



## **Essay Writing of Buddhas' Practice Incorporated**



**(Issue 7)**

### **The Relationship between Precepts and Cause and Effect**

**Instructor: Shi Wuguang**

**Author: Shi Fafu**

**December 20, 2021**

## Table of contents

I. Introduction .....	1
II. The relationship between precepts and cause and effect.....	2
(I) Definition and importance of precepts .....	2
i. The consequences of breaking and upholding the Four Fundamental Precepts .....	4
(II) The Law of Cause and Effect .....	18
III. The precepts of cause and effect of Wisdom Bodhisattva .....	20
IV. Conclusion .....	22
Reference Materials .....	24

---

## **I. Introduction**

Buddhism is the truth of life and the universe and consists of two aspects: the mind's substance (the everlasting true mind) and the use of the mind (cause and effect). In the collections of Buddhism (Sutra, Vinaya, and Treatises), the Buddha has taught various precepts. Only by truly understanding cause and effect can a monk, whether at home or outside, keep the precepts well and leave suffering and achieve happiness. Then, as a monk, in order to keep the precepts, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between precepts and cause and effect, so that one can keep the precepts with wisdom and purify them.

The methodology of this essay is based on the scriptures. Since the four fundamental precepts (not killing, not stealing, not being lustful, and not lying) are the fundamental precepts for monks, this essay uses the four fundamental precepts as examples to analyze the relationship between precepts and cause and effect. The main text is divided into three chapters.

I. Discuss the definition and importance of the precepts. Explain why it is important to keep the four fundamental precepts, the harm and suffering caused by not keeping them, and the benefits and happiness brought by keeping them.

II. Explain the rules of cause and effect. The first and second chapters naturally highlight the relationship between precepts and cause and effect.

III. Focusing on the precepts of cause and effect for the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, avoiding the creation of great misdeeds in the Bodhisattva of Wisdom.

The last part is the conclusion, which is mainly a summary of the previous chapters.

---

## II. The relationship between precepts and cause and effect

### (I) Definition and importance of precepts

Words and deeds based on bad karma, habits, and afflictions can spoil all good things and cause all suffering. Precepts are to help us get rid of these unlucky words and deeds. Without precepts, we will bear and suffer pain. If we want to get rid of suffering and find happiness, we must abide by precepts. In many scriptures, the Buddha emphasized the importance of precepts to achieve the supreme bodhi. Here are some definitions and importance of precepts from the scriptures, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

<b>Definition and Importance of Precepts</b>	<b>Scripture Basis</b>
The prevention of wrongdoing and the cessation of evil, the subduing and even the cutting off of vexations, and the attainment of the supreme Buddhahood	In Volume 7 of <i>The Sutra of the Precepts for Upasakas</i> : "Why is it called precepts? The precepts are called restraint, which can restrain all unwholesome dharmas, so they are named restraint. And those who revert to precepts are called narrow-mindedness. Although there are evil deeds, the nature cannot be tolerated, so it is called persecution. Those who have re-precepted are called coolness, and the heat of afflictions cannot be entered, so it is called cool. Those who have re-precepted are called superior, who can go to heaven and reach the supreme way, so they are called superior. It is also known as the study of precepts, which

	learns to subdue the mind and the roots of wisdom, so it is called the study. <sup>1</sup>
Making a vow is a precept	In Volume 7 of <i>The Sutra of the Precepts for Upasakas</i> : "There are two kinds of crimes committed by living beings: one is evil precepts, and the other is no precepts. A person who has taken the evil precept, though he kills a sheep, and when he does not kill, is always guilty of killing. Why? What is the reason for this? Because of the Vow. If a person does not have a vow, though he kills a thousand sheep, he will be offended when he kills them, but not be offended if he does not kill them. What is the reason? Because he does not make a vow. Therefore, the mind is the root of all good and bad deeds. " <sup>2</sup>
Precepts are the foundation of supreme bodhicitta	In Volume 6 of <i>the Flower Adornment Sutra</i> : "The precepts are the foundation of the supreme bodhi. If you can fully hold the pure precepts, all the Buddhas will praise you. " <sup>3</sup>
Precepts as a teacher	In the <i>Buddha's Suspended Nirvana Brief Teaching and Commandment Sutra</i> : "You bhikkhus, after my extinction, you should respect and cherish the Pratimoksha, just like the dark meets the light, and the poor get the treasure. You should know that this is your master. It would be no different if I lived in this world. " <sup>4</sup>
The precepts produce all	In the Buddha's Suspended Nirvana Brief

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Tan Wuchan: The Sutra of the Precepts for Upasakas Vol. 7, Taisho Collection vol.24, p. 1071.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by Tan Wuchan: The Sutra of the Precepts for Upasakas Vol. 7, Taisho Collection vol.24, p. 1069.

<sup>3</sup> Translated by Buddha Tuobadaluo: The Flower Adornment Sutra Vol. 6, Taisho Collection vol.9, p. 433.

<sup>4</sup> Translated by Kumarajiva : Buddha's Suspended Nirvana Brief Teaching and Commandment Sutra, Taisho Collection vol.12, p. 1110.

<p>merits and virtues, and leave suffering and obtain happiness</p>	<p>Teaching and Commandment Sutra: "The precepts are the foundation of righteousness and liberation, so it is called Pratimoksha. According to this precept, you can have all the meditations and the wisdom of extinguishing suffering. Therefore, Bhikkhu, you should hold the pure precepts. If one can keep the pure precepts, then there will be good dharmas; if there are no pure precepts, all good merits and virtues will not be born. Therefore, you should know that the precepts are the first place where merits and virtues reside. "<sup>5</sup></p>
---	--

From the table above, we can see that vows are precepts, the key to keeping precepts is the root, and true precepts require yearning for precepts. It is very important to uphold the pure precepts. It is the ardent teaching of the Buddha and the display of the wisdom of the Buddha. It can prevent wrongdoing, stop evil, eliminate afflictions, generate various merits, get rid of suffering and achieve happiness, and even achieve supreme Bodhi.

### **i. The consequences of breaking and upholding the Four Fundamental Precepts**

As we know the importance of the precepts, it is even more important for a monk to strictly uphold the precepts. In particular, the four fundamental precepts of a monk (not to kill, not to steal, not to lust, and not to lie) are the fundamental precepts of a monk and are the foundation for the growth of all goodness and should never be broken.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Translated by Kumarajiva: Buddha's Suspended Nirvana Brief Teaching and Commandment Sutra Taisho Collection vol.12, p. 1111.

<sup>6</sup> Translated by Xuanzang: The Mahayana Sutra of the Great Assembly of Ti-tsang's Ten Wheels Vol. 3, Taisho Collection vol.13, p. 738.

---

In the *Mahayana Sutra of the Great Assembly of Ti-tsang's Ten Wheels*, Volume 3, it is recorded that,

What are the fundamental nondependent deeds? If a bhikkhu commits a fundamental offense by doing something other than pure conduct or commits a fundamental offense by thinking of killing a different kind of being or commits a fundamental offense by stealing something other than the Three Jewels or commits a fundamental offense by making a false speech. If a bhikkhu commits any one of these four fundamental sins, he or she will not be allowed to receive any of the bhikkhu's works, nor will he or she be allowed to receive any of the monastic objects given to the monks. And they shall not be scourged, or imprisoned, or scolded, or broken, or their lives cut short. These are the fundamental sins among the sexual sins, and they are not dependent on the Dharma. Why are they called fundamental sins? It is said that if a person commits these four sins, he will fall into all the evil paths at the end of his life, which is the fundamental sin of all the evil paths.<sup>7</sup>

A monk who breaks the four fundamental precepts cannot be considered a true monk. It is like a man whose head has been cut off, for he is already dead. A monk who has broken the Four Fundamental Precepts is not allowed to share the monastic goods, and after death, he or she will fall into the evil path. Based on this, the author will discuss the Four Fundamental Precepts and discuss how keeping the precepts will lead to happiness and freedom from suffering, while not keeping the precepts will lead to suffering. The following is a list of the consequences of breaking and keeping the Four Fundamental Precepts from the scriptures, as shown in Table 2-5:

---

<sup>7</sup> Translated by Xuanzang: *The Mahayana Sutra of the Great Assembly of Ti-tsang's Ten Wheels* Vol. 3, Taisho Collection vol.13, p. 737.

**Table 2.**

<b>The retribution of killing</b>	<b>The retribution of not killing</b>	<b>Contrasting conclusions</b>
<p>In Volume 6 of <i>The Shurangama Sutra</i>, "If beings in the six paths of any mundane world had no thoughts of killing, they would not have to undergo a continual succession of births and deaths. Your basic purpose in cultivating Samadhi is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you do not renounce your thoughts of killing, you will not be able to get out of the dust. Even though people may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Dhyana Samadhi, they are certain to enter the path of spirits if they do not cease killing. At best, they will become ghosts of great strength. on the average, they will become flying yakshas, ghost leaders, or the like; at the lowest level, they will become earth-bound rakshasas. These ghosts and spirits all have their followers. Each claims that</p>	<p><i>The discourse on the ten wholesome ways of action,</i> " if one gives up killing, one will accomplish ten ways of being free from vexations. What are the ten?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. One give universally to all beings without fear.</li> <li>ii. One always has a heart of great compassion towards all beings.</li> <li>iii. All habitual ten dances of hate in oneself will be cut off forever.</li> <li>iv. One's body is always free from illness.</li> <li>v. One's life is long.</li> <li>vi. One is constantly protected by non-human beings.</li> <li>vii. One is always without bad dreams; one sleeps and wakes happily.</li> <li>viii. The entanglement of enmity is eradicated and one is free from all hatred.</li> <li>ix. One is free from the dread of evil destinies.</li> </ol>	<p><b>If you kill, you will not be able to get out of vexation and dust, you will fall into the path of the gods, you will be born in the three evil paths, you will be sickly, short-lived, poor, and suffer all kinds of evil consequences and pains; if you don't kill, you will bring the corresponding good consequences and happiness such as free life.</b></p>



<p>he has accomplished the Unsurpassed Way.<sup>8</sup></p>	<p>x. When one's life comes to an end one will be born as a deva.</p>	
<p><i>Sutra of Receiving the Ten Virtuous Precepts</i>, "The karma of killing lives in the hell, even if you suffer again, this is called Huabao; when you are born among human beings, you will be sick and short-lived; if you are reborn among all sentient beings in the four births, you will suffer all kinds of suffering, which are immeasurable, boundless and incalculable.<sup>10</sup></p>	<p>These are the ten. If one who is able to turn-towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time one becomes Buddha attain to the ability peculiar to the Buddha, to live as long as one wishes.<sup>9</sup></p>	
<p>In Volume 3 of the <i>Upasaka Precepts Sutra</i>, "All sentient beings have now acquired evil looks, evil power, notoriety, short life, diminished property, separation of relatives, reprimand by sages, people who do not trust, and others who commit crimes because of killing. Its calamity: it is called the fruit of evil karma in the present. If you give up this</p>		

<sup>8</sup> Translated by Emperor Pramita: The Shurangama Sutra Vol. 6, Taisho Collection vol.19, p. 132.

<sup>9</sup> Translated by Shicha Nanda: The discourse on the ten wholesome ways of action, Taisho Collection vol.15, p. 158.

<sup>10</sup> Translated by Shiyi: Sutra of Receiving the Ten Virtuous Precept, Taisho Collection vol.24, p. 1025.

<p>body, you will fall into hell, where you will suffer a lot of suffering, hunger and thirst, long life, evil color, evil power, bad name, etc.: it is called the fruit of evil karma in future generations. If you get a human body, Suffering evil color, short life, and poverty. It is an evil person who causes all the grains and fruits outside to decrease, and this is a disaster that affects the whole world.<sup>11</sup></p>		
<p>In Volume 2 of <i>The Sutra spoken by the Great Sathya Nikaya</i>: "The crime of killing can cause all living beings to fall into hell, animals, and hungry ghosts. If they are reborn as humans, they will get two kinds of retribution: one, short life; two, many diseases."<sup>12</sup></p>		

**Table 3.**

<b>The retribution of stealing</b>	<b>The retribution of not stealing</b>	<b>Contrasting conclusions</b>
------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------

<sup>11</sup> Translated by Tan Wuchan: *Upasaka Precepts Sutra*, Vol. 3, Taisho Collection vol.24, p. 1048.

<sup>12</sup> Translated by Bodhiliuzhi: *The Sutra spoken by the Great Sathya Nikaya*, Vol. 2, Taisho Collection vol.09, p. 328.

<p>In the volume 6 of <i>the Shurangama Sutra</i> if beings in the six paths of any mundane world had no thoughts of stealing, they would not have to undergo a continuous succession of births and deaths. Your basic purpose in cultivating Samadhi is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you do not renounce your thoughts of stealing, you will not be able to get out of the dust. Even though people may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Dhyana Samadhi, they are certain to enter a deviant path if they do not cease stealing. At best, they will become spirits; on the average, they will become evil ghosts; at the lowest level, they will become deviant people who are possessed by various sprites. These deviant hordes all have their followers. Each claims that he has</p>	<p>In the sutra of <i>the discourse on the ten wholesome ways of action</i> if one gives up stealing then one will attain to ten kinds of dharmas which can protect one's confidence. what are the ten?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. One's wealth will increase and accumulate and cannot be scattered or destroyed by Kings, robbers, floods, fires, and careless sons.</li> <li>ii. One is thought of with fondness by many people.</li> <li>iii. People do not take advantage of one.</li> <li>iv. Everywhere one is praised.</li> <li>v. One is above the worry, that one oneself could be injured.</li> <li>vi. One's good name spreads.</li> <li>vii. One is without fear in public.</li> <li>viii. One is endowed with wealth, long life, strength, peace, happiness, and skill in speech, without deficiencies</li> <li>ix. One always thinks of</li> </ol>	<p><b>Stealing will bring: not being able to get out of the vexation and dust, falling into the evil path, being born in the three evil paths, always suffering in the body, having sorrow in the heart, sharing wealth, and suffering all kinds of evil fruits and pains; not stealing will bring: having great wealth and other corresponding good fruits and happiness.</b></p>
---	--	--

<p>accomplished the Unsurpassed Way.<sup>13</sup></p>	<p>giving. x. At the end of one's life, one will be born as a deva. These are the ten. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time one becomes Buddha, attain to the realization of the purified great illumination wisdom.<sup>14</sup></p>	
<p>In the volume 1 of Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva: Beings who steal the wealth and property of the Eternally Dwelling, including its grains, food and drink, and clothing, or who take anything at all that was not given to them, will fall into the Relentless Hell where for thousands of billions of eons they will seek escape in vain.<sup>15</sup></p>	<p>In the volume 50: <i>Mahāvaiṣṭya Mahāsaṃnipāta Sūtra</i> "When one is far from the cause of theft, one obtains ten kinds of virtues. What are these ten? One, having great wealth and rewards; two, not sharing with others; three, not sharing with five families; four, being loved and respected by all; five, traveling to ten places without doubts; six,</p>	
<p>In Volume 3 of the <i>Upasaka Precepts</i>: If a person delights in stealing, he also receives bad color, bad power, bad</p>	<p>walking without fear; seven, always happy to give; eight, not asking for wealth and treasure to get it naturally and quickly;</p>	

<sup>13</sup> Translated by Emperor Pramita: Shurangama Sutra Vol. 6, Taisho Collection vol.19, p. 132.

<sup>14</sup> Translated by Shicha Nanda: The discourse on the ten wholesome ways of action, Taisho Collection vol.15, p. 158.

<sup>15</sup> Translated by Shicha Nanda: the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva vol.1 Taisho Collection vol.13, p. 780.

<p>name, short life, loss of wealth, separation of family members, and suspicion when others lose their goods. After giving up this body, one falls into hell, and receives bad color, bad power, bad name, hunger, thirst, distress, and long life: this is the fruit of bad karma in the next life. If a person is poor in possessions, though he gains and losses, and is not loved by his parents, brothers, or wife, he is always suffering, and his heart is troubled. This is the cause and effect of an evil person, and all people are not allowed to eat and lie in color.<sup>17</sup></p>	<p>nine, giving when one gets wealth; ten, being born in a good way. When he has attained bodhicitta, the land of the Buddha will be filled with all kinds of flowers and fruit trees, clothes and snuff-bottle objects, and all kinds of precious treasures.<sup>16</sup></p>	
<p>In Volume 2 of <i>The Sutra spoken by the Great Sathya Nikaya</i>: The sin of stealing also causes sentient beings to fall into hell, animals, and hungry ghosts, and if they are born, they receive two kinds of rewards: first,</p>		

<sup>17</sup> Translated by Tan Wuchan: *Upasaka Precepts Sutra*, Vol. 3, Taisho Collection vol.24, p. 1048.

<sup>16</sup> Translated by Tan Wuchan: *Mahāvaiṣṭya Mahāsaṃnipāta Sūtra*, Vol. 50, Taisho Collection vol.13, p. 333-334.

poverty; second, commonwealth, and no freedom. <sup>18</sup>		
--	--	--

**Table 4.**

<b>The retribution of sexual acts</b>	<b>The retribution of not sexual acts</b>	<b>Contrasting conclusions</b>
<i>In the volume 6 of the Shurangama Sutra, If beings in the six paths of any mundane world had no sexual desire, they would not have to undergo a continual succession of births and deaths. Your basic purpose in cultivating Samadhi is to transcend the wearisome defilements. But if you do not renounce sexual desire, you will not be able to get out of the dust. Even though people may have some wisdom and the manifestation of Dhyana Samadhi, if they do not exterminate sexual desire, they are certain to enter demonic paths. At best, they will become demon kings; on the average, they will become members of the retinue of demons; at the lowest level, they will become female demons. These demons all have</i>	<i>In the volume 9 of the Shurangama Sutra, all those in the world who cultivate their hearts. but do not avail themselves of Dhyana and so have no wisdom, can only control their bodies so as to not engage in sexual desire. Whether walking or sitting, or in their thoughts, they are totally devoid of it. Since they do not give rise to defiling love, they do not remain in the realm of desire. These people, in response to their thought, take on the bodies of Brahma beings. Such beings are in the Heaven of the Multitudes of</i>	<b>Lust is a pit of fire, which can produce all kinds of sins, which will bring: unable to escape from troubles and dust, fall into the magic way, give birth to the three evil ways, be the root of all sins, and suffer all kinds of evil results and pain; without lust, you will: be born in the realm of form , or even</b>

<sup>18</sup> Translated by Bodhiliuzhi: The Sutra spoken by the Great Sathya Nikaya, Vol. 2, Taisho Collection vol.09, p. 328.

<p>their groups of disciples. Each claims that he has accomplished the Unsurpassed Way. <sup>19</sup></p>	<p>Brahma."</p>	<p><b>a higher level of heaven and other corresponding good fruits and happiness.</b></p>
<p><i>In the volume 8 of the Shurangama Sutra</i>, the first consists of the habit of lustful intercourse which gives rise to mutual rubbing. When this rubbing continues without cease, it activates a tremendous raging fire, just as warmth arises between a person's hands when he rubs them together. Because these two habits set each other ablaze, there come into being the Iron Bed, the Copper Pillar, and other such experiences. Therefore, the Tathagatas of the ten directions look upon the act of lust and name it the 'fire of desire.' Bodhisattvas avoid desire as they would a fiery pit." <sup>21</sup></p>	<p>"In those whose hearts of desire have already been cast aside, the mind apart from desire manifests. They delight in following the precepts. Practicing Brahma virtue at all times, such beings are in the Heaven of the Ministers of Brahma." "Those whose bodies and minds are wonderfully perfect, and whose majestic deportment is not in the least deficient, are pure in the precepts and have a thorough understanding of them as well. Governing the Brahma multitudes as</p>	
<p><i>The Sutra of Receiving the Ten Virtuous Precepts</i>: "Sex misconduct is extremely heavy and unchained, like an old elephant, drowning in the mud of five desires, and it is</p>	<p>Great Brahma Lords, such beings are in the Great Brahma Heaven."<sup>20</sup></p>	

<sup>19</sup> Translated by Emperor Pramita: Shurangama Sutra Vol. 6, Taisho Collection vol.19, p. 131.

<sup>20</sup> Translated by Emperor Pramita: Shurangama Sutra Vol. 6, Taisho Collection vol.19, p. 146.

<sup>21</sup> Translated by Emperor Pramita: Shurangama Sutra Vol. 6, Taisho Collection vol.19, p. 143.

generally the root of all crimes." <sup>22</sup>		
--	--	--

**Table 5.**

<b>The retribution of lying</b>	<b>The retribution of not lying</b>	<b>Contrasting conclusions</b>
In the volume 6 of <i>the Shurangama Sutra</i> , although beings in the six paths of any mundane world may not kill, steal, or lust either physically or mentally, these three aspects of their conduct thus being perfect, if they tell various major lies, then the Samadhi they attain will not be pure. They will become demons of love and views and will lose the seed of the Tathagata. They claim that they have attained what they have not attained, and that they have been certified when they have not been certified. Perhaps they seek to be foremost in the world, most venerated and superior people. They announce to their audiences that	In the sutra of <i>the discourse on the ten wholesome ways of action</i> , if one gives up lying then one will attain to the eight dharmas which are praised by the devas. What are the eight? i. One's mouth is always pure and has the fragrance of a blue lotus flower. ii. One is trusted and obeyed by all the world. iii. What one says is true and one is loved by men and devas. iv. One always comforts beings with loving words. v. One attains to excellent bliss of mind and one's actions, speech, and thoughts are pure. vi. One's speech is faultless and one's mind is always joyful. vii. One's words are respected and are followed by men and devas. viii. One's wisdom is	<b>Lying will make all the people and things you like become false. You can't get rid of troubles and dust, your meditation can't be pure, your good roots will be cut off, you will be born in the three evil ways, people will not believe you, you will be slandered, deceived, and suffer all kinds of evil results and pain; if you don't lie, you</b>

<sup>22</sup> Translated by Shi: *The Sutra of Receiving the Ten Virtuous Precepts*, vol. 24, Dazheng Store p. 1026.



<p>they have attained the fruition of a Shrotaapanna, of a Sakridagamin, of an Anagamin, of Arhatship, of the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, or the various levels of Bodhisattva hood up to and including the Ten Bhumi stages, in order to cause others to revere and repent in front of them and because they are greedy for offerings. These icchantikas destroy the seeds of Buddhahood just as surely as a tala-tree is destroyed if it is chopped down. The Buddha predicts that such people cut off their good roots forever and lose their knowledge and vision. Immersed in the sea of the Three Sufferings, they cannot attain Samadhi."<sup>23</sup></p>	<p>extraordinary and cannot be subdued These are the eight. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time one becomes Buddha, attain to the true speech of the Tathagata.<sup>24</sup></p>	<p><b>will bring the truth , It makes people believe in the corresponding good fruits and happiness.</b></p>
<p>In the volume 8 of <i>the Shurangama Sutra</i>, Good Stars recklessly</p>		

<sup>23</sup> Translated by Emperor Pramita: Shurangama Sutra Vol. 6, Taisho Collection vol.19, p. 132.

<sup>24</sup> Translated by Shicha Nanda: The discourse on the ten wholesome ways of action Taisho Collection vol.15, p. 158.

<p>said that all dharmas are empty. They both sank into the Unintermittent Hell alive.<sup>25</sup></p>		
<p>In Volume 3 of <i>the Upasaka Precepts</i>: "If there are people who are willing to tell lies, they will speak harshly and look badly. The retribution of karma. Give up this body, go to hell, suffer great suffering, hunger, thirst and heat: this is called the retribution of evil karma in later generations. If you get a human body, your words are not enough, and although what you say is true, people will not believe it, and those who see it will not Pleasure, although the righteous Dharma is spoken, people do not like to hear it. It is because of a wicked person's karma and power that all foreign assets decrease."<sup>26</sup></p>		

<sup>25</sup> Translated by Emperor Pramita: Shurangama Sutra Vol. 8, Taisho Collection Store vol.19, p. 143.

<sup>26</sup> Translated by Tan Wuchan: Upasaka Precepts Sutra, Vol. 3, Taisho Collection vol.24, p. 1048.

<p>In Volume 2 of <i>the Sutra spoken by the Great Sathya Nikaya</i>: "The crime of lying also makes all living beings fall into hell, animals, and hungry ghosts. If they are born among humans, they will get two kinds of retribution: one, they are often slandered by others; two, often deceived by others."<sup>27</sup></p>		
<p>In the <i>sutra of the Buddha's Explanation for the Layman Śuka of Distinctions in Karmic Retribution</i> : Because of the karma of lying, you will be induced by external things, and they will all be smelly and filthy.<sup>28</sup></p>		

From Tables 2-5 above, it is clear from the Four Fundamental Precepts that failure to observe the precepts brings bad rewards such as suffering and bad luck, while observance brings good rewards such as benefit and happiness. The law of cause and effect remains unchanged regardless of whether one keeps the precepts or not. Even if a Buddha becomes a Buddha, he will still suffer from headaches, which shows the reality of karma. For example, in the Sutra of the Buddha on the Causes

<sup>27</sup> Translated by Bodhiliuzhi: *The Sutra spoken by the Great Sathya Nikaya*, Vol. 2, Taisho Collection vol.09, p. 328.

<sup>28</sup> Translated by Fazhi: *The Sutra of the Buddha's Explanation for the Layman Śuka of Distinctions in Karmic Retribution*, Taisho Collection vol.01, p. 894.

---

of Headaches, the Buddha said that when he was a child in the past, he beat the head of a fish with wood, which caused him to fall into hell for countless years. After becoming a Buddha, when Liuli King destroyed the Sakya clan, the Buddha also had a headache for three days.<sup>29</sup>

If you do not keep the precept to kill, you will suffer the fruit of short life.<sup>30</sup> If you save a life, especially a life in a blessed place, you will suffer the fruit of immortality. It is written in the Hegata Sutra that Hegata saved the life of a blessed person in the past and was not killed when he jumped off a cliff, jumped into a river, drank poison, or was shot by an arrow.<sup>31</sup>

Everyone in the world wants to get rid of suffering and gain happiness. If you don't keep the precepts at the moment, you will correspond to the afflictions. If you indulge the afflictions, you will plant evil causes, create evil karma, and cause endless suffering. The moment of observing the precepts is to correspond with wisdom. When the afflictions are dealt with, good causes will be planted, good karma will be created, and infinite happiness will be brought. Only by observing the precepts can we truly escape suffering and obtain happiness.

## **( II ) The Law of Cause and Effect**

Cause and effect is the law of irony, whether you know or do not know cause and effect, the consequences are to suffer. There are three laws of cause and effect:

First, what cause, what effect, cause and effect is exactly the same.

---

<sup>29</sup> Translated by Kang Meng-xiang: Buddha Talks on the Rising and Practicing Sutra, vol. 1, Taisho Collection, vol. 04, p. 167.

<sup>30</sup> Translated by Kang Meng-xiang: Buddha Talks on the Rising and Practicing Sutra, vol. 1, Taisho Collection, vol. 04, p. 167.

<sup>31</sup> Translated by Shicha Nanda: Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva, vol. 1, Taisho Collection, vol. 04, p. 355-356.

---

In The Sutra of the Magi, the Buddha preached many stories of cause and effect. For example, in one of the Sutras, "The Subtle Bhikkhuni", it was said that the Subtle Bhikkhuni had created bad karma out of jealousy and made bad vows in the past, and eventually the bad consequences of suffering were manifested in herself. However, because she had made offerings to the saint of the rudiments and made good vows to become an Arhat, she also became an Arhat when she met her karmic counterpart. Although she attained Arahantship, she still suffers the unfinished consequences of the past.<sup>32</sup> It can be seen that the vows are planting the causes, and everything that sentient beings feel is "karmically induced", which is also the "discovery of karma" as stated in the Sutra of the Foremost Shurangama at the Great Buddha's Summit Replete with the Myriad Practices (later referred to as the Shurangama Sutra)<sup>33</sup>. What karma you have created, you have to suffer the consequences.

Second, the cause is small, and the fruit is big. Another example is the *Sea God Difficult to Ask about the Character of a Boat* in the *Sutra of the Wise and the Fool*: "If there is a man, he can use a scoop of water to make offerings to the Buddha with faith, or to give to monks, or to serve his parents, or to be poor, and to give to animals. , the merits and virtues of this are inexhaustible."<sup>34</sup> It can be seen that the cause of the seed is simple and subtle at the beginning, and the time of the result is extremely complex and large.

Third, sow now and reap later. In volume 57 of *the Maharatnakuta Sutra*, it is said: "If after a hundred kalpas, the work does not perish, when the karma meets, the retribution will be repaid."<sup>35</sup> Once the karma meets, the retribution cannot be escaped.

From the law of cause and effect, it can be known that no matter whether good or bad karma is done, when the karma is sufficient, the

---

<sup>32</sup> Translated by Huijue etc.: The Sutra of the Wise and the Fool, Vol. 3, Taisho Collection, vol. 04, p. 368.

<sup>33</sup> Translated by Emperor Pramita: The Shurangama Sutra Vol. 3, Taisho Collection vol.19, p. 117.

<sup>34</sup> Translated by Huijue etc.: The Sutra of the Wise and the Fool, Vol. 01 Taisho Collection, Vol. 04, p. 355.

<sup>35</sup> Translated by Yijing: The Maharatnakuta Sutra, Vol. 57 Taisho Collection, Vol. 11, p. 335.

---

result will be received by oneself.

To sum up, as mentioned in the previous two sections, all living beings create good and bad karma, and according to the law of cause and effect, there will be bitter and happy results. According to the wisdom of cause and effect, one can accurately know the law of suffering and happiness. Precepts can prevent wrongdoing and stop evil, cut off evil and do good, and cut off troubles. Follow the wisdom of cause and effect and strictly abide by the precepts, you will be able to get rid of suffering and achieve happiness, and even achieve the supreme Buddha way. This naturally presents the relationship between precepts and cause and effect.

### **III. The precepts of cause and effect of Wisdom Bodhisattva**

In Buddhism, there are Bodhisattvas of Precepts, Bodhisattvas of Concentration, and Bodhisattvas of Wisdom. Among them, Bodhisattva of Wisdom is easily despised and slandered by all living beings. Because they start with wisdom, on the surface they seem dissolute and unruly, but in fact their precepts are very pure. For example, in *the Vimalakirti Sutra*, Vimalakirti often went to the streets, brothels, taverns, and other places, but all of these places were his place of ashram, and all sentient beings were the objects of his teaching, and no sentient being was left unsaved wherever he went.<sup>36</sup> There is also Master Huike<sup>37</sup>, the second patriarch of Zen Buddhism. There are many Bodhisattvas of Wisdom and Practice, but it is difficult for ordinary sentient beings to accept and recognize them. You must know that the Bodhisattva of Wisdom is the most excellent. If you don't obey the precepts on the surface, the precepts will be fulfilled naturally. They break through ignorance directly, strive for quick enlightenment, and use the help of troubles to fuel wisdom to grow bigger and bigger. Although the habit of affliction has not been eradicated, he

---

<sup>36</sup> Translated by Kumarajiva: *The Vimalakirti Sutra*, Vol. 1 Taisho Collection, Vol. 14, p. 539.

<sup>37</sup> Collected of Puji: *Five Lantern Festivals*, Vol. 1 New Continuation Collection, Vol. 80, p. 44.

---

has the wisdom to control the habit of affliction and reach the key to the formation of karma: "All good and bad Dharma mind is the root" and will not create bad karma.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, it can also take advantage of troubles to accompany all beings, form good karma, and benefit all beings. As stated in Volume 91 of The Great Treasure Accumulation Sutra:

Maitreya! The wisdom bodhisattva is also like this. He is not cut off from the habits of greed, hatred, and ignorance, and he is also different from the rest of the dull bodhisattvas. What is the reason for this? His mind is not covered with vexation, unlike the dull bodhisattvas, etc. The dull bodhisattva has no skill and is the same as all mortals who cannot leave. Maitreya! The Bodhisattva of Wisdom is able to destroy all serious sins by the power of wisdom and does not fall into the path of evil because of them. Maitreya! For example, when a man throws wood into a great fire, he adds to it several times. And when he has added to it, the flame becomes more and more energetic and brighter without end. Maitreya! In the same way, the Bodhisattva of wisdom burns the fire of wisdom with the fire of vexation and adds to the wood of vexation several times. After such additions, the fire of wisdom grows brighter and brighter without end. Maitreya! As such, the power of wisdom of the Wisdom Bodhisattva is difficult to comprehend.<sup>39</sup>

From the above scriptures, we can see that the heart of Wisdom Bodhisattva will not be covered by afflictions, and all their serious sins can be destroyed with the power of wisdom, and they will not fall into the evil realm because of these things. They can use the fire of wisdom to burn the firewood of troubles, and the fire of wisdom will become more and more prosperous, without end. It is difficult to know the wisdom, skillful and expedient methods of Bodhisattva Wisdom, so it is

---

<sup>38</sup> Translated by Tan Wuchan: Upasaka Precepts Sutra, Vol. 7, Taisho Collection vol.24, p. 1069.

<sup>39</sup> Translated by Bodhi Liu Zhi: The Great Treasure Accumulation Sutra, Vol. 91, Taisho Collection vol.11, p. 523.

---

impossible to judge whether the precepts of Bodhisattva Wisdom are pure from the appearance. Another example is the good teacher mentioned in *the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, although the affliction and dust work appear on the outside, but the heart is always pure.<sup>40</sup> This principle is also interpreted in *the Shurangama Sutra*: after the Buddha commanded the extinction, the bodhisattva arhat should appear in response to the roots of all living beings, and even with his colleagues, they would do things such as killing, stealing and prostitution on the surface, but they praised the Buddha's vehicle and guided them. All sentient beings enter the Buddha's vehicle and meditate, and there is absolutely no lust, anger and ignorance in their hearts.<sup>41</sup> Wisdom Bodhisattva has thoroughly understood the principle of karma and is keeping the pure precepts according to the wisdom of cause and effect.

## IV. Conclusion

This essay takes the four root precepts kept by monks as an example, and analyzes and discusses by clarifying that failure to observe the four root precepts will bring painful retribution, keeping the four root precepts will bring peace and happiness, and the three laws related to cause and effect. The relationship between precepts and cause and effect, and finally deduced the conclusion: suffering and happiness come from cause and effect, because there is the law of cause and effect, there is a reward of suffering and happiness. According to the law of cause and effect, there is pain brought about by non-observance of precepts, and happiness brought about by observance of precepts. Because the law of cause and effect is like this, the precepts are the outflow of the wisdom of the Buddha, and only by observing the precepts according to the wisdom of cause and effect can we achieve the goal of getting rid of suffering and gaining happiness. At the same time, it also specifically mentioned the karmic precepts of Wisdom Bodhisattva, so as to prevent us from misjudging

---

<sup>40</sup> Translated by Buddha Doro: Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment, Taisho Collection, vol.17, p. 1069.

<sup>41</sup> Translated by Emperor Pramita: Shurangama Sutra Vol. 6, Taisho Collection vol.19, p. 132.



---

Bodhisattva from the surface and creating extremely bad karma.

The relationship between precepts and cause and effect discussed in this article is only a list of the four fundamental precepts that monks should observe among the many precepts. I have not analyzed the relationship between the precepts and cause and effect, nor have I gone into detail and the logical deduction also lacked levels and strength. I hope that there will be more comprehensive, in-depth and meticulous research and sublimation in the future.

---

## Reference Materials

### I. Ancient texts (in chronological order of dynasties)

[Later Han] Translated by Kang Meng-xiang: Buddha Talks on the Rising and Practicing Sutra, Taisho Collection, vol. 04.

[Eastern Jin] Translated by Buddha Tuobadalu: The Flower Adornment Sutra, Taisho Collection vol.9.

[Later Han] Translated by Kumarajiva : Buddha's Suspended Nirvana Brief Teaching and Commandment Sutra, Taisho Collection vol.12.

[Later Qin] Translated by Kumarajiva: The Vimalakirti Sutra, Taisho Collection, Vol. 14.

[Northern Liang] Translated by Tan Wuchan: Upasaka Precepts Sutra, Taisho Collection vol.24.

[Northern Liang] Translated by Tan Wuchan: Mahāvaipulya Mahāsaṃnipāta Sūtra, Taisho Collection vol.13.

[Yuan Wei] Translated by Bodhiliuzhi: The Sutra spoken by the Great Sathya Nikaya, Taisho Collection vol.09.

[Yuan Wei] Translated by Huijue etc.: The Sutra of the Wise and the Fool, Taisho Collection, Vol. 04.

[Sui]Translated by Fazhi: The Sutra of the Buddha's Explanation for the Layman Śuka of Distinctions in Karmic Retribution, Taisho Collection vol.01.

[Tang]Translated by Xuanzang: the Mahayana Sutra of the Great Assembly of Ti-tsang's Ten Wheels, Taisho Collection vol.13.

[Tang]Translated by Emperor Pramita: The Shurangama Sutra Vol. 6, Taisho Collection vol.19.

[Tang]Translated by Emperor Pramita: Shurangama Sutra, Taisho Collection Store vol.19.

[Tang]Translated by Shicha Nanda: The discourse on the ten wholesome ways of action, Taisho Collection vol.15.

---

[Tang]Translated by Shicha Nanda: Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva, Taisho Collection vol.13.

[Tang] Translated by Yijing: The Maharatnakuta Sutra, Taisho Collection, vol.11.

[Tang] Translated by Bodhi Liuzhi: "The Great Treasure Accumulation Sutra, Taisho Collection, vol.11.

[Tang] Translated by Buddha Doro: Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment, Taisho Collection, vol.17.

[Song]Collected of Puji: Five Lantern Festivals, New Continuation Collection, Vol. 80.

Translated by Shiyi: Sutra of Receiving the Ten Virtuous Precept, Taisho Collection vol.24.