



# The Eight Precepts

*The Buddha encouraged his lay-followers to keep the Five Precepts (abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and taking intoxicants) for as long as life lasts. He also recommended that they follow some additional precepts as often as possible. These are known as the Uposatha Precepts, or simply the Eight Precepts. They are traditionally observed on the full-moon days (uposatha), but they can be taken at any time, for a whole day or just a few hours.*

*Following these extra precepts gives us the opportunity to practice some of the renunciation that monks and nuns follow every day. The precept on abstaining from sexual misconduct is changed to abstaining from any kind of sexual activity at all. The last three involve giving up other forms of enjoyment. We limit the food we eat by not taking solid food in the afternoon. We give up entertainment and beautifying our bodies. And we use only very simple furniture.*

*Giving up these things, even just temporarily, helps us to recognize and reduce our attachments. By spending time without these things, we have the opportunity to focus on practicing meditation and experiencing a happiness not based on material things.*

*We know that arahants, upon attaining enlightenment, give up these things completely. So, when we spend time following these training rules we can remember that we are imitating these great spiritual beings. When we understand the benefit of practicing in this way, we can be happy simply remembering the time that we have practiced with this extra dedication.*

Imitating great arahants,

1. I observe the precept of / abstaining from killing beings.
2. I observe the precept of / abstaining from stealing.
3. I observe the precept of / abstaining from incelibacy.
4. I observe the precept of / abstaining from telling lies.
5. I observe the precept of / abstaining from taking / intoxicating drinks and drugs.
6. I observe the precept of / abstaining from / eating at improper times.
7. I observe the precept of / abstaining from / dancing / singing / music / shows / wearing garlands / and beautifying with cosmetics.
8. I observe the precept of / abstaining from using / luxurious and comfortable / seats and beds.

Imitating great arahants, / I follow these precepts / for happiness in this life / for rebirth in heaven / and to realize the Four Noble Truths / in this Gautama Buddha's Dispensation.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!