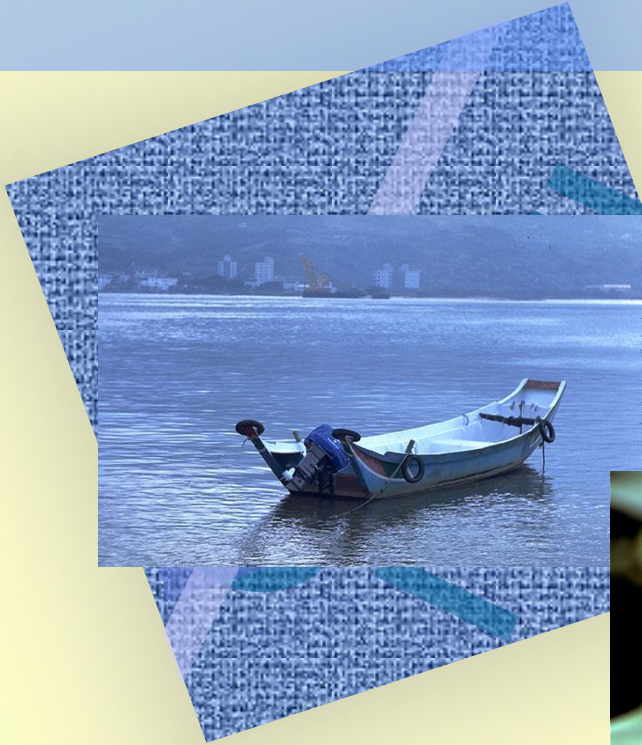


# An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics



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# ***Basis***

The simplest way to describe Buddhist ethics is:

*“Do all good, virtuous and benevolent things; and, do not do any bad, evil, wicked or vice things.”*

◆ Then, the remaining problems are:

*According to Buddhism, what is “good” and what is “bad” ?*

# A Basic Principle for a healthy mind

*Those things that can not leads to a peaceful, calm, tranquil, serene, placid, balanced and enlightened mind are “bad”.*

There are many status of the mind which are considered normal by western psychologists, such as emotions, are considered “unhealthy” or “malignant” to people’s mind by Buddhists.

*Daniel Goleman, Ph.D.  
In the Chinese translation version of  
“Mind Science” An East –West Dialogue,  
1995, p.150*

## ***Some Basic ideas of Buddhism***

- ◆ **Buddhist believes it is the mind/heart that controls people's behavior.**  
So, mind training is very important.
- ◆ **Buddhism is the way to show/teach people to be “good”.**
- ◆ **The ultimate “good” people is Buddha.**  
Buddha is completely enlightened.  
Any people can become a Buddha if he/she keeps on practicing Buddhism.

## ***Some Basic ideas of Buddhism***

- ◆ Buddhist should try to know the ultimate nature of the universe.

The ultimate nature of the universe is independent of time, space and can not be expressed in any kind of language system.

Only Buddha knows the ultimate nature of the universe.



# *Some Basic ideas of Buddhism*

- ◆ According to Buddhism, there are 51 observable status of the mind. About half of them are “no good”. Among them, there are three “bad” kernels or roots. The three bad roots are:

*Greedy, selfish...*

*Anger, bad temple...*

*Idiotic...*

➤ Including not knowing what one should know

- ◆ These three bad roots are the major fundamental causes that leads to bad behaviors.

# Fundamental Ethics of Buddhism

- ◆ Refuge, *a ritual that a person to be converted to Buddhism*

Believe in the three Jewels:

➤ *Buddha, Dharma, and Monk(teacher)*

- ◆ 5 forbidden things 五戒

No killing

No theft

No sex or no illegal sex

No lies

No wine



# Varieties of Commandments

- ◆ **There are varieties of commandments , such as 8/10 Commandments, for different class/level of Buddhists.**
- ◆ **All these Commandments are designed to eliminate the three bad roots described in the last slide.**





# The Code of Conduct

- ◆ The Code of Conduct of Buddhism varies from time to time as well as from place to place.

China, Japan, Tibet and the countries in East-southern Asia all have different kinds of code of conduct.

# Traditional *Vinaya* of Buddhism 律

◆ There two classes of *Vinaya*:

*Vinaya of h na-y na* 聲聞律儀

- This branch of Vinaya is popular in East-Southern Asia countries, such as Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Burma...

*Vinaya of mah -y na* 菩薩律儀

- 聲聞律儀 is included in 菩薩律儀
- More flexible, more coverage...

# *Vinaya*

- ◆ The purpose of *Vinaya* is to know afflictive emotions and then, to be able to control or eliminate afflictive emotions.



# Vinaya of *h na-y na* 聲聞律儀

## ◆ The Original Ethical Rules in Buddhism

## ◆ Various Codes of Conduct:

3(三皈)、5(五戒)、8(八戒) rules

➤ For believers at home

10(十戒)、6(六法)、250(比丘戒)、  
500(比丘尼戒) rules

➤ For monks and nuns



# *Vinaya of mah -y na* 菩薩律儀

- ◆ For all sentient beings
- ◆ According to “*Brahmaj la-sutta*(梵網六十二見經)”, there are 10 major rules and 48 general rules. Other sutras may show some variations compared with that of *Brahmaj la-sutta*.
- ◆ In general, all the rules can be classified into three categories:
  - Forbidden ones.....stop doing “bad”*
  - Virtuous ones.....practicing “Good”*
  - Benevolent ones for all sentient beings.....help all sentient beings*

# da aku ala-karm ni 十善道

## ◆ *Body:*

*No killing*

*No theft*

*No sex or no illegal sex for believers at home*

## ◆ *Language (mouth):*

*No Lies*

*No provoking*

*No scorn, no malicious words*

*No flattery*

## ◆ *Mind:*

*No Greedy, no selfish...*

*No Anger, no bad temple...*

*Not to be Idiotic...*

# *da aku ala-karm ni* 十善道

- ◆ *“da aku ala-karm ni 十善道” has become a common set of rules for all branches of “mah -y na 大乘” Buddhism parties developed in China, Japan, Tibet..., respectively.*

# Concluding Remarks

- ◆ **Buddhist believes it is the mind/heart of a people that controls his/her behavior.**

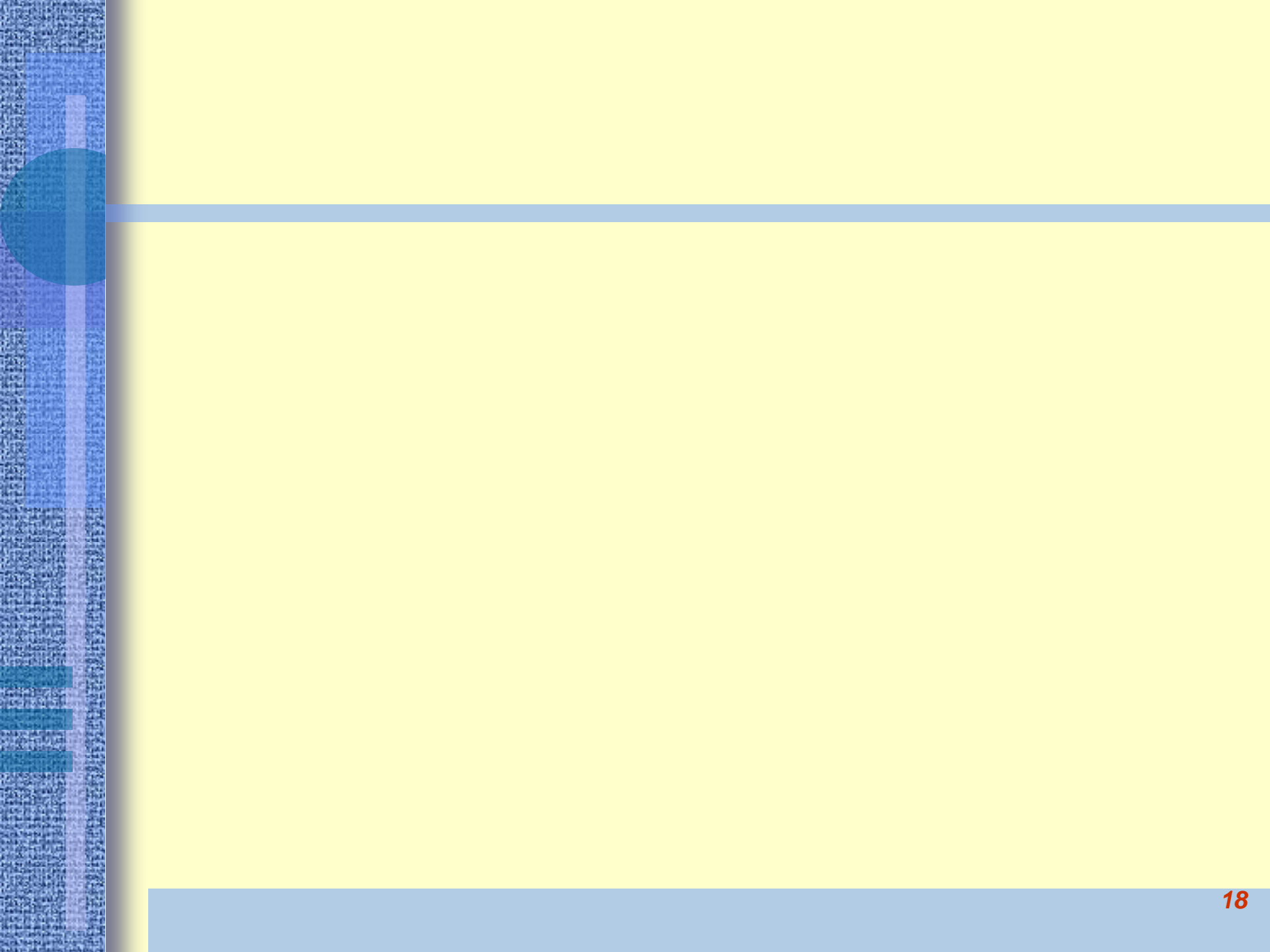
So, mind training or meditation become an important practice of Buddhism.

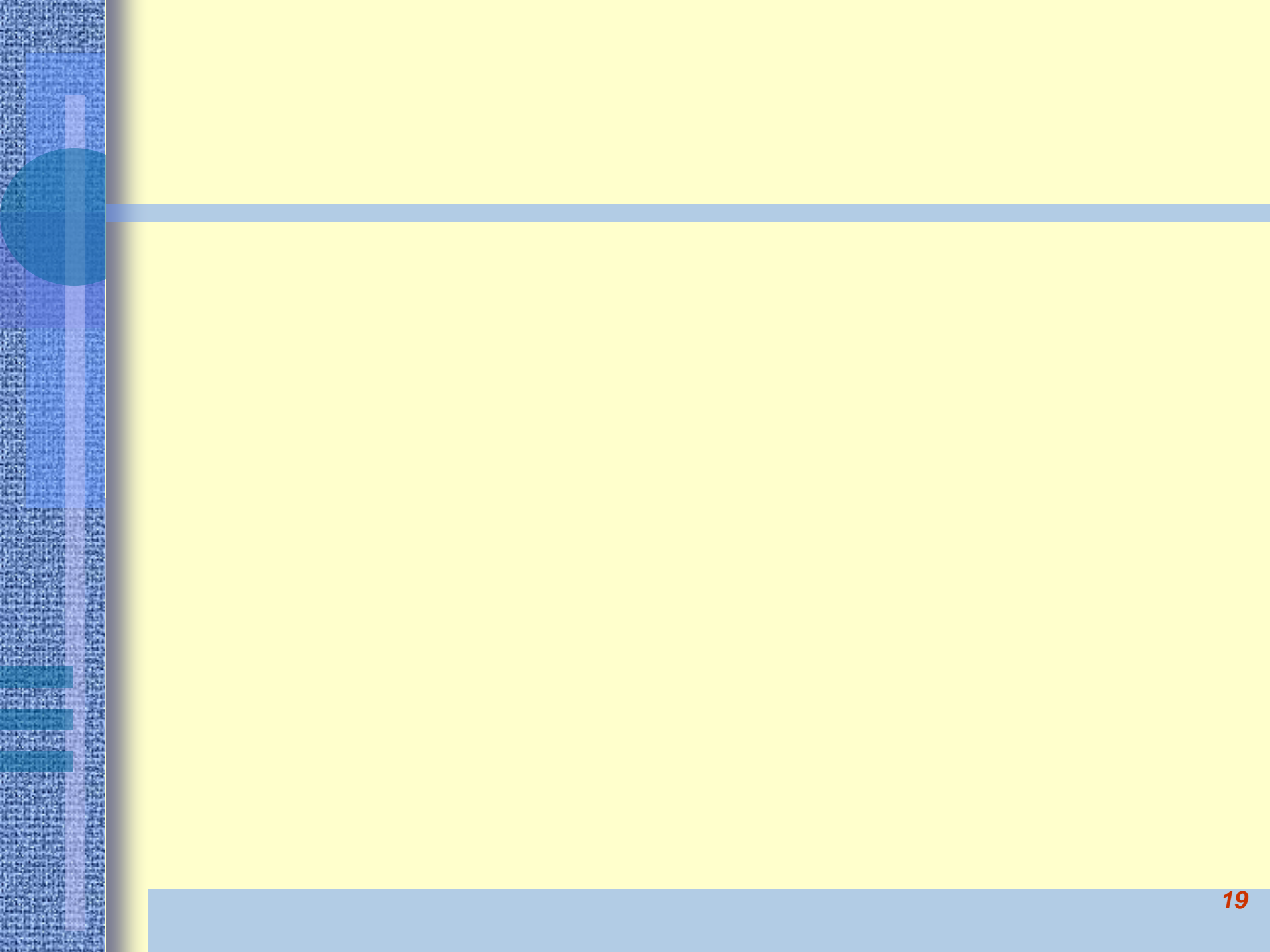
- ◆ **All the documents of Buddhism is somehow relevant to Buddhist Ethics. Because *the only simple goal* of Buddhism is to show/teach a person to become a Buddha, an completely enlightened person.**











***Thank you !***

