-centered, and partnership with the purpose of harmony in social models because pañcaśīla can cultivate ethical virtues and bring peace of mind, of speech and of actions to all. These ethical virtues make people able to co-exist in the community justly, honestly, harmoniously and peacefully. Hence, individuals and communities, technology and society can cooperate within pañcaśīla. Coexistence in universal ethics is only one way to redeem humankind.

In another way of analyzing reality, pañcaśīla are a vitally important tool to maintain peace, disarmament, economic justice, human rights, the right information, security, and environmental protection. The core of first vows is non-violence (*ahiṃsā*), so the best way of compassion (*karuṇā*) mind removes all the ideological violence against living beings through the deeds of the body. The ideas that *ahiṃsā* suggests are disarmament, a political way to settle the controversial issues or social conflicts, and the sense of 'generosity' that will benefit the peaceful world. Especially, non-violence applied to protect the environment with the principle of benefit for both non-living and living beings. The aim is to prohibit acts which create coercive harm to others. The second moral discipline asks humans to be generous and honest which are helpful in economic justice. Nowadays, everyone needs to profit from a business or economic exchange among people and nations. However, people should not cheat or infringe on financial transactions. From this viewpoint, the principle of justice in the economy is useful to have profit and create a wealthy society. The third precept stresses on contentment. That is the way to end greed motivation (lust), to promote sustainable human flourishing. Today's global issue is sexual aggression and abortion. There are many sexual aggression outcomes such as rape, attempted rape, stalking, and other forms of sexual harassment that can lead to abortion (46%) if pregnancy is the result of sexual assault

(Lavelanet 2018, p.58). Therefore, this precept is useful to solve both big challenges. In the traditional understanding, it protects the fidelity in marriage, making a happy family, and protecting women's life. The fourth precept prohibits all the ideological violence against living beings through the deeds of speech. It has the most important contribution to solving significant global challenges of fake news and ill-information in reality and on the internet. This rule focuses on personal transformation to follow honestly which means to always tell the truth or give right information. The fifth precept is concerned with healthy food, security, and living mindfully. Its benefit is to stop using and selling various drugs, by neither drug nor crimes. Buddhist ethic is not only avoidance acts of harming others, but also better than promoting the well-being of others. Hence, pañcaśīla are reflective of the vital importance of the Buddhist ethic of compassion. (Lee et al. 2014, p.558)

As it is well known, pañcaśīla are very close to the conception of human rights. These five principles of universal respect include the right to life, the right to property, the right to fidelity in marriage, the right to human dignity, and the right of security.

To summarize, I have provided five criteria for a global citizen responsible for solving all problems of the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

Avoid violence, protect life; live harmoniously and peacefully; promote human interaction and equality.

Practice Right Livelihood, generosity, economic justice.

Reduce greed, promote contentment.

Practice Right Speech, pay attention to listening skill and compassionate speech (*metta-vācī kamma*).

Deep understanding of the cause of well-being of human beings, avoid toxins, preserve physical and mental health.

By highlighting pañcaśīla, I hope to inspire people to realize their true role, potential, and responsibility as ethical agents in solving the fourth industrial revolution's problems. Through moral analysis disciplines that pañcaśīla have important force to change both thoughts and deeds from suffering to happiness that is significant in creating a better world. To show the Buddha's teaching of pañcaśīla

have more value than what we believe they are. The world does not need miracles to fly but requires the magic of non-violence, loving, compassion, giving kindness, generosity, contentment, honest, and mindfulness. These miracles of pañcaśīla can solve our present problems to maintain peace, disarmament, economic justice, human rights, the right information, security, and environmental protection.

In conclusion, pañcaśīla are the teaching of Buddha to transform individual and society. These precepts are universal ethics and the characteristic morality of a global citizen. When pañcaśīla becomes the heart of the community, then all problems of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will be gone by the virtues of compassion, generosity, contentment, honest, and mindfulness. And then, universal ethics can bring happiness to our families, society and the world by realizing the conditions and applying the right techniques.

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