



Path to Peace



“Culture of Lawfulness”

Office of Justice Affairs

“Sila : Path to Peace” (ศีล : สร้างสังคมสันติสุข)

Advisor from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Phra Medhivajarpundit Prof. Dr.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Uthai Satiman

Advisor from Office of Justice Affairs

Pol.Lt.Col. Phongthon Thanyasiri

Ms. Priyanuch Jingjit

Written by

Ms. Pariyanouch Santivongse

Ms. Waraluck Toungpu

Ms. Krittima Klasanthia

Translated by

Ms. Sudarak Suvannanonda

Ms. Pariyanouch Santivongse

Coordinator

Acting Sub Lt. Teerapon Sam-aoung

Illustrated by

Ms. Nutthawimol Saisuwan

Supporting team

Ms. Nawaporn Angtharak

Mr. Sakdipat Anuchan

Ms. Lalita Khongkha-in

Ms. Chompunoot Thongtum

Mr. Tiradej Ngampotjanawong

Produced by

Division of National Justice Commission Secretariat (Corporate Communication Group)

Email: law_knowledge@oja.go.th

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“Sila : Path to Peace” (ศีล : สร้างสังคมสันติสุข)



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Preface

The United Nations adopted the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** as part of the Global Agenda from 2015-2030, with **Goal 16 focusing on peace, justice, and inclusivity**. Specifically, this goal calls for promoting peaceful societies and building effective justice systems and strong institutions through targets such as reducing all forms of violence, ending abuse, exploitation, and torture of children, combating illicit financial and arms flows, and curbing corruption.

In Thai society, which is influenced by Buddhism, **Pañca-sīla (the Five Precepts)** serve as fundamental guidelines that shape people's actions, speech, and thoughts toward moral conscience and peaceful living. The precepts call for abstaining from: 1) killing or harming humans and all living beings, 2) taking what is not given, 3) committing sexual misconduct, 4) speaking falsely, and 5) using intoxicating substances. When these principles are observed, peace and social order—particularly in regard to the safety of life, body, and property—can be safeguarded. In this sense, the teaching shares a similar purpose with the law: to regulate human behavior and ensure social harmony.

At the close of 2024 and into the New Year 2025, the Office of Justice Affairs published "Dharma in Laws", a compilation of infographics designed to disseminate legal knowledge closely related to the Five Precepts, as well as laws concerning Buddhist temples and bhikkhus, for the benefit of both clergy and laypeople.

The Office of Justice Affairs, Ministry of Justice, has the mission of raising public awareness about laws and the justice system and serving as the lead agency responsible for advancing SDG16. Recognizing that the Five Precepts are not only moral principles fundamental to Thai Buddhists but also widely acknowledged across the world as universal ethical values, the Office has further developed this concept through the present book, **"Sīla: Path to Peace"**.

The aim of this book is to illustrate the connections between legal knowledge, the moral guidance of the Five Precepts, and the goals of SDG16 in an entertaining but also thought-provoking style. We hope to inspire readers to reflect on how they can strengthen moral awareness in daily life, as well as to carry such awareness into their roles in society. Also, the book should serve to foster a culture of lawfulness both within Thailand and in the global community.

Office of Justice Affairs

Foreword

“Sila: Path to Peace” is a book that integrates the principles and practices of **Pañca-sīla (the Five Precepts)**—abstaining from harming life, abstaining from corrupt thoughts and deceit, abstaining from indulgence in sensual pleasures, abstaining from false statements, and abstaining from intoxicating associations—with Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions.

“Sila” symbolizes strength and stability in the expression of morality through physical, verbal, and mental conduct. Guided by it, people treat each other with love and respect for human dignity. They pursue the right livelihoods and care for the natural environment, enabling communities and society to coexist peacefully.

The distinctive feature of this book lies in its presentation of legal content and social peacefulness through the idea of **“Security Framework,”** encompassing all five dimensions of security, while using Pañca-sīla as a foundation for holistic security. The content is delivered in an easy-to-understand format, enriched with both infographics and storytelling, with moral lessons accompanying each precept’s explanation. This approach allows readers to grasp complex principles in an engaging, simple, and accessible way.

Creating compelling stories that convey the meaning of each precept is a thoughtful way to **“bring law to Dharma”** and “bring Dharma to life.” Likewise, the essence of the internationally recognized Sustainable Development Goals (SDG16), is presented here in a manner that is practical and applicable to daily life. They are made accessible to people of all backgrounds, professions, and ages by incorporating Pañca-sīla as a framework for cultivating profound values for living harmoniously with others (the Meta-Precept), with **“Sati,”** or the constant sense of mindfulness, as the essential foundation for building a sustainable and peaceful society.

It is my sincerest hope that this book will serve as a powerful message to help people of all ages, both in Thailand and beyond, realize that **“Sila”** is the very foundation upon which a truly peaceful society can be built.

Prof. Dr. Phra Medhivajrapundit

The Director of Innovative Mindfulness and Peace Studies Programme (Ph.D.)

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

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Five Precepts Five Virtues and Law

The Five Precepts: The Foundation of Thai Law

“Sīla” means normalcy. Everyone desires to maintain a normal state in daily life free from trouble and harm and to avoid conflict with the law. Such a moral code of conduct is not specific only to Buddhism but can also be found in Christianity and Judaism, like the Ten Commandments. The Five Precepts, or Pañca-sīla, therefore, can be regarded as one foundation of moral principles that is universal in nature, aligns well with the concept of human rights, and self-regulates so that followers would have no difficulty keeping their behavior in check and abiding by law.

From the perspective of law, the Five Precepts endorse policies and regulations on social order essential for peaceful coexistence of people. Dhamma-vinaya, which refers to the Buddha’s complete teaching of disciplines, is reflected in laws, and actions prohibited by the Five Precepts were criminalized. Thus, what goes against the Five Precepts is not only frowned upon by society but also punishable by law.

In governing society, the principles of Vinaya can complement the law. For example, just as the law regulates citizens’ rights and duties so they can live together without conflict, the Five Precepts are helpful, at the very least, to guide the way on how not to harm others. To make this observance more effective, the Five Precepts are paired with **“the Five Virtues” (pañca-dhamma)**, which encourage and strengthen the practice.

Although the Buddhist scriptures (Tipiṭaka) do not explicitly state that the Five Precepts and Five Virtues are linked, their essences, which reinforce each other, have led to the connected term **“pañca-sīla pañca-dhamma,”** a subject of study at the elementary level of monastic education in Thailand.

The Office of Justice Affairs published **“Dharma in Laws”** to disseminate legal knowledge closely related to the Five Precepts that Thais are familiar with. The following table provides examples of the connection between Pañca-sīla, Pañca-dhamma, and legal principles.

The Connection between Pañca-sīla, Pañca-dhamma, and Legal Principles

Pañca-sīla or Five Precepts	Pañca-dhamma or Five virtues	Related Laws
<p>Sīla 1: Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī (to abstain from killing and hurting lives)</p>	<p>Mettā Karuṇā (to be loving and kind, and having good will toward others to have compassionate desire to alleviate the suffering of others)</p>	<p>Offenses against Life and Body in the Penal Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 289 prescribes seven incidents of murder, which are punishable by death.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sections 295-298 and 391 determine the punishments for physical assaults, which are not just 500 THB fines. 
<p>Sīla 2: Adinnādānā veramaṇī (to abstain from taking what is not given, stealing, cheating, infringement of ownership, destroying others, property)</p>	<p>Sammā-ājīva (to earn one's living in rightful and honest means)</p>	<p>Offenses against Property in the Penal Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 334-366 imposed consequences for those taking others' belongings.  

Pañca-sīla or Five Precepts

Sīla 3: Kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇī

(to abstain from sexual misconduct, violating other's love ones)

Pañca-dhamma or Five virtues

Kāma-saṃvara

(to restrain oneself in relation to sensual pleasures whether sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches to be content with one's committed partner and be disciplined in guarding oneself against sexual desire and any temptation)

Related Laws

Offenses Relating to Sexuality in the Penal Code

- Section 278 - 285 are about indecent acts of sexual nature.



The Civil and Commercial Code Amendment Act (No. 24) B.E. 2567 (2024)



- Section 1516 (1) lists adultery as one of the grounds for divorce and the wronged spouse can claim compensation.

Sīla 4: Musāvādā veramaṇī

(to abstain from false speech and deception)

Saccā

(to maintain truthfulness and honesty in deed, speech, and thought.)

Offences relating to Counter in the Penal Code

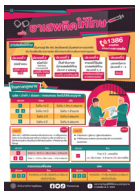

- Section 264-269 are about forged and fabricated documents.



Offences against Liberty and Reputation

- Section 326-333 are the acts of defamation.



Pañca-sīla or Five Precepts	Pañca-dhamma or Five virtues	Related Laws
<p>Sīla 5: Surā-meraya-majja- pamādatṭhānā veramaṇī (to abstain from alcoholic drinks and intoxicating substances that lead to heedlessness)</p>	<p>Sati sampajañña (To be aware and continuously attentive to one's mind. To practice mindfulness and be thoughtful of the things one should and should not do so not to fall into heedlessness.)</p>	<p>Act Promulgating the Narcotics Code, B.E. 2564 (2021)</p>  <p>Land Transport Act B.E. 2522 (1979) and its Amendments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial Regulation on Testing the Alcohol Content of Drivers B.E. 2567 (2024) 

The table shows that violations of Precepts 1–4 are mainly tied to the Thai Penal Code, while violations of the Fifth Precept (such as drug use or alcohol consumption) fall under specific laws like the Narcotics Act or Alcohol Regulations. Yet in practice, breaking the Fifth Precept could possibly lead back to criminal offenses as defined in the Criminal Code.

For example, on the provisions related to criminal liability, Section 66 states that being under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances may not be raised as an excuse under Section 65. With the exception that the intoxication is caused without the knowledge or against the will of the offender, and at the time of committing the offense, the offender is unable to appreciate the illegal nature of the action or unable to control oneself, the offender shall then be exempted from the punishment for such offense. However, if it is considered that the person is still partially able to appreciate the nature or illegality of the action or is still partially able to control oneself, the court may inflict lesser punishment to any extent than that provided by the law for such an offense.

This demonstrates that various forms of vice—whether drug use, intoxication, or even gambling—serve as triggers that impair mindful consciousness and self-awareness, which lead to loss of self-restraint and eventually to violations of Precepts 1–4. Phra Brahmapundit, Ph.D., expressed a similar view in his lecture

“The Five Precepts as the Foundation of Thai Law” at the 22nd National Symposium on Justice Administration. In his words, “Intoxicants destroy the mind. When a person loses Sati, they are unable to maintain control and end up violating the first four precepts. Intoxicants are therefore the root of negligence and a threat to society. By observing the Fifth Precept, one has a strong basis for observing the other four. In this way, the Five Precepts create a foundation for respectful society—one that protects life, property, and human dignity. In such a society, the need for strict legal enforcement would be greatly reduced.”

Looking at it with the criminal justice’s lens, the Five Precepts is guaranteeing five aspects of security.

Security of Life

This can be attained by promoting the respect of human rights, preventing danger and harm of the body, life, and mind.

Security of Wealth

This can be attained by prohibiting not only stealing, but also fraud, financial crime, and corruption.

Security of Family

This can be attained by prohibiting adultery, sexual misconduct and violation, discouraging the indulgence in sensual pleasure, and promoting the respect of people of all genders and ages.

Security of Speech

This can be attained by prohibiting lies, deception, verbal bullying, verbal harassment hate speech, and especially fake news which nowadays causes widespread misinformation affecting people and society.

Security of Health

This can be attained by discouraging the use of intoxicants, for alcohol and other substances negatively affect physical and mental health, impairing the brain’s cerebral cortex and the limbic system, reducing physical and mental ability to conduct oneself, and leading to recklessness. Prolonged usage also results in the deterioration of rational thinking, impulsivity, frequent display of inappropriate behaviors, loss of self-control, and mental illness, affecting oneself and society.

“Law governs actions, morality governs conscience”

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



FIVE PRECEPTS

SDG16

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global development framework for the post-2015 period, adopted by 193 member countries of the United Nations on September 25, 2015. These goals cover a 15-year period from 2016 to 2030, providing a common direction for all nations to work toward. There are 17 goals in total.

In Thailand, the Ministry of Justice has assigned the Office of Justice Affairs to be the leading agency for driving Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16): Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. This goal focuses on building peaceful societies, ensuring everyone has equal access to justice, and creating transparent, accountable, and effective institutions. These are fundamental principles for developing a democratic society and promoting public participation. SDG16, which comprises 12 targets, is considered a foundational mechanism, like a golden thread, that links all 17 SDGs together.

Peace

The United Nations defines Peace as a society ***“free from crime, with reduced violence, and with no corruption.”*** The related targets include:

- Significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates.
- Ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children.
- Substantially reducing illicit financial and arms flows.
- Combating organized crime.
- Substantially reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms.

Justice

The key definition of Justice is ***“equal access to justice, reduced inequality, and the elimination of discrimination.”*** This involves:

- Promoting the rule of law at both national and international levels.
- Ensuring equal access to justice for all.
- Providing legal identity for everyone.
- Ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national and international laws.
- Promoting and enforcing non-discriminatory laws and policies.

Strong Institutions

The concept of Strong institutions is ***“to improve service delivery and promote public participation.”*** This involves:

- Building effective institutions and promoting participatory decision-making by all sectors.
- Strengthening national institutions.
- Developing the quality of management and operations of government agencies in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and transparency.
- Ensuring citizens have the right and opportunity to participate in the mechanisms of all government sectors, based on human rights principles.
- Driving Thailand's right to participate and make decisions on the global stage.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



PEACE

- 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- 16.4 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- 16.5 Reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms



JUSTICE


- 16.3 Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.9 Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
- 16.10 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- 16.B Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development






STRONG INSTITUTION

- 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making
- 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
- 16.A Strengthen relevant institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

The Connection between Targets of SDG16 and Sila (the Five Precepts)

 Peace	 Justice	 Strong Institutions
16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 1 : Security of Life (to abstain from killing and hurting lives) • Sila 5 : Security of Health (to abstain from alcoholic drinks that lead to violence) 	16.3 Promote the rule of law at and ensure equal access to justice for all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 3 : Security of Family (to respect everyone regardless of genders and ages) • Sila 4 : Security of Speech (to maintain honesty in the justice proceedings) 	16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 5 : Security of Health (to govern with awareness and mindfulness) • Sila 4 : Security of Speech (to betransparent and communicate no deception)
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 1 : Security of Life (to value all lives) • Sila 3 : Security of Family (to protect families and respect everyone) • Sila 2 : Security of Wealth (to refrain from corrupt means of livelihood) 	16.9 Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 4 : Security of Speech (to value truthful information) • Sila 1 : Security of Life (to value basic rights) 	16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 5 : Security of Health (to make decisions with awareness and mindfulness) • Sila 3 : Security of Family (to respect everyone regardless of genders and ages) • Sila 4 : Security of Wealth (to practice inclusive communication)
16.4 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 1 : Security of Life (to value all lives) • Sila 3 : Security of Family (to protect families and respect everyone) • Sila 2 : Security of Wealth (to refrain from corrupt means of livelihood) 	16.10 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 4 : Security of Life (to value all lives) 	16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 4 : Security of Speech (to communicate decently and with transparency) • Sila 5 : Security of Health (to govern and decide matters of international affairs with mindfulness)

 Peace	 Justice	 Strong Institutions
16.5 Reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 2 : Security of Wealth (to refrain from embezzlement and corruption) • Sila 4 : Security of Speech (to be honest) • Sila 5 : Security of Health (to be mindful in professional activities) 	16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 1 : Security of Life (to value all lives) • Sila 3 : Security of Family (to respect everyone regardless of genders and ages) • Sila 2 : Security of Wealth (to treat everyone as equal before the law and accept no bribery) • Sila 4 : Security of Speech (to be honest and enforce the laws with transparency) 	16.a Strengthen relevant institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sila 1 : Security of Life (to prevent violence against lives) • Sila 5 : Security of Health (to govern with awareness and mindfulness) • Sila 3 : Security of Family (to promote strong social institutions)

Looking at the broader framework of SDG16, it becomes clear that the Five Precepts align closely with the direction of the global goals. In the part of “Peaceful society,” the First Precept corresponds to reducing violence and ending oppression; the Second Precept supports efforts to reduce corruption and bribery; and both the First and Third Precepts relate to ending human trafficking, especially in cases involving sexual exploitation.

As for Justice and Strong Institutions, the Fourth Precept reinforces their core elements by way of promoting truthfulness and ensuring accurate communication, which are related to a transparent justice system and fair law enforcement free from discrimination. Finally, the Fifth Precept oversees all others with “Sati,” discouraging intoxicants, thereby protecting both physical and mental stability that are essential for rational governance and responsible decision-making.

Conclusion

From the Five Precepts to the Culture of Lawfulness

Thai society can only maintain order if people learn to respect the rules—a concept known as the Culture of Lawfulness. It requires everyone to live by the Five Precepts and obey the law because people are protected internally by morality and externally by laws. In this sense, the Five Precepts offer a foundation for social stability that is completely in line with SDG16, in addition to being moral guidance.

Together, the Five Precepts and SDG16 function as a preventive system for peace and security. The Five Precepts aim to stop problems before they arise, with the fifth one acting as a sort of **“Meta-Precept”** that governs the mind in steering life along a rightful path.

On an individual level, one can achieve personal security by adhering to the Five Precepts, while SDG16 focuses on global security, creating peace and justice by preventing conflicts and lessening the severity of global issues. Ultimately, law and morality are not separate. They form one integrated system that strengthens society and upholds universal principles of just and order.

Agenda for Sustainable Development, Goal 16 [SDG16]

“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”



“Dharma”

The teachings or Buddhism practices



“Deed”

An action that is performed intentionally.
An action that abide by the laws



Pañca-sīla or the Five Precepts

The guideline of five abstinence that Buddhist followers should practice to cultivate moral conscience

Laws, regulations, orders, or rules

Enforceable instruments that aim to control the behavior of individuals in society and must be followed.



Story of Fable Friends

Since prehistoric times, humans have understood that the key to survival in a world full of uncertainty is unity. Cave paintings discovered in many parts of the world provide important evidence of the communal lifestyle of early humans. Whether foraging, living, or participating in sacred rituals, these activities were depicted as group efforts, reflecting the bonds and interdependence within small communities.

As time passed, humans transitioned to farming and permanent settlers. Social interactions became increasingly complex, eventually leading to disagreements, conflicts, and challenges between members of communities. To maintain peaceful coexistence, people began forming **“agreements”** that served as guidelines for acceptable behavior. These agreements later established social norms, which evolved into **“law”** regulating the behavior of modern citizens.


While law is an important mechanism for maintaining order, it alone may not be sufficient to create a peaceful society. Without good conscience, compassion, and kindness to one another, a community will not thrive. These qualities are essential in filling the loopholes that laws cannot cover and form the foundation of what we now call **“human rights.”**

Human rights are universally recognized as fundamental principles of dignity and mutual respect, regardless of race, religion, gender, language, or social status. Such differences must never be used as grounds for discrimination or denial of rights; rather, they should be embraced and valued as expressions of humanity's remarkable diversity.



The First Precept

Security of Life



Respect for the life and dignity of fellow human beings is not only a principle in legal systems or human rights but also evident in religious teachings, particularly in Buddhism, which emphasizes compassion and refraining from harming the lives of others. **The First Precept, *Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī***. This means one should abstain from killing because all living beings are equally important. Life should be cherished not only by the owner but also by society as a whole, and taking a life is a malicious act that leads to social deterioration, making it unsafe for everyone.

In Thailand, the concept of respect for the right to life and liberty is enshrined in various laws to protect individuals from violating the body, mind, or liberty of others. It can be found in the Penal Code, where offenses related to physical assault, murder, or acts that threaten public order are included, and also in the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act B.E. 2551 (2008), which aims to protect human dignity from unfair exploitation.

Even seemingly minor incidents, such as quarreling, can be considered a crime if they violate the rights of others, because "humanity" is what the law aims to protect. As the Buddhist wisdom verse states,

"Vivādam bhayato disvā"

- quarrel is seen as harm.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

Poor little Snow White ran away from her evil stepmother and stumbled upon seven dwarfs.

*"My name is Snow White," she said.
"Can you please let me live with you here for
a while just to hide from my vile stepmother?"*

The dwarfs allowed her to stay on the condition that she cook and clean for them.

While staying in their house, she couldn't help but notice that the dwarfs left early in the morning and returned late after nightfall, reeking of blood.

Suspecting something dreadful, Snow White decided to follow them one day. She almost couldn't believe her eyes when she saw the dwarfs butchering and skinning rabbits, with countless more of the helpless animals in traps and cages across the area.

She knew at once this was not the work of simple hunters earning a living, but an act of cruelty—a deliberate scheme of animal abuse.

Fearful for her safety, she told the dwarfs she wished to leave. They refused and instead locked her in, forcing her to continue doing chores for them.

But Snow White was no wimpish girl. She was strong and clever enough to escape this life-threatening situation. The place was no longer a haven and the dwarfs were heartless humans who deserved no mercy.

One night, she cooked their dinner as she always did, but this time she added just a dab of poison. The dwarfs enjoyed their last meal and went to bed... never to wake again.

*The moral of this story is
"What goes around comes around".*





The Second Precept Security of Wealth

Ambition and the desire for wealth are not wrong. Desire is not a negative thing, so long as it does not intrude upon another's property. Living by the **Second Precept, *Adinnadana veramani***, one must abstain from taking others' belongings, exploiting, or using improper means to obtain those assets, but instead only gain from honest and rightful livelihood.

If you follow the recent news, you'll find that every day there are reports of people physically attacking others in order to take their belongings, robbing gold, or scam-calling elderly people to trick them into giving personal information or investing in expensive products in hopes of generating income for their families. Many lost a huge sum of money to cunning criminals before they even knew it.

Have these cunning scammers ever considered the toll their deception takes on the victims? Beyond the loss of property, many suffer a blow to their morale and hope for the future. Such tragedies stand as stark lessons for society.

Although there are many government agencies currently working to prevent and suppress property crimes, and many laws that were put in place including the Penal Code and the Anti-money Laundering Act B.E. 2542 (1999), one should not rest assured or rely solely on the protection of the law. These threats are fast-paced and constantly evolving.

Thus, it is best to make people aware of the dangers and to live with the understanding that **nothing worthwhile comes easily**. Do not be driven by greed or by the desire to become rich through quick investments or corrupt means. Such pursuits not only bring suffering to oneself and to society, but involvement in these vices also makes one an accomplice to criminal activities—destroying both one's own life and the lives of others in ways that cannot be foreseen.

Therefore, taming greed, being content with what one has, and earning a living by ethical means should be practiced as essential foundations of life. As the Buddhist wisdom verse states,

"Lobho dhammanam paripantho"
—greed harms all wholesome things.





Rapunzel

In a great royal city, the queen gave birth to a lovely little princess and named her **"Rapunzel"**. Unfortunately, Princess Rapunzel was a frail child who often fell seriously ill, which gravely worried the king and queen.

As days passed, the king ordered his men to post a proclamation saying whoever knew a way to bring health to the beloved princess would be handsomely rewarded.

Now in the mysterious forest, there was a dwarf, who, upon hearing the king's words, came to the castle and told the king he knew exactly what to do.

"I have heard of an enchanted flower that could cure any mortal ailments," said the dwarf. "But it belongs to the witch who lives deep in the mysterious forest."

"Without delay the king commanded his men: **"Bring me the flower, no matter what it takes."** So they hurried off.

Thereafter, the witch returned to her shack in the forest only to find her treasured blossom gone—the very flower from which she brewed the draught to preserve her eternal life. Learning that it had been taken by the king's order, she rushed to the castle, but the flower was wasted and the princess had already finished the potion. Furious, the witch plotted to steal into the palace, kidnap Princess Rapunzel, and lock her away in the old shack.

"You did not for a moment think of my loss as the owner of the flower," said the witch. **"Now you shall learn the lesson and taste what it is like to have a beloved possession stolen from you."**

The moral of this story is
"Do not desire what is not yours."



The Third Precept

Security of Family

Humans are noble beings. What is nobility, if not the possession of virtue? Temperance is the mark of those who practice self-control, guided not by mere instinct or fleeting desire.

The same is true for cultivating and refining the virtues of the mind. Virtue is not inherited through human DNA but is shaped and polished by one's family, education, and personal practices. The family, in particular, is the first unit to instill moral ethics in its members. Building a strong and secure family provides the initial foundation for good society and produces virtuous population.

The most important family members whose moral ethics will be instilled are the children.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), abused children may experience permanent disabilities, unwanted pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases. As for the long term effect, they may also face emotional challenges, difficulty adjusting to others, antisocial behavior, and a tendency toward violence that can lead to criminal activity.


Today, existing laws—like those prescribed in the Civil and Commercial Code and the Child Protection Act, B.E. 2546 (2003)—help define the role of the family and safeguard the rights of children. Yet ideally, the law should serve only as a last resort when it comes to caring for the future generation.

As adults, how can we protect these seeds waiting to grow?

Children are like seeds that need to sprout. It is our duty as adults to provide a positive example for children, foster an atmosphere that supports their development, and nurture them with love and attention.

Additionally, a survey on violence against children and youth in Thailand found that children who grow up in households with both parents are less likely to experience sexual violence compared to those raised by caregivers other than their parents.

This highlights that a positive spousal relationship is another crucial factor in strengthening the family as an institution.



Swipe Right for Love

Technology has facilitated communication between people living far apart. Through a variety of apps, it has allowed people to get to know one another, sparked the beginning of relationships, and created a trend in different forms of partnerships.

However, these **“casual relations”** are rarely built to last the same way traditional couples committed to growing old together.

Technological advancements have turned everything upside down. Things that once seemed difficult have become easy. The breaking up of lovers, which used to be a lingering decision, is now simpler too.

Adding to such problems is the trend of the **“talking stage,”** which provides a grey area that even someone already in a relationship shamelessly joins in.


Partners that should respect each other behaving disrespectfully is probably one of the factors undermining family institutions.

Therefore, those who have committed partners should always be mindful that a single impulsive act can burn away all the fond memories of a good relationship in the blink of an eye. As the Buddhist wisdom verse states, **“Natthi raga-samo aggi” — there is no fire like the fire of lust.**

In this regard, the Third Precept is Kamesumicchacara veramani.



The Weaverbirds



Once there was a family of weaverbirds dwelling in the forest. The mother bird, bound to the nest, tended her growing hatchlings with tireless care. Thus it fell to the father bird to fly out each day in search of food for them all.

But while he was out, he lingered among other weavers, chirping and chattering, often forgetting about his loved ones waiting at home.

One day, the father bird stayed away so long that the mother bird grew restless and full of doubt. Would he ever return, or had he left her for another weaver?

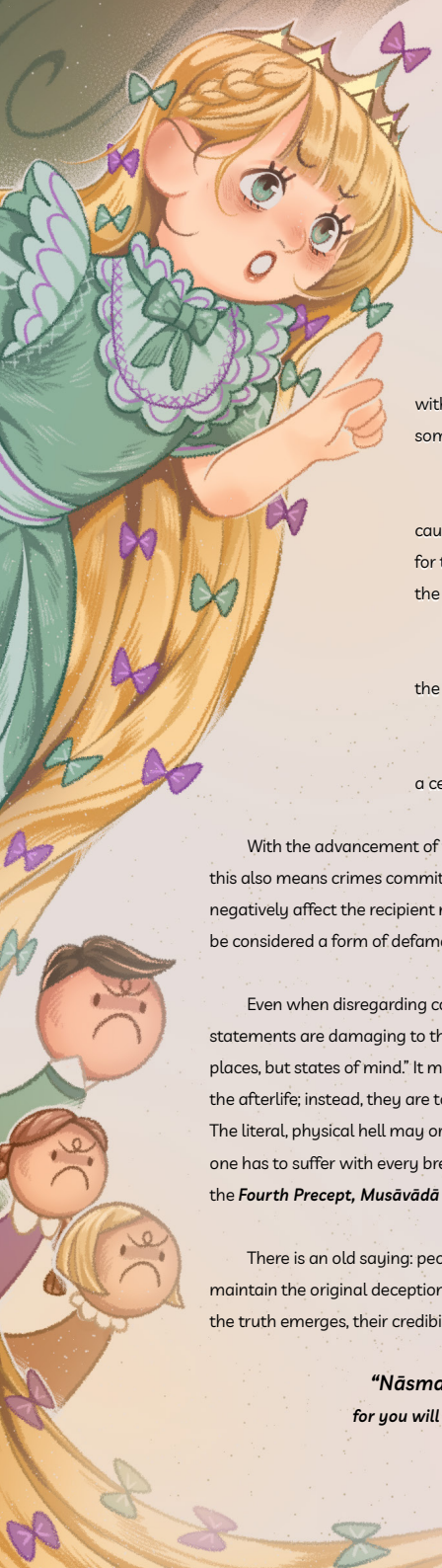
As the mother bird worried, Snow White stopped by for a chat. **“I happened to see your mate today, showing off his nest-building skills to a young female weaver,”** she said.

At these words, the mother bird’s heart hardened. She lifted her hatchlings from the nest and flew away, never once looking back.

When at last the father bird decided it was time to return, he found only an empty nest. In that moment, he realized that his fleeting pleasures had cost him the very family he had.

Dishonesty to one’s partner and sexual misconduct ruin one’s family. The moral of this story is

“Pleasure from the senses seems like nectar at first, but it is bitter as poison in the end.”



The Fourth Precept Security of Speech

Words hold a magical power.

They can breathe life into people, inspiring them or mending hearts with kindness. Yet, they also carry a destructive force capable of tearing someone down.

Insults, ridicule, defamation, and disclosure of secrets to cause damage or destroy confidence—these often come easily, for they seem to cost nothing and demand no responsibility from the speaker.

However, in the eyes of the law, when one's words harm others, the speaker can be held liable for punishment.

Today, there are many incidents of wrongdoing in which speech is a central element.

With the advancement of technology, communication has become easier than ever. Unfortunately, this also means crimes committed through technology have increased. Harassing messages that negatively affect the recipient may be one example. What we commonly call cyberbullying can, in fact, be considered a form of defamation—a punishable criminal offense.

Even when disregarding consequences of the law and looking at it in a more personal aspect, false statements are damaging to the speakers too. In Thai, there is a saying, "Heaven and hell are not external places, but states of mind." It means that liars do not need to wait for the negative repercussion in the afterlife; instead, they are tormented from within, knowing that their words had harmed others. The literal, physical hell may or may not exist, but the shame and guilt that burn one's mind are a reality one has to suffer with every breath. This is what happened to those who refuse to follow the **Fourth Precept, *Musāvādā veramaṇī***.

There is an old saying: people who lie often find themselves needing to continue lying to maintain the original deception. Such a person cannot present themselves with dignity, and when the truth emerges, their credibility and reputation collapse. As the Buddhist wisdom verse states,

***"Nāsmase alikavāḍine"—do not trust one who speaks falsely,
for you will be condemned to live with doubt and suspicion forever.***

An illustration at the top of the page shows a brown wolf with a red tongue and sharp teeth lunging towards a flock of white sheep. The sheep are scattered across a green field, some looking back at the wolf with expressions of alarm. The scene is set against a light, hazy background.

The Boy Who Cry Wolf

There once was a village where all villagers were nice and kind to one another. They are always ready to lend a hand whenever their neighbor runs into trouble.

One day a shepherd boy was watching over his sheep in the meadow near the village end, looking for some fun and also curious to know whether the villagers are as helpful as they say, he ran into the street and shouted out, ***"Wolf! Wolf! The Wolf is coming for my sheep!"***

All the villagers who heard the cry came running to help without hesitation, but as they arrived there was no trace of a wolf but a flock of sheep grazing peacefully. They realized the boy had just pranked them.

The boy laughed because his prank was a success. Rapunzel saw what happened, and with noble intention she warned him, ***"Don't ever do this again, or when you really need help, no one will believe you."*** The shepherd boy shrugged it off, for after all, it was just a fun prank that couldn't hurt anyone.

Then not so long after, the shepherd boy was watching over his sheep in the meadow near the village end as usual but this time a wolf really came attacking. The boy ran to the village, shouting at the top of his lungs for someone to help. Not a single one came. They all thought the boy was playing a silly prank like before.

The wolf devoured all the sheep.

The moral of this story is
***"No one believes a liar,
even if they are telling the truth."***





The Fifth Precept

Security of Health

Have you ever wondered why government agencies run countless “**Drunk Driving**” campaigns or why there are so many rest stops along major highways during long holidays?

The answer is simple: when you are fatigued or under the influence of alcohol, your ability to make sound decisions deteriorates sharply. In such a state, you are not fit to take responsibility for your own safety—or for the lives of others who share the road with you.

Statistics from the Department of Probation reveal the gravity of the problem. During the “**Ten Dangerous Days of the New Year Festival**” (27 December 2024 – 5 January 2025), there were 7,654 new probation cases. Shockingly, 7,306 of them were for driving under the influence of alcohol. On average, there is roughly one victim every hour who suffers due to drivers impaired in both judgment and social responsibility.

From these figures, it is undeniable that “**Sati**”—mindfulness—is a vital necessity in human life. This principle is reflected not only in moral teachings but also in laws, such as the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act, B.E. 2551 (2008), and the Land Traffic Act, B.E. 2522 (1979). The same wisdom is embedded in the **Fifth Precept**, **Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī**, which calls on us to refrain from intoxicants and other habits that cloud the mind and lead to heedlessness, such as gambling, alcohol consumption, and substance abuse. Those who reject this precept and indulge in the reckless thrill of such vices invite nothing but harm to their health and their property.

By contrast, true happiness is found in living with sati—staying fully aware of the consequences of every action and steering clear of behaviors that rob the mind of its clarity. As the Buddhist wisdom verse states,

“Satimā sukhame dhati”
he who is mindful maintains happiness.

The Hare and the Tortoise

At the Himmapan Marathon, the tortoise and the hare joined the race. Naturally, the hare bolted from the start and pulled far ahead of the tortoise.

Near the very last water station, the hare suddenly caught sight of fancy donuts laid out upon a table. He slowed down and looked behind him but could not see his opponent anywhere. Certain that he was much faster and that the tortoise must be trailing a good distance behind, he grew careless.

"It will take ages before the tortoise catches up. And even if he does, I can sprint far faster. Why should I not indulge myself with some sweet treats?", thought the hare.

So, though he had no need to rest, he stopped for the donuts—unaware that each one was laced with the witches' brew. Whoever tasted it would fall under its spell and be unable to stop eating.

To the hare, the donuts were insatiable. He became so lost in eating more and more that he forgot the race entirely. Meanwhile, with a slow and steady pace, the tortoise reached the finish line.

When the hare at last realized what had happened, it was too late. He tore himself away from the treats and rushed to the tortoise. But the bitterness of defeat, worsened by the bewitched sweets, drove him into madness. In his fury, he attacked the tortoise. The crowd rushed to restrain him, but blinded by rage, the hare only grew more violent.

In the end, the people were disgusted and banished the hare from all future Himmapan races. When at last the spell of the donuts wore off, the hare understood his disgrace. He had not been defeated by the tortoise but by his own craving, which led him astray. A single foolish indulgence had ruined him.

The moral of this story is
"Those who live without constant mindfulness are easily undone by temptations that lead them to ruin."
Mindfulness is being awake in this mortal world.



“Culture of Lawfulness”