1. Introduction

A peaceful society is a society without violence, without conflict, but the members of the society live harmoniously and help one another if there is trouble or problem.

The foundation for such a society, according to Buddhism, is the observation of the five precepts. When each and every member of the society can observe these five rules then the foundation for a peaceful society is laid down.

These five precepts advocated by the Buddha are as follows:
1. I undertake the precept to refrain from killing and harming life.
2. I undertake the precept to refrain from taking what is not given.
3. I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct.
4. I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech such as lying.
5. I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which make our mind unclear.

Personal Aspect
There are personal as well as of social values of these Five Precepts. Speaking from the personal aspect, these five precepts are the basis for one's spiritual development as told in the eightfold noble path:

- Wisdom 1. Right understanding, 2. Right thought,
- Ethical conduct 3. Right speech, 4. Right conduct, 5. Right livelihood,
- Mental cultivation 6. Right effort, 7. Right mindfulness, 8. Right concentration,

Here ethical conduct encompasses the five precepts: right conduct includes the first three and fifth precepts, right speech includes the fourth precept.

Social Aspect
From the social aspect, human beings are social beings and live in groups so we have to observe certain kind of basic code of discipline. Otherwise, the society would not be peaceful.

The observing the five precepts is the highest form of giving in Buddhism, giving of fearlessness. If one observes the five precepts, one is harmless to other people and to the society but contribute to make the society peaceful. If all the members of a society could observe the five precepts, the society they live in must be without any kind of violence.
The Abhisanda Sutta of the Anguttara Nikaya mentions five great gifts which have been held in high esteem by noble-minded men from ancient times. (A 8.39, PTS: A.iv,246; GS, iv. 167-9)

Now, there are these five gifts, five great gifts — original, long-standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated, unadulterated from the beginning — that are not open to suspicion, will never be open to suspicion, and are unfaulted by knowledgeable contemplatives & priests. Which five?

There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from taking life. In doing so, he gives freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings. In giving freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, freedom from oppression to limitless numbers of beings, he gains a share in limitless freedom from danger, freedom from animosity, and freedom from oppression. This is the first gift, the first great gift.

Furthermore, abandoning taking what is not given (stealing) ……. This is the second gift, the second great gift.

Furthermore, abandoning illicit sex, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from illicit sex ……. This is the third gift, the third great gift.

Furthermore, abandoning lying, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from lying ……. This is the fourth gift, the fourth great gift.

Furthermore, abandoning the use of intoxicants ……. This is the fifth gift, the fifth great gift.

And these reward of skillfulness, nourishment of happiness, celestial, resulting in happiness, leading to heaven, leading to what is desirable, pleasurable, & appealing; to welfare & to happiness.

Therefore, observance of the five precepts contributes to harmonious and peaceful coexistence among community members and consequently helps to promote social growth and development.

In a society where morality prevails and members are conscious of their roles, there will be general security, mutual trust, and close cooperation, these in turn leading to greater progress and prosperity.

Without morality there will be corruption and disturbance, and all members of society are adversely affected. Most of the problems that society experiences today are connected, directly or indirectly, with a lack of good morality.

On the other hand, the Buddhist moral precepts also serve as concrete guidelines to follow. Because morality always concern the issues of right and wrong, good and evil. For a moral life to be meaningful these issues must not remain mere theoretical principles, but translated into practice.
Good must be performed, evil must be given up. It is not enough to know what is good or evil, we also need to take proper action with respect to them as pointed out by Dr. Sunthorn Plamintr.

Voluntary Observation
These five moral precepts provide a wholesome foundation for personal and social growth. They are practical principles for a good life and the cultivation of virtues. If we understand the objectives of precepts (*sila*) and realize its benefits, we will see moral precepts as an integral part of life rather than as a burden that we are compelled to shoulder.

Buddhist moral precepts are not divine, not commandments imposed by force, but they are a course of training willingly undertaken in order to achieve a desired objective. Therefore, the Buddha always advised his disciples “You should observe these precepts”, not “you must observe them”.

So we do not practice to please a supreme being, but for our own good and the good of society. As individuals, we need to train in morality to lead a good and noble life. On the social level, we need to help maintain peace and harmony in society and facilitate the progress of the common good. The practice of moral precepts is essential in this regard.

Observance of the five precepts constitutes the minimum moral obligation of a practicing lay Buddhist. But from the social point of view, these five precepts are the common observance for all members of a particular society for harmony and peace.

The observance of the five precepts helps to promote peaceful coexistence, mutual trust, a cooperative spirit, and general peace and harmony in society. It also helps to maintain an atmosphere which is conducive to social progress and development, as we can see from the practical implications of each precept.

However, W. Pachow has put forward the suggestion that the rules of the *Patimokkha* (the rules of the monks) are a direct outgrowth of the Five Percepts. He said:

> It would not be unreasonable to say that the code of discipline of the Sangha is but an enlarged edition of the *pancasila* which have been adopted by the Buddhists and the Jains from the Brahmanical ascetics. And under various circumstances, they have developed subsidiary rules in order to meet various requirements on various occasions. This appears to us to be the line of development through which the growth of these rules could be explained. (A comparative study of the Pratimoksa. p.37)

**The First Precept: To refrain from killing and harming life**

Basic meaning
According to Buddhism, this precept means refraining from harming and taking of life. There are two canonical definitions of taking life.
(1) In many Suttas, it is said, “Cruelty, with bloody hand, intent in injury and killing, without mercy toward all animals.”

(2) According to Dhammika Sutta of Suttanipata, taking life has three aspects: (a) Killing an animal, (b) Getting someone to kill an animal, (c) Giving consent to kill an animal.

In Dhammika Sutta, the verse goes thus, "Let him not destroy life 自殺 or cause others to destroy life 他殺 and also not approve of others’ killing 見殺隨喜. Let him refrain from oppressing all living beings in the world, whether strong or weak.”

He himself takes life and encourages another to do so, approves of taking life and speaks in praise thereof. He himself abstains from taking life, encourages another to such abstinence, approves of such abstinence and speaks in praise thereof. (A.II.253)

Another translation: “Let him not kill, nor cause to be killed any living being, nor let him approve of others killing, after having refrained from hurting all creatures, both those that are strong and those that tremble in the world.” (Sn. 393)

Classification of life
There are three words indicating life in Pali: life (pāna), living being (satta) and animate nature (bhūta), but the meaning of these three words is same as jīva -- someone who has life.

In this definition of taking life, there are two meanings: first unmoving living being, it means plant and vegetation, second movable living being, it means human beings and animals.

The Buddha says, "People think that plant has life." This means that the general opinion of the people during the time of the Buddha in India at least is that trees or plants have life. The Buddha just voiced the opinion of the people.

Hindu or Brahminism already advocated non-violence (ahiṃsā) to all forms of life. Mahātma Gandhi died for this cause.

In the Vāsettha Sutta of M.N, the Buddha gives a list of life. He starts with grass and trees, then animals and ends with human beings. The only difference between them is that plants are one-faculty beings while animals and human beings have five faculties. Therefore, plants have life. If you cut trees or grass intentionally, you break the first rule.

This rule, in the present situation, can be interpreted as the protection of our environment.

Buddha’s advice to monks
During the time when the vinaya rules were not there, the distinction between novice and ordained monks was not available. Therefore, the instruction given to all monks is refrained from taking of life.
When the vinaya rules were enacted, the distinction between novice and ordained monks is obvious. For novice, samanera, the Buddha gives such instruction, “I refrain from taking of life.” In the case of ordained monks (bhikkhus) the Buddha enacted many rules.

1) Expulsion. Killing a human being is considered as a gravest offence. If a monk has done it, he is expelled from the Buddhist community (sāsana) permanently.
2) Expiation. Ordained monks should not take the life of animals. If a monk commits this offence, he will not be expelled, he can stay in sāsana, but he must confess his offence to a certain monk at the congregation of monks.
3) During the period when there were no vinaya rules, there was an instruction for all monks regarding to plants. That is -refrain from harming vegetation.

With regard to human beings, the texts says: “Whatever bhikkhu should intentionally deprive a human being of life, or seek a weapon for him for taking[-life], or should utter praise of death, or should urge him towards death saying, Good man, what use to you is this miserable life? Death is better than life. Or, having such thoughts and intentions in mind, should in several ways utter praise of death, or should urge him towards death, he too becomes defeated, is not in communion.”

So it is clear that even if a monk utters praise of death, urges someone towards death, he is also defeated, which means that he can not be a monk any more.

With regard to plants, the vinaya rules were enacted, this simple instruction became a vinaya rule. These particular rules are only for the ordained monks, not for novices. If the ordained monks commit this offence, then it is Expiation.

So life (pāna) in the first rule has threefold life: human being, animals and plants. If a monk kills a human being, he is expelled from Sāsana, but if he takes the life of a animal or plant, he will not be expelled from Sāsana. But he can stay in the Sāsana after a confess in front of the community.

Regarding to the rule abstaining from taking life (Pāñātipātā), Buddhism takes these three forms of life into consideration. If one takes the life of one of the three forms, for instance even the life of plant intentionally, he commits an offence.

(1) Here knowing with full consciousness and intention are very important. The Buddha says, if one cuts trees or grass knowingly and intentionally, he commits the offence of expiation. So, it is no doubt that taking the life of vegetation knowingly and intentionally commits the offence of Expiation.

(2) If you do not express your dissatisfaction and remain silent when you see someone killing an animal, you commit an offence. So killing in whatever form, with whatever purpose, is totally condemned in Buddhism.

Therefore, the security of all forms of life can be created only in Buddhist society because all forms of life are protected in Buddhist society.
What we have discussed above is the negative aspect of Pāñātipātā. Here we should talk the positive aspect of Pāñātipātā.

Positive aspect of Pāñātipātā
This precept is based on the principle of goodwill and respect for the right to life of all living beings. As the Buddha says: “All tremble at punishment, all fear death. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill.” (Dhammapada, 129)

So the Buddha advised his disciples: “He has laid the cudgel and sword aside, and ashamed of roughness, and full of mercy, he dwells compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life.” Dīgha Nikāya.

So in the Mettā Sutta, the Buddha advised people to practice compassion: “One should not wish another pain out of anger or thoughts of enmity. Just as a mother would protect her only son with her life, so one should cultivate the immeasurable mind towards all living beings and friendliness towards the whole world.”

Refrain from killing is easy, but extending compassionate love to all living beings is difficult. Therefore, in the Vusuddhimagga, there are so many ways prescribed for practicing compassion.

The result of killing
In the Cūla Kammavibhaṅga Sutta we are told of the results of killing living beings:

Some man or woman kills living beings and is murderous, has blood on his hands, is given to blows and violence, is without pity for living beings. Because of performing and carrying out such action, at the breaking up of the body, after death he reappears in a state of misfortune, an unhappy destiny, a state of affliction, hell.

Social significance of the first precept
First, According to the modern law, everyone has the right to life, which is one of the basic human rights. So Buddhism highly protects basic human rights as well as the right to life of animals.

We have to understand this by looking at the time of the Buddha when the right to life of some people was deprived such as the slaves and outcastes.

The Buddha teaches that life is dear to all and everyone fears death. Everyone has the right to live safely.

As the saying goes, “He who lives by the sword, dies by the swords.” Once one understands that killing inflicts pain and suffering on others, one should avoid killing. This is the moral law according to Buddhism.
Second, it is only when life is protected and guaranteed then society can be peaceful so that people could live happily and they do their work to develop the society in which they live.

If the security of life is not guaranteed, then people in that society will live in fear. As a result, people could not engage in any social work because they have to look after their life first. Thus, society cannot develop.

See those countries where conflict and war are daily phenomena, there is development but backwards as many lives and building are destroyed everyday.

The first of the five Buddhist moral precepts is based on the altruistic concept of universal love and compassion. It is not only a way of life and an exercise in personal morality, but also a part of the much larger scheme in spiritual discipline of which purity of body, speech, and mind are indispensable ingredients. As such it makes no exception in its practice, given the lofty ideal to which it is designed to lead. However, in real life situations, we may need a more practical attitude of mind to approach the problem in a more realistic manner.

Further developments
This rule has been further developed in Mahayana Buddhism that if out of compassion and in order to save many, a bodhisattva can kill the evil one. This is illustrated in the story of five hundred merchants in the sea.

The motivation for this act is thus compassionate on two accounts: (1) by killing the man he prevents him from killing others and thus prevents him from committing an unwholesome act that would result in his being reborn and suffering in hell; (2) the bodhisattva also by his act saves the lives of the 500 others.

Thus in deciding to kill the man the bodhisattva is presented as accepting that this is an unwholesome act, the unpleasant consequences of which he will have to suffer in hell.

However, the Sūtra goes on to relate how the bodhisattva in fact avoided the sufferings of rebirth in hell; much later, as a Buddha, he lets his foot be pierced by a thorn in apparent retribution for this act of killing.

However compassionate, the bodhisattva still cannot escape his own karma, he prepared to go to hell and suffer in order to save others.

But the Theravāda exegetical tradition still sticks to the original rule and exclude compassion as the simple motivation for killing a living being such as euthanasia.

They argue that without hatred and delusion, even in the case of euthanasia, one cannot kill a living being. In other words, there must be hatred and delusion to illness and thinking that it can save the person suffering.
Refraiming from eating meat
The Mahāyānists proposed vegetarian food and opposed to eating meat as described in the *Laṇkāvatāra-sūtra* in which a long chapter is devoted to this subject and several arguments are adduced in favour of vegetarianism.

The main reasons brought forward in the *Laṇkāvatāra-sūtra* are as follows:

1. out of compassion because all sentient beings have been to our relatives even parents,
2. meat is not pure as the animals eat variety of things and after eating meat you have bad smell,
3. gods do not like meat eaters,
4. meat eaters have bad dreams,
5. meat eaters do not accomplish their practices,
6. other beings like dogs do not like eaters. (T16, 513c-4a)

The *Laṇkāvatāra-sūtra* teaches that vegetarianism is the only proper course for a bodhisattva. Śāntideva shares this view, but he allows the use of meat as medicine, if human life is in danger.

The Brahmajala Sūtra also says:

The disciples of the Buddha should not eat any kind of meat because it forfeits the seed of great compassion and causes [animals and transcendental] beings to avoid him. So all bodhisattvas should not eat any kind of meat. Those who do so are guilty of countless offenses. Therefore, Bodhisattvas should not eat the flesh of any sentient beings whatsoever. If instead, he deliberately eats meat, he commits a secondary offense. (T24, 1005b)

In early Buddhism, some kinds of meat are not allowed for monks to eat. According to the Pali Vinaya, Vin.I.218-20. Monks should not accept:

1. elephant flesh or horse flesh- as people see an elephant and a horse as a king’s emblem,  
2. dog-flesh or snake-flesh, as people saw them as disgusting,  
3. the flesh of lions, tigers, panthers, bears or hyenas, as other such animals would smell the eaters and attack them.

On Five Pungent Herbs
Not only meat, the Mahāyānists even do not take the five kinds of pungent herbs. This is also discussed in both the *Laṇkāvatāra-sūtra* and the *Brahmajala Sūtra*.

The Brahmajala Sūtra says:

A disciple of the Buddha should not eat the five pungent herbs -- garlic, chives, leeks, onions, and asafoetida. This is so even if they are added as flavoring to other main dishes. Hence, if
The commentary to the above sūtra says that these thing are prohibited because they have bad smell. (菩薩戒本疏, T40, 672a) Some think that it may have been influenced by Hindu yogic ideas.

The Second Precept: To Refrain from stealing (Adinnādānā)

The basic meaning of the rule

"Intentionally taking what is not given, what belong to others either in the village or in the forest."

The Dhammika Sutta says: “Then let the Sāvaka abstain from (taking) anything in any place that has not been given (to him), knowing (it to belong to another), let him not cause any one to take, nor approve of those that take, let him avoid all (sort of) theft.” (Suttanipāta, 394)

Thus, refrain from stealing (Adinnādānā) has three aspects:

1) One should not take what is not given.
2) One should not get others to take what is not given.
3) One should not give consent for taking what is not given.

(1) This definition of stealing is only for layman. This said in the 6th century B.C. that was an agricultural society. Therefore, the implements were very important for the production.

Taking what is not given does not mean to take everything. It has a specific meaning. Here it means the ways and means of development.

Those are the implements and technology. Therefore, the duty of society is to look after these implements. Thus, technology is also guaranteed. Otherwise, there will be no progress or development in the society.

Non-stealing is difficult to observe

In fact, it is very difficult to observe this precept. (1) We commit it every moment. For example, if you take bus without paying bus fee, you commit stealing. If you come to the office late but you get the full salary at the pay day, you take what is not given. Bribery also comes under this. So everyday, everywhere we commit some kind of stealing.

(2) Even though non-killing is in the first place of five precepts, but non-stealing has more weight. Because only when you kill a human being, you commit expulsion (Pārājika), but if you take even a small thing which is not given, you commit stealing.

In the Suttanipata, it says that "you should not take anything anywhere without given". To illustrate this, a story is given in the sutta. When one enters forest, he sees a pin thinking that it does not belong to anyone. So he takes it. The commentary says this man commits stealing.
For monks
When “not to steal” is described for monks, the above are not found in the Suttas. Because monks are supposed to possess not more than 3 robes and an alms-bowl. They have few property. The Suttas say: “He do not take what is not given, he takes only what is given, he is satisfied with what is given. He does not have any sense of taking what is not given from others. He lives a pure and perfect life.”
This is only for monks, because monks have nothing, except three robes. It is not applicable for laymen. Because lay people cannot be satisfied with what they have. They always want to have more and more. This is permitted for lay people in Buddhism. However, since only monks can achieve nibbana, laymen have to become monk to achieve nibbana.

The monk may be considered as the big thief if he knows the Dharma but keeps it for himself as told in the Mahavagga.

“The monk, who masters thoroughly the Dhamma and the discipline made known by the Tathāgata, takes it for his own, is a great thief.” (Mahāvagga, I. 89; The Book of the Discipline, I. 156)

The positive aspect
The positive aspect of right action is the respect for the property of others. Buddhism never talks about economically equality of people. There is no time, when there is no difference among people.

That’s why Buddhism endorses non-stealing. Economical equality only exists in dream. It will never come true. The urge for having more cannot be eradicated by external revolution but by internal revolution. When they enter into the city of nibbana, they are equal. So stealing cannot be completely taken out from society.

So by the observance of non-steal, one protects the property of others. Robbery, theft, cheating and fraud are dishonest ways of possessing the property of others by force or deceit. The dishonest businessman who sells faulty goods and the employee who neglects his duties and yet collects his salary, are just as guilty of taking what is not rightfully theirs as the robber and the thief.

Social significance of this precept
First, this is about the safety and protection of private property. This, too, is one of the basic human rights. This precept is in second place, simply because when one’s life is secure, what one loves most is his property.

When each and every member of a society agrees to uphold this precept, naturally there will be no fear of losing one’s personal possessions. People will live in peace and happily.

The order of five precepts has a very important meaning with regard to society. In any society, if the security of life is guaranteed, then the people could live happily and they also can do their work to develop the society in which they live that will be a good society.
But if the security of life is not, guaranteed, then the people in that society will live in fear. As a result of that, the people will not engage in any social work, because they try to look after their life first. Then how could the people develop the society?

That's why non-killing is put in the first place in the five precepts. The first important thing, therefore, is security of life. One loves oneself more than others even more than his wife and children.

When he says that he would not kill others, he also expects others not to harm himself. So, the mutual understanding of not harming each other is what is guaranteed in the first precept.

In the Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta of DN, it says, at the last stage of degeneration of society, when one sees other, he feels that he sees an animal. Then people attack each other. There would be weapon in everybody's hand. Grass becomes sword. People kill each other.

When this situation is going on, some people return to forest thinking that it is better that they should refrain from killing. Suddenly the closure of society stops, and a new society starts to open again. So, killing plays a very important role in the opening and closing of society.

The second important thing for an individual is what he has earned, including his wife and children, and other property. That's why non-stealing comes in the second place in five precepts. Because after life, what one loves most is his property, what he earned. So life and property should be guaranteed in any society. Otherwise, the society cannot be developed. The society will collapse.

Sometimes, which comes first, life and property, is not clear, because some people cannot think of life without property. The Sutta says, when stealing is prominent in the society then the use of weapon becomes prominent. Then taking life comes into being.

So sometimes Pānātipātā comes first sometimes Adinādānā comes first. That is co-ordination between the two. Your life and what you have earned are closely related. You can’t separate one from the other, because one cannot think of himself without property.

The Third Precept: To Refrain from Sexual Misconduct (Kāmesumicchācāra)
The basic meaning
Definition: “He avoids sexual misconduct and abstains from it. He has no intercourse with such persons as are still under the protection of father, mother, brother, sister or relatives, nor with married women, nor with female convicts, nor lastly, with betrothed girls.”

So according to this definition, the following nine categories of women are protected:

(1) Protected by mother.
(2) Protected by father.
(3) Protected by mother and father.
(4) Protected by brother.
(5) Protected by sister.
(6) Protected by relative.
(7) Protected by husband
(8) Protected by the punishment of government. It means that a woman who is in jail is protected by government.
(9) When a woman is engaged. In ancient India, a woman who wears a garland shows that she is engaged. She has planed her future.

If a man has any sexual relation with any woman who is protected by any of above nine categories, he commits adultery. In fact these nine categories include all women. This means all women are protected.

Since they are protected, this very fact also indicates that women are not independent. Of course, prostitutes are not taken into consideration.

In other words only prostitutes are independent. Although going to prostitutes is not under this precept, but it is under ethical injunction. If you go to prostitutes, your life will be ruined. Therefore, it is also not allowed or prohibited to go to prostitutes.

The English word “adultery” has the meaning of “man goes to woman as well as woman goes to man”. But the Buddha’s statement defines the illicit partner from the perspective of the man only.

Patriarch society
This is because at the time of the Buddha, India was mainly a patriarchal society and women were not independent and were considered as property of men. In Buddhist scripture, there are two definitions for man.
(1) In the commentary of the Suttanipāta, it says: "man is the multiplicity of first man (manu).
(2) In the commentary of the Vimānavaṭṭhu, it says, "one who has a developed mind."

In Sanyutta Nikaya, the Buddha says, "woman is the highest among the commodities." Here the Buddha uses bhandānā for woman. It is the highest among commodities because women have life.

We should remember that this is said in the environment of Indian patriarchal society when women were in fact looked down upon.

Further development
It was the later treatises that elaborate the matter for both sexes. Thus, For a man, three kinds of women are considered illicit partners:

(1) A woman who is married to another man. This includes, besides a woman already married to a man, a woman who is not his legal wife but is generally recognized as his consort, who lives with him or is kept by him or is in some way acknowledged as his partner. All these women are illicit partners for men other than their own husbands. This class would also include a woman engaged to another man. But a widow or divorced woman is not out of bounds, provided she is not excluded for other reasons.
A woman still under protection as we have described above. This provision rules out elopements or secret marriages contrary to the wishes of the protecting party.

A woman prohibited by convention. This includes close female relatives forbidden as partners by social tradition, nuns and other women under a vow of celibacy, and those prohibited as partners by the law of the land.

From the standpoint of a woman, two kinds of men are considered illicit partners:

For a married woman any man other than her husband is out of bounds. Thus a married woman violates the precept if she breaks her vow of fidelity to her husband. But a widow or divorcee is free to remarry.

For any woman any man forbidden by convention, such as close relatives and those under a vow of celibacy, is an illicit partner.

Besides these, any case of forced, violent, or coercive sexual union constitutes a transgression. But in such a case the violation falls only on the offender, not on the one compelled to submit.

Positive aspect of this precept
The positive virtue corresponding to the abstinence is, for laypeople, marital fidelity. Husband and wife should be faithful and devoted to each other, content with the relationship, and should not risk a breakup to the union by seeking outside partners.

Therefore, guiding purposes of this precept, from the ethical standpoint, are to protect marital relations from outside disruption and to promote trust and fidelity within the marital union.

From the spiritual standpoint it helps curb the expansive tendency of sexual desire and thus is a step in the direction of personal development in spiritual progress according to Buddhist practice.

From laypeople the precept enjoins abstaining from sexual relations with an illicit partner. The primary transgression is entering into full sexual union, but all other sexual involvements of a less complete kind may be considered secondary infringements.

Social significance of this injunction
The primary unit of society is family which has three types:
(1) Co-operative family. People live together and engage in the same economical activity. It has its own houses and territory.
(2) Extended family. This happens only in the family which has a very sound economical foundation in the rich society.
(3) Nuclear family where there are only parents and children. This is present system.
The nuclear of this nuclear family is nothing but woman. If you want to have a family you must have a female partner. So long as the central figure—woman is protected, this family system goes on. Otherwise, the family system will be destroyed.

When women are in peace, the whole society is in peace. That's why the Buddha says non-adultery is very essential for any society. So long as woman is protected, the primary unit of society is in peace, then, the society will be prosperous.

The Buddha advised men not to go to women who belong to others because the Buddha wanted men to behave ethically in order to have a peaceful society.

The Buddha advised people to control their sexual desires so that they do not become a source of sorrow and suffering to themselves, their families and society as a whole.

Since the family is the basic unit of the society, the unity and strength of the society depends on the unity and strength of each family. It is mostly women, especially mothers that help to strengthen the family unity.

Thus, as long as the basic unit of society, the family, is at peace, then the society is also at peace. Thus, for their own good and that of society, people should avoid sexual misconduct.

The Fourth Precept: To Refrain from Telling Lies (Musāvāda)
The basic meaning
In the Dhammika Sutta of the Suttanipāta we find three aspects of telling lies (Musāvāda):
1. Telling lie,
2. Getting others to tell lie,
3. Giving consent to others to tell lie,

In the Sāleyyaka Sutta, No. 41 of the Majjhima Nikāya, we find the following description of “telling lies” regarding to lay people:
Here someone speaks falsehood: when summoned to a court or to a meeting, or to his relatives' presence, or to his guild, or to the royal family’s presence, and questioned as a witness thus, 'So, good man, tell what you know,' then, not knowing, he says 'I know,' or knowing, he says 'I do not know,' not seeing, he says 'I see,' or seeing, he says 'I do not see'; in full awareness he speaks falsehood for his own ends or for another's ends or for some trifling worldly end.

He speaks maliciously: he is a repeater elsewhere of what is heard here for the purpose of causing division from these, or he is a repeater to these of what is heard elsewhere for the purpose of causing division from those, and he is thus a divider of the united, a creator of divisions, who enjoys discord, rejoices in discord, delights in discord, he is a speaker of words that create discord.
He speaks harshly: he utters such words as are rough, hard, hurtful to others, censorious of others, bordering on anger and unconducive to concentration.

He is a gossip: as one who tells that which is unseasonable, that which is not fact, that which is not good, that which is not the Dhamma, that which is not the Discipline, and he speaks out of season speech not worth recording, which is unreasoned, indefinite, and unconnected with good. That is how there are four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.

According to this Sutta, there are three reasons for people to tell lie:
1) For the sake of himself to avoid punishment.
2) For the sake of others.
3) For the sake of requiring material things.
According to the tradition, telling lie (Musāvāda) also includes other three verbal unwholesome deeds that people commit:
1) Slandering talk,
2) Harsh words,
3) Frivolous talk,
Five ingredients are listed for telling a lie:
(1) the object itself;
(2) the consciousness of falsity;
(3) the attentive mind;
(4) consciousness of the lie containing the intention to deceive (Sn.129);
(5) and the speech itself.
This is important because it shows that at least two people come together, Musāvāda could be taken place. So Musāvāda is a social matter.

According to the Suttas, all the above mentioned aspects should be avoided. Even if your telling lie makes other feel happy and others also would be misled by your telling lie. Then you commit an offence.

Positive aspect
According to the suttas, “Refraining from telling lies, he should tell the truth, he should tell things corresponding to the truth and in speaking he should speak firmly, based on facts. He should not tell any thing which bring disharmony to the society.” (A )

This means that we also should avoid talking about things that have not been happened or taken place. Certain things will take place in future or even if it has been taken place, but it is not in your experience, you also should keep noble silence because you might be inaccurate due to your ignorance.

That’s why the Buddha told us to talk about our experience. So in this definition, the 4th precept is connected with truth and untruth.
The Subhāsitasutta of the Suttanipata:

So it was heard by me:

At one time Bhagavat dwelt at Sāvatthī in Gethavana. Bhagavat said this: 'O Bhikkhus, the speech that is provided with four requisites is well-spoken, not ill-spoken, both faultless and blameless to the wise.'

'Which four?'

'O Bhikkhus, the Bhikkhu (1) speaks well-spoken (language), not ill-spoken; (2) he speaks what is right (dhamma), not what is unrighteous (adhamma); (3) he speaks what is pleasing, not what is unpleasing; (4) he speaks what is true, not what is false. O Bhikkhus, the speech that is provided with these four requisites, is well-spoken, not ill-spoken, both faultless and blameless to the wise.' This said Bhagavat. When Sugata had said this, then the Master spoke the following:

1. 'Well-spoken language the just call the principal (thing); let one speak what is right (dhamma), not what is unrighteous (adhamma), that is the second; let one speak what is pleasing, not what is unpleasing, that is the third; let one speak what is true, not what is false, that is the fourth.' (449)

Then the venerable Vangisa, rising from his seat, throwing his robe over one shoulder and bending his joined hands towards Bhagavat, said this: 'It occurs to me, O Sugata!'

'Let it occur to thee, O Vangisa!' said Bhagavat.

Then the venerable Vangisa, standing before Bhagavat, praised him with appropriate stanzas:

2. 'Let one say such words by which he does not pain himself, nor hurt others; such words are truly well-spoken. (450)

3. 'Let one speak pleasing words which are received joyfully (by all), and which (saying) he, without committing sins, speaks what is pleasing to others. (451)

4. 'Truth verily is immortal speech, this is a true saying; in what is true, in what is good, and in what is right, the just stand firm, so they say. (452)

5. 'The words which Buddha speaks, which are sure to bring about extinction and put an end to pain, such (words) are truly the best.' (453)

This fourfold formula is especially interesting since it offers 'well-spoken' as the primary speech precept [30]. Appropriate speech is, above all, affectionate, gentle speech. It is spoken with regard to the welfare of the auditor. This suggests that it may not always be appropriate to speak out; simply because something is true does not mean that we should say it. The saint only speaks out what he believes will be of spiritual benefit to others.

For monks

In the case of monks, in addition to all the above aspects of refraining from telling lie, he should avoid the following:
He is not an Arahant, he says that he is an Arahant. That is telling a big lie for a monk. If a monk commits this offence to such a degree, then he is expelled from the order (sangha). The fourth indicates the quality which you do not have, but you claim that you have.

Social significance

Refaining from telling lies is actually the discipline in language. It is because when telling lies (Musāvāda) takes place, 1) slandering talk, 2) harsh words and 3) frivolous talk also take place. It means that telling lies (Musāvāda) is the head of these verbal unwholesome deeds.

This is important in Buddhism because, everything regarding to language comes to the camp of telling lies (Musāvāda) according to Buddhism.

Language
Kokâliya Sutta of the Suttanipata:

‘To (every) man that is born, an axe is born in his mouth, by which the fool cuts himself, when speaking bad language. (657)

‘He who praises him who is to be blamed or blames him who as to be praised, gathers up sin in his mouth, and through that (sin) he will not find any joy. (658)

The most wonderful thing that society has ever produced is language because language creates culture, society, organization, and civilization. It also presents culture. Therefore, language is the mother of culture. Thus, there is no culture without language.

So language is closely connected with society. Its function is as an instrument to express or indicate what human beings feel, and it serves as a communicative instrument for human society. Through language, people associate with each other, exchange their opinions, learn knowledge. Thus, language is peculiar to human society.

It has social function, no individual function. Language should have words, letters and sentences. It comes out through your mouth to express your feeling and idea and opinion. So every word has a special meaning.

Language also makes the difference between human and animals. Although parrot can imitate short sentence of human language, it cannot create new sentences with the words that it has learnt and it doesn't understand the meaning of the sentence it utters. So what the parrot utters is not language. Among the animal kingdom, bees are the close to human beings. That's why bees have a good organization.

In the human society, since there are many different languages the society has been divided into many communities such as Chinese community, British community, Thai community etc. So language can bring people together. That's why we have so many communities in society.
The culture of any society is based on the language of that society. The culture, language and society are always going together. So if the language is not there, the culture will no more.

And only the human beings have the advantage of learning many languages and using them to develop their life, culture and other things. That’s why the human beings could build so many languages, cultures. That’s how the knowledge of human being came into existence and being transmitted.

Truth and respect
On the other hand, if one has respect for truth, one will avoid telling lies. When a person consistently avoids telling lies, his relatives, friends and associates will trust him and value his sincerity.

But if a person lies for the first time and the lie is not detected by others, he may continue to tell more lies until it becomes part of his nature. He will eventually lose the respect and trust of others.

This precept has a special and important function in society. If you speak bad words or tell lies, it will bring disharmony and conflict into society. Constructive words can bring all human beings together, while destructive words make the society scattered. That’s why language should be disciplined.

Once people uphold the respect for the truth, there will be fewer quarrels, misunderstandings and fewer cases of false accusations in the courts. Society will then become more peaceful and orderly.

In this case, the 4th precept-refraining from telling lies, has a social implication. We have to practise the 4th precept as the members of the society, not as individuals.

Further developments
The Mahāyānists further developed this precept as to make a clear distinction between expressing untruth with a selfish intention and with a well-meaning motive as a skillful means such as white lie.

This is well illustrated by the story of a burning house in the Lotus Sutra. A father found that his large house was on fire with his children playing inside unaware that its burning roof could collapse at any moment when he came back from a business trip.

Being unable to get into the house himself, the father called his children saying “Come quickly, my little ones, I have some wonderful toys for you. All the toys you ever wanted to have are here!”

In this instance the father is using a skillful means that eventually saves the boys’ life. Under certain circumstances, this may be the only alternative, but indiscriminate use of such means may lead to undesirable results. One needs to be judicious, therefore, in the practice of the precepts.

A good illustration is to tell a terminally ill patient that there exist hopes of his recovery.
The Buddha says, therefore, that one should speak the truth which is useful and conducive to the Dhamma, and should avoid that which is useless and is likely to cause unwholesome *kamma* to oneself and others.

**The Fifth Precept: To Refrain from Taking Intoxicants (Surāmeraya)**

*The meaning of Surāmeraya*

There are two Pali words for alcohol: *surā* and *meraya* (Skt: *maireya*). *Surā* is a natural thing and equal to whisky and Brandy. *Meraya* is *āsava* which means defilement. According to commentary, *Meraya* is an unnatural thing.

*Surā* is five kinds and it comes from the following five things:

1. Made out of flour
2. Made out of sweets
3. Made out of rice
4. Made out of so many things fermented
5. Made out of various ingredients

*Meraya* is *āsava* which is taken from milk, tree juice, jagari, sugar and lemon. In Pāli canon, there is a similar definition in the commentary of the *Vimānavatthu*. According to that there are five kinds of *āsava*:

4. *Culāsava* - all kinds of sweets.
5. *Sambharasamyuthāsava* - intoxicant things.

So *āsava*, intoxicant drink comes from all these things.

All kinds of these, *surā* and *meraya* are taken into consideration according to the commentarial explanation.

When the Buddha pronounced that people should refrain from *surā*, because *surā* stands for two things: *majja* which is intoxication and *pamāda* which is carelessness. In the commentary it says that *majja* weakens mindfulness. *Pamāda* upsets mindfulness and throw out mindfulness.

The result of taking liquor is that people lose their energy and labour. It is said when alcohol was introduced to the city, people became inactive and they did not have energy to work and the whole city became deserted.

So taking liquor has the connection with the use of labour in any country. So without labourers there is no development in the society. As long as *surā* stays in the society, the society will degenerate and not prosper. People will not have good working force and the productivity will go down and get static.
So labours are the only way of production. It is very essential because in the time of 6th century B.C. there was no idea of any industry and sort of mechanism and technology. So everything depended on labours. The harmonization of labourers is completely out when intoxication is there. That’s Why the Buddha said that labourers should not take liquor.

Story about sura

(1) The story about the origin and destruction of taking liqueur. Surā is a kind of intoxicant drink which was discovered by two persons called Sura and Varuna. In the *Jātakāthakatha*, it is said that Sura was a forester. One day he went to forest and found a kind of tree which has three branches. He saw some birds and animals went to the tree and drink some liqueur from it and then they fell down. But after sometimes he saw that these birds and animals gradually got up from the ground and went away. So he thought that it could not be poison, but must be something else. After careful examination, he tasted the liquor from the tree. At that time there was an ascetic called Varuna in the forest. Whenever Sura went to forest he would call on the ascetic. So that day Sura took some liquor from the tree and went to him saying, “Ven. Sir, I have some special things today would you like to taste it?” said the forester. So the ascetic tasted it and soon went to sleep. Later on Sura brought it to city. So after the introduction of this kind of liquor, city after city are destroyed, ruined by it. The story said Sāvatthī was the last city to be introduced that liquor. Some wine makers went to Sāvatthī and told the king that they could make a kind of fine drink. So the king gave them all the necessary things to make wine. While making the wine, one day cats tasted the liquor and fell down. So the guards of the palace informed the king that after drinking the liquor, cats died. So the king ordered to kill all the wine makers. But later after sometimes, the cats got up. So the guards informed the king again. Then they knew that it was not poison. So they also drank it. From this we see how dangerous surā is.

(2) There is another story in Jātaka. One day, a dump fly tasted a little bit liquor left in coconut shell. After tasting it, he felt heavier and stronger than before. So he went back to the dump again. As soon as he landed on the dump, the dump went down a little bit. Then an elephant came, but when he smelt the dump, he went back. Then the fly said, “My dear friend, why do you go back, come for a fight. I am ready today”. Then the elephant came back to the dump and produced a big dump on it and watered it. That is the end of the fly. This is what happened to all the people, flies and animals after tasting surā in the Jātaka story. That’s why the Buddha wanted us to refrain from taking surā.

Definition in the *Dhammika Sutta*

The *Dhammika Sutta* of the *Suttanipāta* is very important regarding refraining from taking liquor. Because for all other precepts of pañcasīla, there is only one stanza in the *Dhmmika Sutta*, but for the 5th one, there are two stanzas. So not taking liquor is stressed more in the *Dhammika Sutta* and is explained in two stanzas. There are three aspects of not taking liquor:

1) One should not take liquor.
2) One should not get others to take liquor.
3) One should not give consent to take liquor.

So according to Buddhism, it is our duty that we should oppose having liquor and liquor industry in any society. Surā has something to do with the Vedic Soma (consuming drink).
In Vedic religion, Soma is one of the closest ways to go to the world of Brahma. So to satisfy the Brahmā, people are required to give him Soma. Between the creator and creation, there is a God called Agni who consumes liquor for the sake of individuals. So Agni could take liquor to the creator. In Vedic religion when one drinks soma, one can get immortality. That’s why refraining from liquor is so much stressed in Buddhism in the 6th century B.C. But later on there was a tendency in Brahmanism to oppose liquor because they realized that it was not only weakening religion, but also weakening so many things. So liquor should be avoided according to the Dhammika Sutta because the Buddha says that it makes people mad, hypnosis and only fool takes liquor.

Here by alcohol, it also includes all the things which make you loose mindfulness such as drugs, smoking,

The defects of taking liquor

According to the Sigālovāda Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya, alcohol is the first thing that takes people to hell.

On one occasion, the Buddha was delivering a sermon when a drunkard happened to be in the assembly. Restless and unable to control himself, the drunkard disturbed the assembly with his disorderly behaviour. The Buddha then commented on the harmful consequences of taking intoxicating drinks:

1. Losing one's wealth
2. Increasing quarrels
3. Being more susceptible to diseases
4. Gaining an evil reputation
5. Exposing one’s body shamelessly
6. Weakening one’s intelligence.

Some may say that a little alcohol is good for health. That is true, but the real danger is addiction to intoxicant drinks as told in canonical texts.

There is a famous Scottish saying regarding alcohol which is quite true: "One Whisky a night is alright. Two is too much. Three is too few."

Another saying concerning alcohol: "First, a man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink and then the drink takes the man."

So if you are addicted to drinking, smoking and drugs, you are not only destroying your health, but your family as well. It also causes serious health problems in modern society.

Drunken drivers, for example, are a danger on the road for they are very likely to cause accidents. In fact, drunkenness is a major cause of death and injury in road accidents in many countries. The damage caused in such accidents creates suffering and unhappiness for the victims and their families.
Furthermore, taking alcoholic drinks and drugs tend to distort the sensibilities and deprive people of their self-control and powers of judgment. That's why the Buddha advised people not to take intoxicants as they cause them to think or act irrationally. This precept is particularly important to those who meditate because by refraining from taking intoxicants, they can more easily cultivate awareness, attention and clarity of mind.

Friendship founded on compassion and mutual understanding is much more desirable than that which is based on alcohol. Social drinking may produce a general euphoric atmosphere among drinkers, but it is never a necessary condition for interpersonal relationship. Often, people use this as an excuse to get drunk.

Thus, the observance of the fifth precept not only contributes to happiness in the family and peace in society, it also prepares a person for the practice of mental development.

The positive aspect
(1) The fifth precept is based on respect for and promotion of mental health. It guards against the loss of control of one's mind. In observing this precept, one should keep his mind clear and aware.

(2) He always has self-vigilance and self-awareness. He does not allow his emotions to control himself; he brings his mind under his control.

Summary

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In brief, observing the five precepts is a means of helping a Buddhist to cultivate Good Conduct by restraining him from committing unwholesome actions.
These five precepts are the basis of moral conduct. It aims at promoting a happy and harmonious life, both for the individual and for society. This moral conduct is considered an indispensable foundation for all higher spiritual attainment. No spiritual development is possible without this moral basis.

From the social point of view, by meticulous observance of the Five Precepts one gives fearlessness, love and benevolence to all beings. If one human being can give security and freedom from fear to others by his behavior, that is the highest form of dana one can give, not only to mankind, but to all living beings.

From the personal point of view, we observe the precepts in accordance with our abilities, training by degrees until we are able to make the precepts part and parcel of our lives.

However, these qualities of five virtues should be developed. For example, compassion is a spiritual quality that we all possess to some degree. But, without a conscious and persistent effort to develop it, this important quality may remain rudimentary and weak.

By consciously practicing the first precept, we bring this compassion to a higher level of development and come a step closer to the realization of the Dhamma. In the process, our conduct becomes more refined and our mind becomes more sensitive to the problems and suffering of others.

By practicing the second precept we not only purify our livelihood but train in generosity and non-attachment.

The third precept has a direct connection with the training in sense restraint, which is an essential feature in higher spiritual development. In fact, enlightenment is not possible without mastery over the senses.

The fourth precept deals with training in truthfulness and virtuous speech. The objective of this precept is not only the cultivation of respect for truth, but a way of life that is sincere and free from falsehood in every respect.

Even the fifth precept, which enjoins against the use of intoxicants, is not merely negative, for the resultant effects that take place in the mind in terms of mental strength and moral integrity are very positive. The observance of this precept is also a natural precursor to the cultivation of mindfulness and wisdom, which are the essence of insight meditation.

Each and every precept increases our awareness of how we may skillfully conduct ourselves in body and speech and helps us to see more clearly whether we are improving in this process of self-discipline.

The Anguttara Nikaya mentions five great gifts which have been held in high esteem by noble-minded men from ancient times (A.iv.246; GS, iv. 167-9). Their value was not doubted in ancient times, it is not doubted at present, nor will it be doubted in the future. The wise recluses and brahmans had the
highest respect for them. These great givings comprise the meticulous observance of the Five Precepts. By doing so one gives fearlessness, love and benevolence to all beings.

Conclusion

It is said that one who observes these five precepts is making offerings of fearlessness to others.

It is true that if a person observes these five precepts, others who are near and around him will not fear of life, property and others harassment. So the society will be peaceful.

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