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The Development of Peace through the Process of Morality

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Summary

Internal tranquillity creates external peace and leads to the formation of social peace through moral cultivation of the mind. This is because the mind is the source of peace. If one has a good mind, then both speech and action are also good.

A teaching of the Buddha Called *Vijjā-sutta* is a method of development for an individual's mind that can lead to internal tranquillity. The researcher has adjusted this Buddhist teaching to become a lesson in the process of morality. This process contains the following activities: regularly visiting a temple, generosity, listening to the doctrine, observing the precepts, and mental development. An individual who undertakes these activities gains moral experiences, which enable him to attain internal tranquillity and peace.

The objective of this study is to reveal whether the process of morality enables people to attain the internal peace. The *ex post facto* method for the collection of the data was applied to the target group of 10,010 Buddhists who participated in religious activities at Dhammakaya temple. The sample is divided into the following five categories:

- 1) non-moral experience group
- 2) first moral experience group
- 3) 1~24 months moral experience group

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- 4) 3~4 years moral experience group
- 5) more than 5 years moral experience group

The result of the research show that people who had five years of exposure to moral experiences more early attained internal tranquillity than the other group. They have good moral base, which includes moral rational, right understanding in the world and life, good attitude to oneself and others and moral behavior.

Keywords: 1.Internal Tranquility 2.Internal Peace 3.Process of Morality
4.Moral Experience 5.Peace Development

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Introduction

In modern Society, the world has become boundless and includes many close relationships. The economical and technological influences of developed countries has flooded into other countries. Streams of materialism and consumerism have begun to dominate the minds of people throughout the world. Belief in spiritualism and morality, which previously formed the base of harmonious co-existence, has been eroded. Greed and ambition have replaced good morality and spiritual values, and social disorder has become a major problem. This can be seen through the rise of several social ills:

- 1.The lack of virtue in man has led to,
 - 1.1 crime, murder and war,
 - 1.2 stealing, cheating, and corruption,
 - 1.3 sexual misconduct,
 - 1.4 false speech and dishonesty.
2. Lack of impartiality causes people to be unjust and to take sides because of greed, fear, and delusion.
3. Social and economic problems are the root of antisocial habits such as gambling, drug addiction, and late night drinking and playing.

These three social problems have sapped the moral strength of individuals and society as a whole. As a result, internal peace has been negatively affected. The minds of the people have been defiled, yet there are calls for eternal peace and happiness. Every method has been applied for that purpose i.e. peace negotiations, anti-nuclear

campaigns prayers, singing for peace and so on. All men hope that those methods can bring peace to the society. However, they can only create the ideal of peace for society. Permanent peace is still unobtainable.

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Theoretical Framework

Religious doctrines play a crucial role in creating eternal peace for the world. As Miller mentioned, there are three very important functions for religion to play:

1. explanation of life and death.
2. Providing guidance for solving life's problems.
3. Providing emotional support to people, religion is able to fulfil this role because it is able to answer questions pertaining to life in greater depth than other disciplines.

People who have religious faith will follow a religious doctrine of their persuasion. Research has concluded that religious practitioners are generally more happy, healthy, conscious of the needs of society, and satisfied with life than those who do not have a religious discipline. (Chamberlain and Zika 1988; Ferraro and Jensen 1991; Welch, Tittle and Petee 1991; Kass, Friedman, Leserman, Zuttermeister and Benson 1991). Moreover, researches in Thailand have also revealed that meditation and mental development are able to make the mind calm and peaceful, eliminate mental impurities, and increase physical health. Thus it can be concluded that right meditation is effective in raising the level of one's mental and physical healthy (วไลพร 2527, พิศ 2530). In addition, it was also found that the Buddhist practitioners were more moral than non-practitioners. (ชาลี 2530, ฅกาจ 2521, อโนชา 2529, Omduen 1993).

Based on the results of research, it can definitely be concluded that Buddhist moral cultivation plays an important role in the creation of permanent peace in the world. This process could be continuously developed in an individual. A person who practices morality will gain a moral experience. When he has been exposed to moral experience for an extended time, he become moral minded person, his behavior will become good, he will speak kindly, and he will do good deeds. If every person places his faith in morality and

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controls his physical and verbal behavior, then permanent peace in this world can be realized.

The research is based on the concept of the creation of abundant peace which has been the theme of teachings at Dhammakay temple for more than thirty years. The root of that concept is that internal tranquillity creates external peace. This means that

permanent peace is based in every individual's mind. If the mind can attain internal peace, then it can be naturally assumed that one's speech and deeds will also become peaceful and calm. On the contrary, if one's mind is without peace and calm, then one's verbal and physical behavior will lead to the suffering not only for oneself but also for society as a whole. The Buddha has taught:

Mind foreruns all mental conditions,

Mind is chief, mind-made are they;

If one speaks or acts with a wicked mind,

Then suffering follows him,

Even as the wheel the hoof of the ox.

Mind foreruns all mental conditions,

Mind is chief, mind-made are they;

If one speaks or acts with a purified mind,

Then happiness follows him,

Even as the shadow the body.

Yamakavagga I, Dh. 40/11/1-2

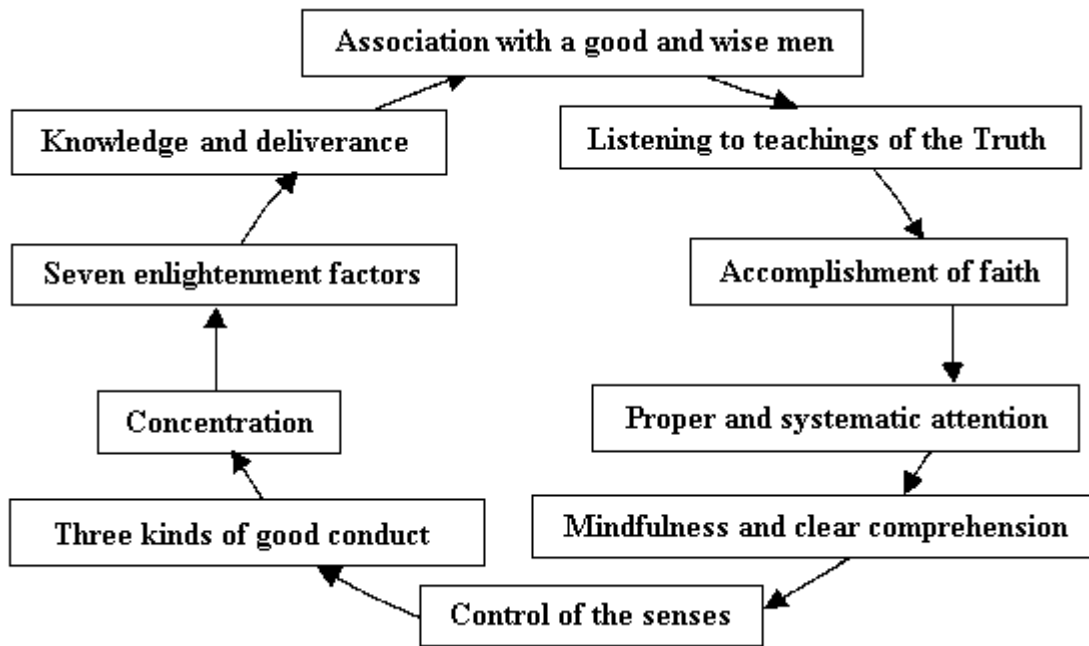
Therefore, permanent peace is the result of the development of an individual's ability to attain internal peace.

The process of such a development is explained in various places in the canon and Tipiṭaka. In this study, however, we focus on the teachings in the Vijjā-sutta. This sutta explains the procedures to attain vijjā or knowledge and vimutti or deliverance from a basic to high level.

According to the Vijjā-sutta, there are ten stages in the path to

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attaining knowledge and deliverance. See diagram below:



From these ten stages, the researcher selected the first three stages to study 1;

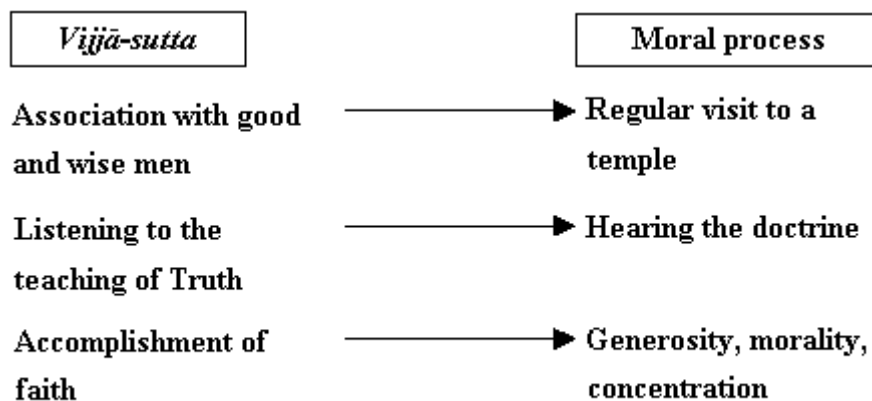
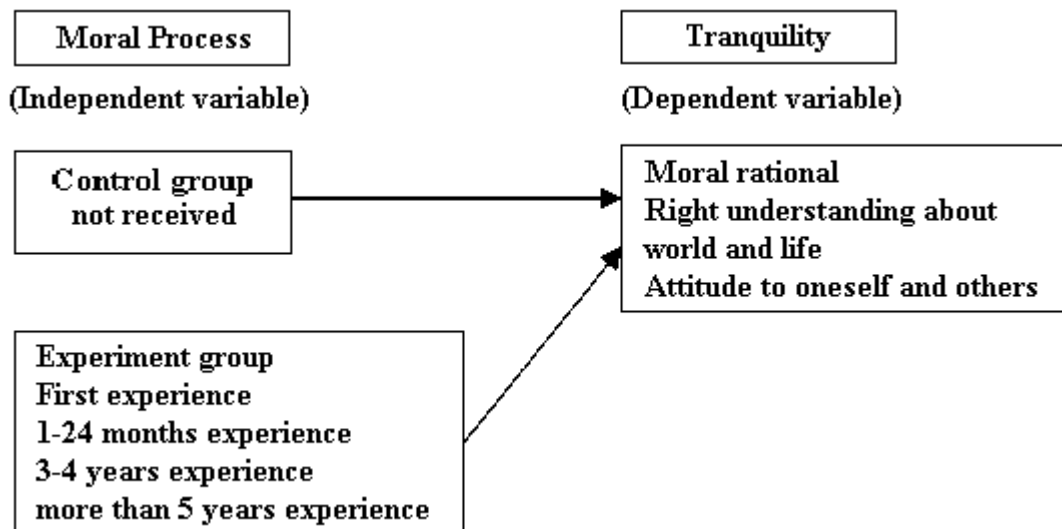


Figure 1: From Vijjā Sutta to Moral Process

The ex post facto technique of research was applied to this study and the type of correlational comparison was selected.



In this study the important variables were set up as followings:

1. A peaceful person means a man who has the following four characteristics i.e.:
 - 1) Morality.
 - 2) Right understanding about the world and life.
 - 3) Good attitude towards himself and others.
 - 4) Moral behavior which arises from possessing the first three mental characteristics and which can be clearly seen by close relatives, such as parents, husband or wife, son or daughter, colleagues etc.
 2. Morality means belief in principle of cause and effect which is used as the basis of right understanding, keeping the precepts, and maintaining one's daily life.
 3. Right understanding about the world and life or "Sammadi.t.thi" means belief in the following six principles:
 - 1) Alms-giving is fruitful.
 - 2) Worship and respect of good men is fruitful.
 - 3) Law of action is truthful.
 - 4) One's parents are previous benefactors and children should feel gratitude.
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- 5) This world and the next are real.
 - 6) One can become enlightened through religion is true.
4. Having a good attitude towards oneself and others means to realize the value of oneself and others.
 5. Moral experience means participating in the activities at Dhammakaya temple, such as alms-giving, observance of the five precepts, listening to the Buddha' teaching, practicing meditation using the āloka-kasiṇa or meditation devices as "Pramongkol-depmuni" taught.

6. Observance of the five precepts means to receive and observe the five precepts. 1) No killing, 2) No stealing, 3) No sexual misconduct, 4) No false, malicious, harsh and vain speech, 5) No intoxicants causing heedlessness.

7. Observance of the eight precepts means to receive and observe the eight precepts. 1) No killing, 2) No stealing, 3) No sexual misconduct, 4) No false, malicious, harsh and vain speech, 5) No intoxicants causing heedlessness, 6) No untimely eating, 7) No dancing, singing, music and unseemly shows, wearing garlands, using perfume or embellishment with unguents, 8) Not to use a high and large luxurious couch.

Population Survey

The population in this study is divided into two groups. 1) non-moral experience group; and 2) moral experience group. Person classed as being in the non-moral experience group is the person who never goes to Dhammakaya temple. The size of this group was 2,669. The moral experience group consists of people who have practiced the Buddha's teaching at Dhammakaya temple continuously during 1998. There were 115,000 in this group. Multistage random sampling was applied to collect the data. The sample size of this group was 7,341.

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Research Instrument

The questionnaire used to collect the data was divided into five sections:

1. basic information
2. morality
3. right understanding about the world and life
4. attitude to oneself and others
5. moral behavior

The first part, consists of personal information i.e.: sex, age, marital status, educational qualifications, occupation, place of birth, observance of the five and eight precepts, meditation, the length of time for using a space device for meditation in each day, the length of time of being exposed to moral experiences. There are closed and opened ended questions in this paper.

The second part of the paper aims to measure the level of morality. It consists of 26 three choice questions. There are questions about 10 items on right understanding, 9 on the precepts, and 7 on the goal of life. One point is given to the right answer and zero to the wrong. The respondent has to use the principle of morality to decide the best answer.

The third part, aims to calculate one's attitude to oneself and to others. It consists of six topics from the Buddha Dharma i.e. that the almsgiving is fruitful, that worship and respect of good men is fruitful, that the law of action is truthful, that one's parents are previous benefactors and that children feel gratitude, that this world and next world are real, that one can become enlightened through religion is true. Points are allocated from 5 to 2 for agreeing with the statements, 5 being the most positive agreement, and 1 point is given for a disagreement. The negative questions provide points in reverse.

In the fourth part, the form aims to assess one's attitude towards oneself and others. It concerns mental stability and

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feelings for others. Awarding of points is the same as in the third part.

In the fifth part, the form aims to measure the level of moral behavior of a person exposed to moral experience. It consists of 15 moral behavior patterns. The respondents are parents, husbands or wives, and colleagues. The objective is to evaluate the level of behavioral change of the person exposed to moral experience. The same type of measurement was applied for this paper.

The format of the research was done in consultation with two of the most venerable monks, three experts, and five members of the public. The basis of the questionnaire coincides with the main theory in this study which is Vija-sutta. This paper was a test for the quality of the instrument for four times with 400 persons. The level of test reliability was calculated by Alpha Cronbach's coefficient. Finally, the quality was tested again with factor analysis to confirm the reliability. The result of the analysis showed that the set of variables was consistent to the variables in the questionnaire. The values of reliability of morality, right understanding about the world and life, attitude to oneself and others, and moral behavior are 0.94, 0.98, 0.93, and 0.93 respectively.

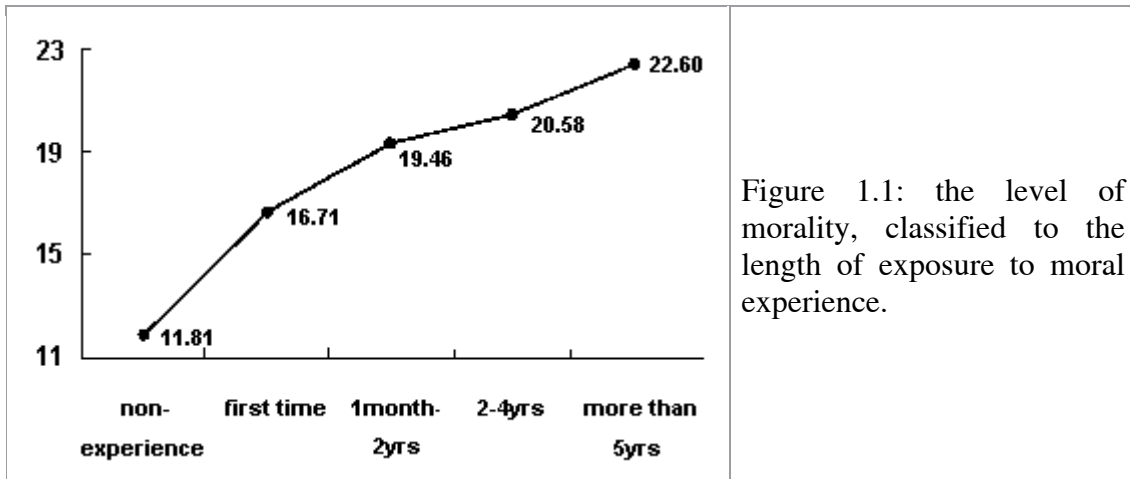
Data Analysis

In all cases, the dependent variable i.e. morality, used in this study were continuous, therefore, multiple regression, one-way and two-ways analysis of variance, and analysis of covariance were used to test the influence of the personal information of the respondent i.e. age, and the moral experience tranquillity. From the 11 variables, only 4 variables have had a direct influence on the level of tranquillity namely: moral experience, observance of the five precepts, observance of the eight precepts, and the āloka-kasiṇa meditation practice. Hence, the path analysis was employed to construct a peace development model from the 4 variables.

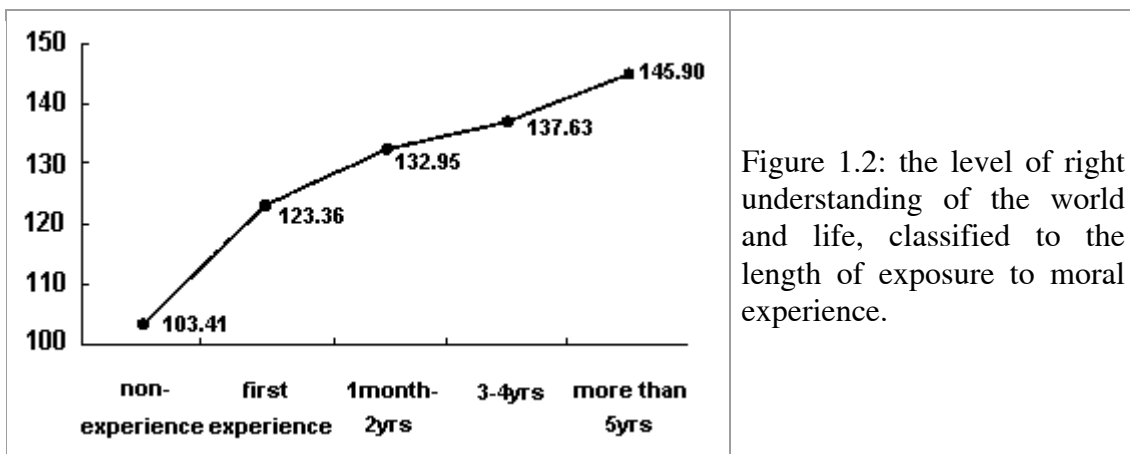
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Findings and Discussion

1. The person who was exposed to a continuous moral experience was more moral, more often had right understanding about the world and life, and had a better attitude towards himself and the others, than those who had not been exposed to the moral experience. The people who were exposed to the moral experience for more than 5 years were shown to be the most peaceful. See figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3.



From the graph, it can be seen that the people who were exposed to the moral experience for a long time have a proportionately high moral standard.



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From the figure, it can be seen that a person's right understanding of the world and life increases in accordance with the length of exposure to the moral experience.

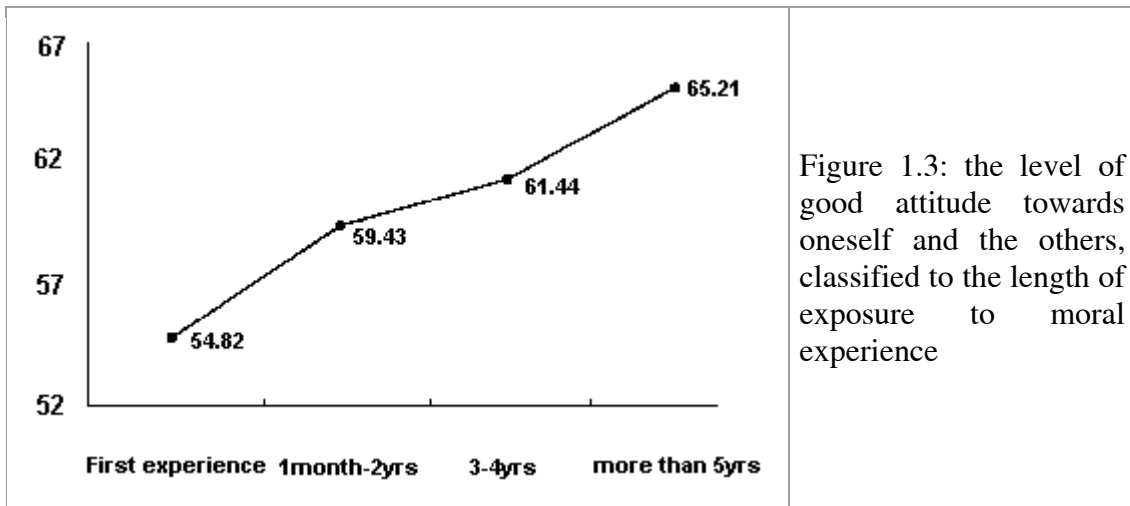


Figure 1.3: the level of good attitude towards oneself and the others, classified to the length of exposure to moral experience

From the figure, it can be seen that the level of good attitude towards oneself and the others increases according to the length of exposure to moral experience.

Besides, it was also found that people who were exposed to the moral experience continuously were the most peaceful. See figure 2.

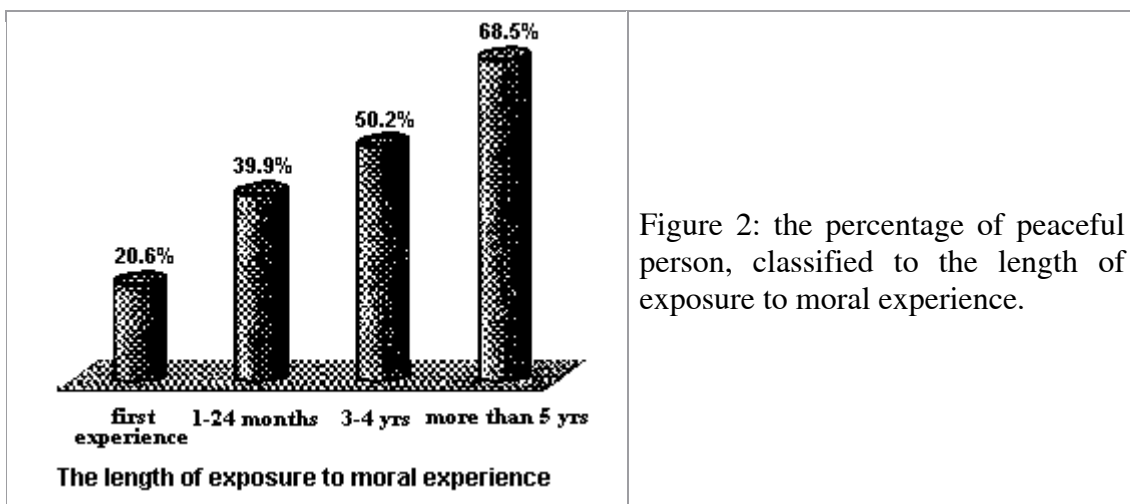


Figure 2: the percentage of peaceful person, classified to the length of exposure to moral experience.

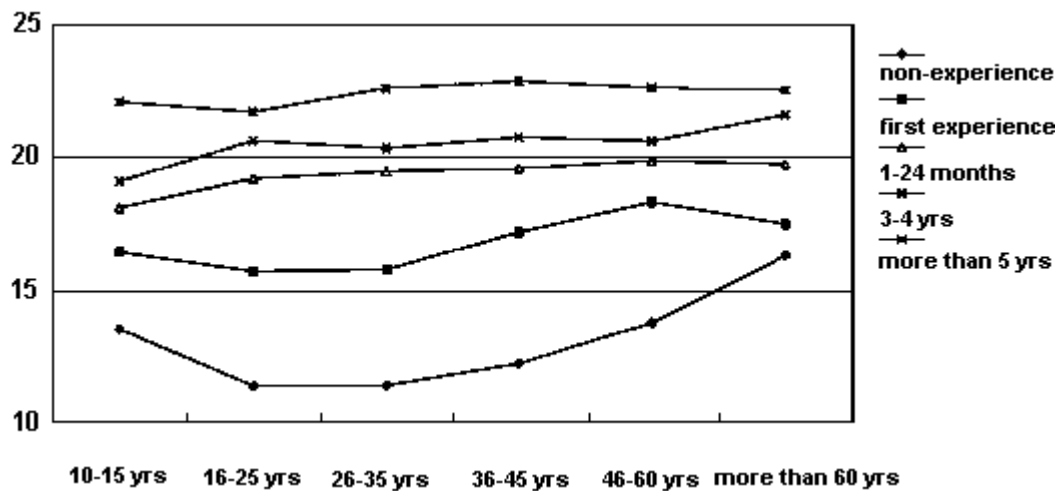
According to this findings, moral experiences play a vital role in bringing about tranquillity. This result coincides with the teachings of Vijiā-sutta. People who have been exposed to moral experience continuously and go to a temple regularly have much opportunity to

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hear the Buddha's doctrine, consequently, they will gain a right understanding of world and life, that is, they can understand what the real goal of life is. Besides, regularly going to a temple allows them to associate with good and wise people, which will also increase their level of faith. As a result, they will have right thinking, right speech, and right action.

2. Most people believe that older people who have a wide experience in life are happier than younger people with less experience. The result of this study, however, shows the facts to contrary. It was found that the age had an influence on morality in the group with non-experience of morality and with first moral experience. But the influence of age was reduced when compared to people with more exposure to moral experience.

Figure 3: The influence of age and exposure to moral experience on morality.



It can be explained that when someone has more moral experience, their moral standard will increase greatly, regardless of age. It is very interesting to note that in the group with non-experience of morality, the morality level was lower for the 16-25 age group, and then gradually increased until 45 years old. Finally we can see that between 45 and 60 years of age, the level of morality grew quickly. Even though in the group with non-

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experience of morality, those in the 60 years old category had the highest moral standards, but compared to level of morality of the group with morality experience, this category was lower than the group of the 10-15 year old who only had first moral experience. Moreover, in the group of people with 5 years continuous exposure to moral experience, the level of morality is higher than all other groups at any age.

It was also revealed that when the person lives without virtues to protect the mind, his mind looses its refuge. The daily life decisions are made on the basis of desire, without consideration of good or bad moral standards. Such people cannot distinguish between good and the evil, right and the wrong, suitable and the unsuitable, advantageous and disadvantageous. Because of the lack of right decisions in accordance to the truth, a person cannot distinguish the difference in feeling, belief, and truth. Rather this kind of person relies on emotion and belief in his own experiences to make daily life decisions than relying on the Buddha's teachings.

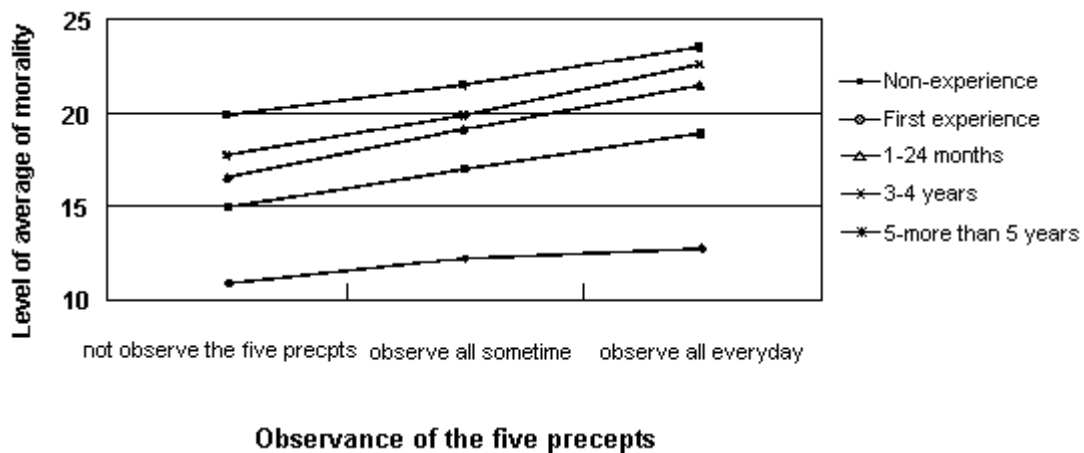
The Buddha's teaching of the Noble Truths leads to a happy and successful life. Whereas a person making decisions based on his own desires may be led on the

wrong direction. Besides, 16-25 year old have strong emotions and are prone to changeability. They erroneously believe that they are young and strong and will not die. They do things in a crazy way. However, if their energy and intelligence could be used in a creative way, it would lead to the development and happiness of society.

3. The observance of the five precepts and exposure to the moral experience greatly influences morality. The influence of the observance of the five precepts is obvious in the moral experience group. That is, the level of morality is high in accordance with the level of observance of the five precepts and the length of exposure to the moral experience. See figure 4.

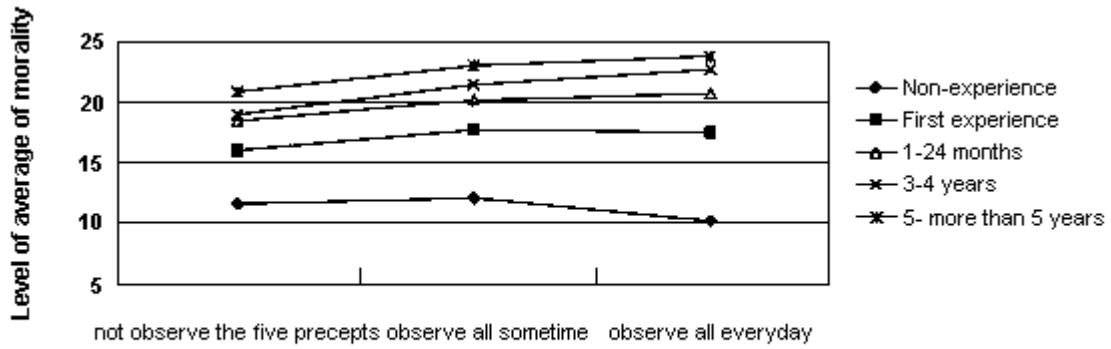
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Figure 4: The influence of observing the five precepts and exposure to the experience on morality.



The eight precepts also obviously has great influence on the level of morality. When a person is exposed to the moral experience for more than one month, the level of morality is higher in accordance with the level of observance and length of exposure to the moral experience. See figure 5.

Figure 5: The influence of observing the eight precepts and exposure to the experience on morality.

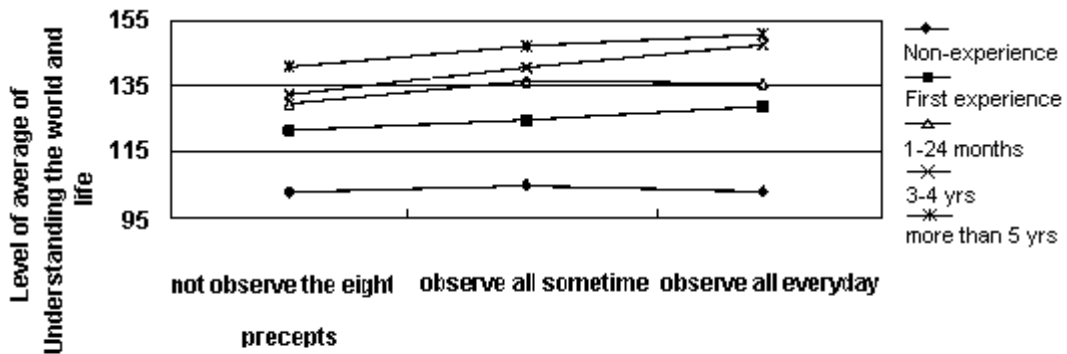


Observance of the eight precepts

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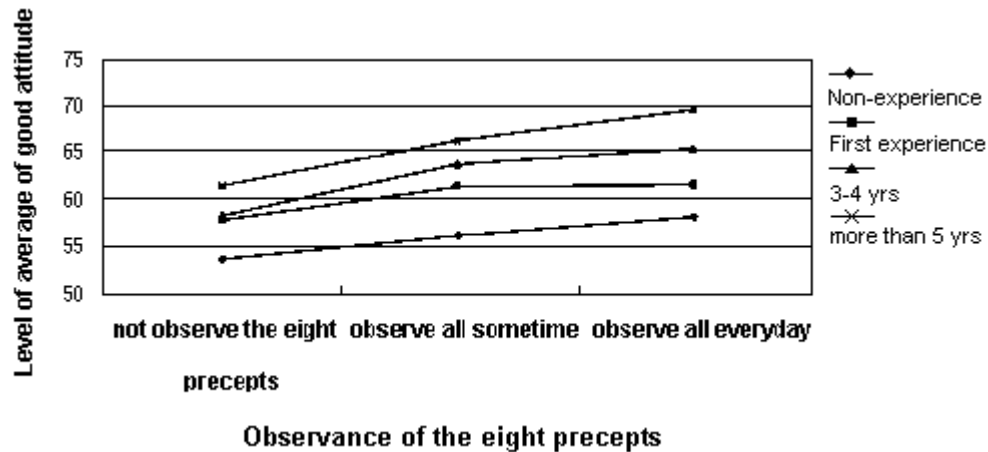
Moreover it found that the group of people who observe the five and eight precepts everyday have the highest level of right understanding of the world and life, and have a good attitude towards themselves and others. See figure 6-7.

Figure 6: The influence of observance of the eight precepts and exposure to moral experience on the understanding of the world and life.



Observance of the eight precepts

Figure 7: The influence of observance of the eight precepts and exposure to the moral experience on the attitude to oneself and others



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Those who observe the five and eight precepts everyday and have been exposed to the moral experience continuously have the highest moral standards, right understanding of the world and life, and possess a good attitude towards themselves and others. This is no doubt because the five precepts have affected them and they have adopted the following: (Kimatthiya Sutta, Aṅguttara Nikāya Ekādasakanibata)

- 1) non-suffering
- 2) delightfulness
- 3) joyfulness
- 4) peacefulness
- 5) happiness
- 6) stable-minded
- 7) intuition as actual
- 8) disenchantment
- 9) absence of lust
- 10) knowledge and vision of deliverance

These values have affect the mind of every person who observes the five precepts, even though some only observe them for a few days.

Besides, it can be seen that the influence of the eight precepts on tranquillity is the same as observance of the five precepts. But the person who observes the eight precepts is very serious in keeping the four following precepts, to abstain from 1) unchastity, 2) untimely eating, 3) dancing, singing, music and unseemly shows, and wearing garlands, using perfume, and embellishment with unguents, 4) the use of high and large luxurious couches.

The outcome of additional practice enables the person who observes the eight precepts to continuously live a calm, quiet, and simple life, and to understand the truth

of life in terms of birth, decay, sickness, and death. The feelings of discrimination based on social status and conceit are much less.

4. Through this study we can clearly conclude that anyone who

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practices meditation alongside exposure to moral experience continuously for more than 5 years will understand the world and life correctly. A person who always practices meditation and is continuously exposed to moral experience has a focused and still mind. He is without frustration. The enlightened and calm mind is in control and he is able to find the right way to live. He has the power and confidence to proceed on the righteous way.

5. It has been proved that continuous exposure to moral experience will develop a peaceful mind, and if a person practices continuously for more than 5 years, he will have the chance to be very peaceful. Not only is he continuously exposed to the moral experience, but he also has to observe the five precepts everyday. If possible, he should also take the opportunity to observe the eight precepts, if even for a short time. Observance of the precepts will make a person more careful in his action and speech. A person observes these precepts should not cause suffering either to himself or to others by 1) killing, 2) stealing, 3) sexual misconduct, 4) false, malicious, harsh and vain speech, 5) taking drugs.

Besides, he has to practice meditation more frequently, at the very least half-hour everyday. His mind will become familiar with goodness. If he does not give up his meditation practice, the mind will be powerful and suitable for work. He will make decisions based on morality and will stay peacefully and happily in society.

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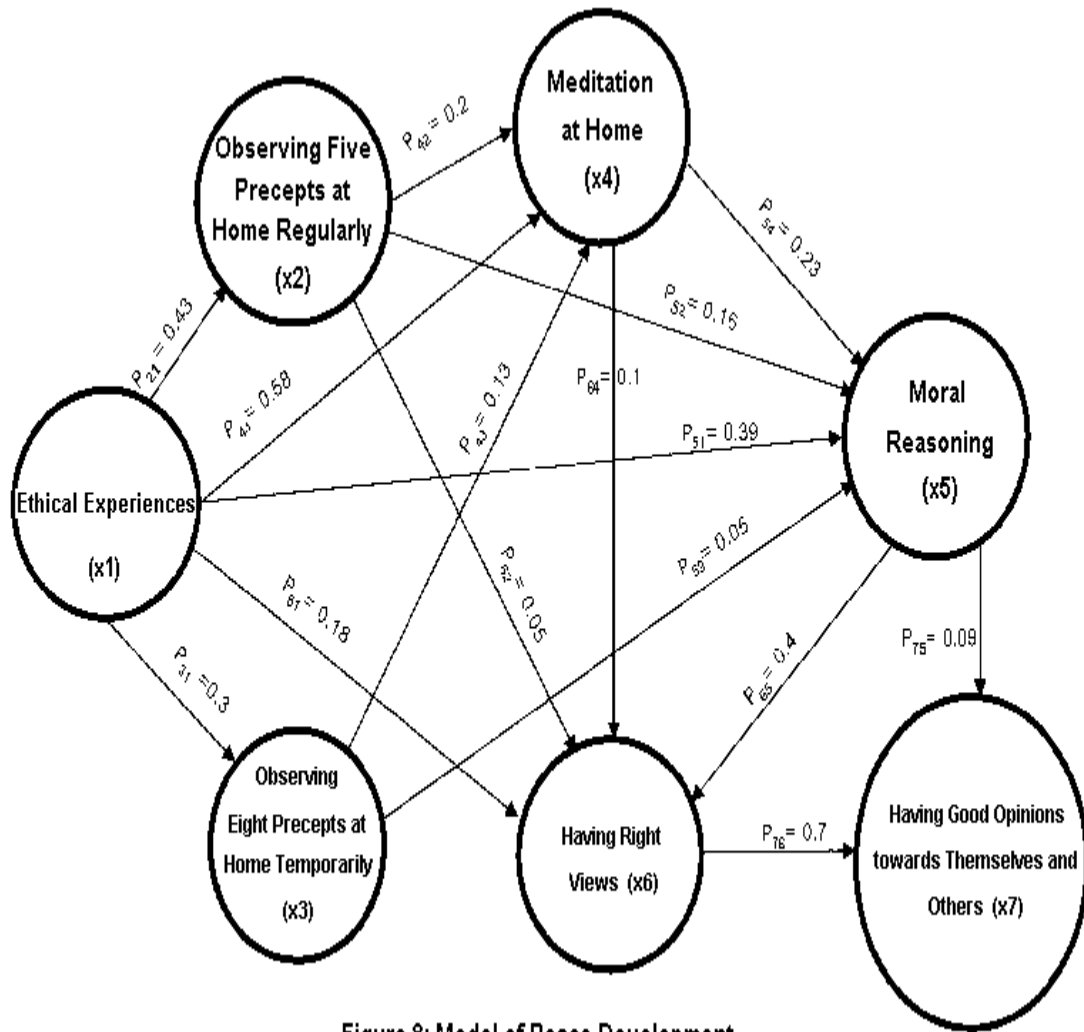


Figure 8: Model of Peace Development

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經由道德進程開展和平

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提要

基於「內在寧靜」能創造「外在和平」的理念，可推斷經由個人內心的道德訓練將有助於社會和平，因為畢竟心是一切和平的根源。如果一個人存有善心，那麼他的語言與行為也必定是良善的。

佛陀在《明經》（vijjā -sutta）的教示可作為開發內心趨向內在寧靜的法則。因此有人已經將這份教說整理成道德進程（process of morality）的訓練教材。這個進程包括親近道場、布施、聞法、持戒與修心。參與者都能獲得道德經驗的增上。這些在家庭與寺廟累積的經驗，有助於他們達到內在的寧靜與和平。

本文希望探討道德進程如何幫助行者達到內在和平。針對實際參與法身寺宗教活動的 10,010 位佛教徒收集資料，採樣分為五組：

沒有任何道德經驗的群組。

初學道德經驗的群組。

修學道德經驗 1~24 個月的群組。

修學道德經驗 3~4 年的群組。

修學道德經驗 5 年以上的群組。

研究結果發現：有五年以上的道德經驗者，較其他組別獲得更多的內在寧靜。他們有良好的品德，包括：有理性、處事有正見、善待自己及他人，以及行善。

關鍵詞： 1.內在寧靜 2.內在和平 3.道德進程 4.道德經驗 5.開展和平