

## Month 5 of the PARAMITA CHALLENGE – January 2022

Perfection of Concentration, the Bodhisattva Precept on Restraining Intoxication,  
and completing the Ten Abodes

Welcome to the Fifth Month of the Paramita Challenge!

波羅蜜多挑戰

Each month we will receive sets of topics for contemplation, one for each week of the month. The first set refers to the Perfections. Contemplate one topic each week during the month of January 2022. The fifth set refers to the Concentration Paramita, the Precept on Intoxication Restraint, and the last stages of the 10 Abodes from the 52 Stages of the Bodhisattva. Again, take one stage at a time and contemplate this stage for a week.

Keep a journal record of your insights. The journal can be in the form of prose narratives, poems, artwork, etc.

Begin with observing your intentions, opportunities, and actions to be moral and ethical. Also, arouse your faith in the Triple Gem. See where/when you are confident and where/when you have doubts.

### Right Concentration

Right Concentration is discussed in detail in the original Buddhist suttas. Concentration is defined as:

"And what is right concentration? There is the case where a monk — quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful (mental) qualities — enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation — internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the Noble Ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' With the abandoning of pleasure & pain — as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress — he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called right concentration."

— SN 45.8

For a more complete explanation, see Thānissaro Bhikkhu's Wings to Awakening: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/wings/part3.html#part3-e>

# Paramitas

## The Ten Paramitas

### Definition and Varieties

### *Chéng wéishí lùn* 成唯識論

### *Doctrine of Mere-Consciousness*

The ten excellent moral exercises are the ten Paramitas.

十勝行者, 即是十種波羅蜜多

The Ten Paramitas in the <i>Chéng wéishí lùn</i> 成唯識論				
#	English (Wei Tat Trans.)	Chinese	Pinyin	Commentary
5	Meditation and contemplation	靜慮	jìng lù	Meditation is of three kinds 靜慮有三種: (1) meditation leading to <i>Samadhi</i> ; (2) meditation leading to the unfoldment of supernatural powers; and (3) meditation leading to the successful accomplishment of great tasks. 謂安住靜慮、引發靜慮、辦事靜慮。

Six Perfections and their Subdivisions from the <i>Sutra on Understanding the Profound and Esoteric Doctrine</i> 解深密經 <i>Jiě shēnmì jīng</i>			
Six Perfections 六波羅蜜多 liù pō luó mì duō	Three Subdivisions 三分 sānfēn	Contained within the precepts of	
5 Meditation/ Concentration 靜慮 jìng lù (Pāli <i>samādhi</i> , <i>jhāna</i> ; Skt. <i>dhyāna</i> )	meditation of abiding in happiness, which counteracts all the suffering of passion because it is non-discriminative, tranquil, very tranquil, and irreproachable. 無分別寂靜極寂靜無罪故, 對治煩惱眾苦樂住靜慮 wú fēn bié jì jìng jí jì jìng wú zuì gù , duì zhì fán nǎo zhòng kǔ lè zhù jìng lù	High Thinking	
	the meditation that engenders functions and virtues 引發功德靜慮 yǐn fā gōng dé jìng lù		
	meditation that engenders benefits for sentient beings 引發饒益有情靜慮 yǐn fā ráo yì yǒu qíng jìng lù		

# Bodhisattva Vows

## *The Brahmā's Net Sutra*

*Brahmajāla-sūtra*, 梵網經 *Fànwǎng jīng*

(Chinese translation attributed to Kumārajīva 鳩摩 in 406.

English translation by A. Charles Muller and Kenneth K. Tanaka.)

### Fascicle Two

58 Bodhisattva Vows			
#	Chinese 菩薩十重戒	Pinyin Púsà shí zhòng jiè	English <u>The Ten Major Bodhisattva Precepts</u>
5	酤酒戒	gū jiǔ jiè	Don't sell or consume alcoholic beverages or other recreational drugs.

#### 5. Prohibition of the Sale of Alcohol

My disciples, if you yourself sell alcohol, or you encourage others to do so, then herein are the causes of selling alcohol, the conditions for selling alcohol, the method of selling alcohol, and the act of selling alcohol. All kinds of alcohol should not be sold, as [consumption of alcohol] leads to the commission of [other] crimes. Instead, bodhisattvas should give rise to penetrating wisdom in all sentient beings. If, on the other hand, they lead sentient beings into distorted states of mind [by selling them alcohol], this is a bodhisattva *pārājika* offense.

#### Xiāнкуān Commentary:

The Bodhisattva precept is different here than the layperson's precept on intoxication.

#### Lay Fifth Precept:

"I undertake the training rule to abstain from alcoholic drink or drugs that are an opportunity for heedlessness."

*surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.*

我應承受持不飲酒戒 (不飲酒) Wǒ yìng chéngshòu chí bù yǐnjiǔ jiè (bù yǐnjiǔ)

It is presumed that the Bodhisattva has already taken this vow. Therefore, the Bodhisattva vow is more specialized. The Chinese Bodhisattva Vow is simply three characters: 酤酒戒, literally meaning "selling alcohol precept." The emphasis here goes beyond personal use to include selling or helping in the distribution of alcohol. This precept would extend to other mind-altering drugs as well. The issue which complicates matters is what drugs, other than alcohol, would be considered intoxicants that dull the mind. In our time, popular recreational drugs include cocaine, crystal "meth" (methamphetamine), and heroin. Hallucinogenic mushrooms and cacti, include, psilocybin, mescaline, ayahuasca, and peyote. Marijuana containing THC also induces an hallucinogenic response. Overuse of prescription medications, especially opiates (for pain management), amphetamines (for attention disorders), and

tranquilizers (for anxiety and sleep disorders) can also be misused for mind-altering purposes. Many of these psychoactive substances can be physically addictive or emotionally habit forming. In addition to being health hazards, these drugs create a different view of reality, such that people may not know if their experiences are true or the result of the drug. When a person suffers from a physical or mental illness, however, the use of medication is fully warranted, especially when the prescribing physician is both knowledgeable and ethical.

The line between intoxication and medication can become blurred in the absence of sufficient medical research. THC and CBD, for example, are still under consideration regarding their efficacy for certain medical conditions. Psychiatric research is also investigating the use of hallucinogenic mushrooms for the treatment of certain mental conditions. The legality of marijuana, for example, is currently undergoing changes. Racial, economic, and other societal factors make this topic more complex. Suffice it to say that the lay practitioners and the Bodhisattvas are well served when avoiding any and all intoxicants unless specifically prescribed by a physician who knows both the patient and the scientific evidence.

Also below is a sutta section on intoxication drawbacks.

From *Six Pathways to Happiness: Volume Two* (publication 2022)

# 善生經

## *Sigālovāda Sutta*

### 善生經 *Shànshēng jīng*

The Buddha gave practical advice to the laity in many teachings. In the original suttas, we find DN 31 *Sigālovāda Sutta: The Discourse to Sigāla*, where advice is presented in detail. The teaching is also found in the Chinese *Āgama* in corresponding text: DĀ 16 善生經 *Shànshēng jīng*.

Six drawbacks of intoxication	<i>surāmerayassa cha ādīnavā</i>	飲酒有六失	Yīnjiǔ yǒu liù shī
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Chinese Buddhism augments the reasoning for non-intoxication based on the loss of reputation (4). The commentary on the five [signs of] decay (五衰 wǔshuāi), is applicable to one who transgresses the precepts (犯戒 fànjiè). These five signs are listed as the following: 1) although they seek wealth, it does not come to them (求財不遂 qiú cái bùsuí); 2) although they get something, they waste it (設得衰耗 shè dé shuāi hào); 3) they are not respected by their social group (衆不敬愛 zhòng bù jìng ài); 4) their bad reputation spreads (惡名流布 è míng liúbù); 5) when they die, they enter the hells (死入地獄 sǐ rù dìyù). This last pronouncement

presumes a knowledge of karma and rebirth that only the enlightened may have. Better to say that the intoxicated person already is living a hellish life and needs our compassion.

## Commentary on the Fifth Precept from the Brahma's Net Sutra by Master Hui Seng

### The 5th Major Precept

Sutra:

The fifth major precept prohibits dealing in intoxicants. A disciple of the Buddha must not himself deal in any type of intoxicant whatsoever, encourage others to do so, or involve himself in the causes, conditions, methods, or karma of dealing in intoxicants, for intoxicants are the causes and conditions for all manner of offenses. A Bodhisattva should influence all beings to give rise to bright, penetrating wisdom. If, instead, he influences beings to give rise to upside-down thinking, he thereby commits a Bodhisattva *Parajika* Offense.

Commentary:

The Five Lay Precepts prohibit partaking intoxicants but do not, as it does here, restrict dealing in intoxicants. In the Five Lay Precepts one is instructed not to use intoxicants oneself, but if does not mention dealing in intoxicants. The Bodhisattva Precepts, however, reckon the selling of intoxicants as a major offense. That's the theme of the Bodhisattva Precepts throughout: if you harm others, the offense is heavy; if you harm yourself, the offense is considered lighter. If you consume intoxicants that's just harming yourself; but, if you sell intoxicants, you are harming others. "Dealing in" means selling for the sake of profit; selling to make money. "Intoxicants" refer to beverages that make people become drunk. They are also called "potions of ignorance," because once one drinks them, one becomes muddled, unstable, and upside down.

A disciple of the Buddha must not himself deal in any type of intoxicants whatsoever. One cannot sell intoxicants oneself. Encouraging others to do so means to urge them to go into business with oneself, to join oneself in selling liquor. It is also a major offense to enjoin others to sell liquor with one. The person who is selling the liquor and the person who teaches him to sell the liquor are both committing a heavy offense. However, if you teach the other person to sell for his own profit, and you do not share in the profit, then it's considered a light offense.

...Or involve himself in the causes... As to the causes, conditions, and so forth, of dealing in intoxicants: the "cause" of selling intoxicants is the intent to make a profit. The conditions refer to the vessel, like the bottles, cans, boxes, and so forth, that hold the liquor. The Methods are the devices used to measure, for example, the number of ounces per bottle and the cost of each bottle, including such things as the distribution and recycling of used bottles for refill. ...Karma of dealing in intoxicants... The "karma" means that with one's own hands one sells the liquor to the person. One only has to sell it to another and the karma is created. The Precept says that the Bodhisattva cannot sell any type of intoxicant. It is explained in this way because each country has a wide variety of intoxicants. There are wines that are made from flowers or grains and there are wines that are made from fruit. In China, most wines are made from rice, wheat, or barley. In America, many wines are made from grapes, and there

are many types of liquor. But, no matter what type of intoxicant it is, if it causes people to get drunk, then one cannot sell it.

...For intoxicants are causes and conditions for all manner of offenses. In the *Vinaya of the Four Divisions*, it states clearly the Ten Disadvantages incurred when one drinks wine or takes intoxicants:

- 1.) The complexion goes bad. One's face becomes ruddy, swollen, and the veins are destroyed.
- 2.) One loses one's strength. People who are drunk become unstable and lose their sense of balance.
- 3.) One loses one's vision. Things become dim, and one can't see straight, as though one were looking through a net.
- 4.) One manifests the appearance of anger.
- 5.) One wastes resources. Originally, the grains could have been used beneficially for food, but once made into wine their effect becomes detrimental. That's considered to be a waste of resources.
- 6.) One's illnesses increase.
- 7.) One tends to pick fights. Normally, a person may be quite peaceful, but once gets drunk, he loses his temper.
- 8.) One loses one's reputation. People who habitually drink alcohol become notorious. They are referred to as "winos" and "drunken ghosts."
- 9.) One's wisdom decreases. Normally, one might be fairly intelligent, but when one gets drunk, one manifests stupidity.
- 10.) At the end of one's life, one will fall into the three evil paths.

Those are the Ten Disadvantages that are incurred just by drinking alcohol, how much more will it be for those who sell alcoholic beverages to other people? They, too, will fall into the three evil realms.

This is a Precept of restraint. The above were all Precepts of the nature, which means they are also prohibited by law, because they oppose the nature. Killing, stealing, and false speech are punishable by law. But it is not illegal to deal in intoxicants [alcohol], so this is a Precept of restraint. After taking this Precept, one must not deal in intoxicants.

You may ask, "If it is not punishable by law, why should we have such a Precept?"

This is a Precept against evil comportment. Even people who have not received the Precepts are exhorted not to create this type of karma. Although people haven't received this Precept, they will still reap severe retribution if they involve themselves in the karma of selling intoxicants. For this reason, a very strict stipulation has been set up for the Great Knights— the Bodhisattvas. If one wishes to leave the world—if one wishes to cultivate transcendental Dharmas— then one must refrain from creating this kind of karma.

A Bodhisattva should influence all beings to give rise to bright, penetrating wisdom. If, instead, he influences beings to give rise to upside-down thinking, he thereby commits a Bodhisattva *Parajika* Offense.

There are five conditions which make this a heavy offense.

1. It is a living being. This is, the being to whom one sells intoxicants is a living creature.
2. One is aware that he is a living being.
3. One is selling with the hope of gaining profit.
4. The intoxicants are genuine.
5. The transaction takes place. That is, one sells it to another person. When these five conditions are met, they make up the offense.

# Bodhisattva 52 Stages

<b>Ten Abodes 十住 shízhù (stages 11-20)</b> <b>Focus on Stages 8-10</b>			
1	The abode of arousing the aspiration	發心住 fāxīn zhù	We abide in the firm resolve to attain Buddhahood
2	The abode of nurturing	治地住 zhìdì zhù	We abide in preparing the mind-ground to practice the view of emptiness
3	The abode of practice	修行住 xiū xíng zhù	We abide in cultivating all good practices and the four wholesome roots of warmth, tipping point, patience, and highest worldly wisdom (四善根 sì shàngēn)
4	The abode of producing virtues	生貴住 shēng guì zhù	We abide peaceably in the principle of 'no-self' where the seed-natures are purified
5	The abode of being endowed with skillful means	具足方便住 jùzú fāngbiàn zhù	We abide in innumerable good roots, and use expedient means to aid in the view of emptiness
6	The abode of correct mind	正心住 zhèngxīn zhù	We abide in the completion of the wisdom of emptiness as found in the <i>Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras</i>
7	The abode of no-backsliding	不退住 bùtuì zhù	We abide wherein one does not retrogress from the experience of the three gates of liberation: wishlessness, signlessness, and emptiness (三解脫門 sān jiětuō mén)
8	The abode of the 'true child'	童真住 tóngzhēn zhù	We abide in being born into the Buddha-family, letting go of worldly cravings, and instead we abide where deluded views do not arise and where awakening does not cease
9	The abode of the dharma-prince	法王子住 fǎ wángzǐ zhù	We abide in producing wisdom in accordance with the Buddha's teaching, and being assured of becoming a Buddha in the future
10	The abode of lustration	灌頂住 guàndǐng zhù	We abide in being able to view the principles of signlessness & emptiness. (無相 wúxiàng, 空法 kōngfǎ)

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