

The Great Faith of
the Third
Universal Amnesty



The Five Virtues

**THE FIVE VIRTUES
OF THE THIRD AMNESTY'S
COMMANDMENTS**

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Đức Hộ Pháp PHẠM CÔNG TẮC

The Supreme being did not have the heart to watch humanity being maltreated in this deteriorated life and drown in the suffering ocean, and because of love, He came to earth three times to found the great way to guide and save living beings of the world. Oh! What a love and care of the hearty and perfect Great Supreme Being! Despite the disintegration of the secular life and the ingratitude of human hearts, the moral spirit is not in desperation. Not too long after the founding of the great way, the number of disciples amounted up to more than one million. The Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do then became a great faith. Wasn't it a joy for all of us?

Needless to say, we, as virtuous people, should follow the path of virtues and justice. Although all well said, you should know that morality would be more appreciated than the physical appearance, so would be the practice of morality than materialism.

In order to be a true virtuous person, you have to realize your virtues. Otherwise, it is like the Buddhist dress that would not make a

Boddhisattva. You should not cheat yourself, your conscience, and then commit crimes against God and Superior Spirits (Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas)

For a while, I have been watching closely the situation of our community, it's not a lack of enthusiasm and zeal in the belief, but really a lack of realization of order, politeness and courtesy as demonstrated in the relationship between disciples without sincerity and true love for each others.

Looking at the aspect of good conduct, there remains much imperfection to the point that despite His compassion, the Supreme Being has to come to the spiritism seances to reprimand. Good conduct is the door, virtue is the house. If we want to enter the house without crossing the door, would it be possible?

I am also a person searching to follow the path of virtue like you, and have seen this current trend of the faith, would you think that I would not be suffering?

Therefore, while respecting the Supreme

Being's will and confiding to you brothers and sisters disciples, I have come to consider five essential virtues of the great way entitled "*The Five Virtues Of The Third Amnesty's Commandments*" for your use. The thought may be narrow, the words simple, but if one cultivates fully those five aspects daily, the path of virtue is not far.

Since ancient history, spiritual leaders as well as philosophers have written innumerable books to explain their thoughts and theories based on the principal virtues. Confucianism uses as its basis the three duties and the five virtues, Buddhism the three commitments and the five precepts, and the way of Immortals the three treasures and the five primordial energies.

Now the Third Amnesty of the Great Way (Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do) should also follow and develop the useful human virtues as a guide for disciples. Therefore, I present and dissert on the following five virtues: Harmony, Patience, Modesty, Respect, and Love, that I declare under the "Tam Ky Ngu Duc Luong Cham" or the "Five Virtues Of The Third Amnesty's

Commandments.”

Whoever has followed the great way should understand and cultivate his/her personality to become a person of virtue. I thereafter will dissert on those virtues.

Hòa - Harmony

Harmony is concord, agreement. The Etiquette book said: " Politeness uses harmony as the precious directive," in other words, ceremonial rites although complicated can be seen as using peace or harmony for basis, because outside concordance is the manifestation of inside respect. If there is only solemn ceremony but not harmony, then no matter how elaborated is the ceremony, it is still useless and the superior spirits will not acknowledge.

Manh Tu said: "Natural condition is not as good as world opportunity, and world opportunity cannot compare with human harmony." In other words, even if the natural condition is good, world opportunity present, they may not be long lasting. The stability comes from harmony because with harmony come communication, unanimity, long lasting cooperation. Even if wind and rain are harmoniously appropriate, it is still not as good as human heart. When there is human concord, the solidarity would be like the

thousands of legs of the millipede: no one can oppress it. If each person has his/her own idea, if no body is agreeable with anybody, there would be discordance, rival, and conflict, the Tao cannot persist. And if the Tao does not exist, then what is left? Can one rely just on high citadels and deep ditches? Can one rely just on appropriate weather? In brief, harmony is stronger than iron fortress, more powerful than canon, and world opportunity and natural condition cannot compare with it.

In Tam Quoc history, Luu Tien Chua used only harmony to win over natural condition and world opportunity leading to the defeats of Tao Thao and Ton Quyen. That proved well the strength of harmony.

The Script of Kinh Thi has stated: "The harmony between Yin and Yang brings appropriate weather, the harmony between husband and wife brings successful household." The saying in Kinh Thi also stated that harmony is important for ten thousand countries. So even from heaven and earth to the monarchs, all need to base on harmony, needless to say, we all have to.

In brief, all actions need to refer to harmony as commandment. The world has to have harmony for peace, prosperity, progression and civilization, so does the family for joyful union. There should also be harmony between parents and children for enhancing piety, between siblings for love, between husband and wife for prosperity of the household, between friends for trust, between government officials for honor, between wealthy people for happiness, between virtues for perfection, and between religions for persistence.

The above is concerning the useful result of the harmony. From a practical point of view, one should understand that harmony must mean good and fair relationship. One must take it easy, be joyful, altruist, and generous. A person of harmony would always feel light, free and pure.

However, the word harmony may have other meaning. Confucius has stated: "The great man honors harmony but not partisanship, the narrow minded man honors partisanship but not harmony." The word harmony and partisanship sound very similar but are in reality very different.

Harmony reflects co-operation and fairness, without discrimination; and partisanship reflects discrimination, separation, without considering the best benefit for community and is therefore sham and valueless. One should be cautious in distinguishing between the two. Today, we are blessed by having the Supreme Being founding the great way for grant amnesty for all human beings, and harmony is extremely necessary. Why? Because any virtuous person needs to have perfect virtues of which harmony is the top. One should understand that harmony is indispensable for love and co-operation and would lead to immensely good relationship.

I offer you the harmony as a ladder to progress in your spiritual journey and please remember the four words “Hoa Khi Tu Tuong,” which mean “Harmony leads to wellness.”

Nhãn – Patience

Nhan is patience, endurance, or digestion of an insult, or holding anger, controlling adverse emotions to keep self cool and calm. Patience is a very good virtue of man. It's not easy for a person to realize this virtue in life, but it is necessary in the spiritual cultivation. Confucius stated: "Impatience in small matters leads to failure in great plans." Many times in life, who could not be patient in petty matters would experience great difficulties that may even be fatal.

In the Tang dynasty, Mr. Quach Tu Nghi, while he was in school, noticed a Buddhist teaching "A black wind blows the boat into suffering ocean" that he did not understand. He consulted a monk who answered him with anger: "You stupid child! You should not question such a high Buddhist teaching!" Mr. Quach Tu Nghi became angry with the monk who was then smiling, leisurely explaining to him that his anger was the black wind that blows his boat into suffering ocean. Tu Nghi then realized the meaning of the Buddhist

teaching, was very thankful to the monk. Oh! In this life there have been tremendous number of black winds around us that we are not aware of and that may drown our boat into that suffering ocean.

Master Tu Truong came to say farewell to Confucius and ask him for a life lesson. Confucius said: "patience is the most important virtue." Master Tu Truong asked for the reason, Confucius answered: "Without patience, the king would experience misfortune, and the country, disaster. Without patience, the officer would be in jail, siblings separated, husband and wife negligent, and friends indifferent. Who does not realize patience would experience misfortune." Master Tu Nghi exclaimed: "It's right! It's right! How difficult! How difficult! Man could not be man without patience."

There were already many examples in life, man should not be still confused. Just look at the hurricane destroying houses, the flood sinking boats, our anger is very similar that may lead to disasters. It's usually too late to realize it afterward. What a pity!

Look also at the example of Mr. Truong Cong Nghe whose family included nine generations together in a big house, never had any single small conflict, and maintained long lasting happiness. The king learned about this good example, asked him the way to maintain such a happiness with all generation members in such a big household, he replied by writing a big word "NHAN." The king wanted to witness his conduct by giving the whole family an apple, he chopped the apple into small pieces and boiled them in a big pot, then distributed equally to everyone of the family to enjoy the king's blessing. Oh! The patience of Mr. Truong Cong Nghe is really valuable. He even raised hundreds of dogs, and the whole flock would not eat if one of them was missing at meal time. His patience would have positively affected the conduct of animals. It would be a shame for anyone who learns his example without being able to realize patience.

One should distinguish patience from coward. Coward is a shame in spiritual cultivation. However, when uneducated person maltreats us brutally, if we may refrain our anger, we are not coward, and the rude person may realize his

mistake and pay more respect to us. Let's look at another example. There were two generous brothers who often helped others and therefore caused jealousy to a brutal person. The patience of the brothers only stirred more anger in him, he came to insult loudly the brothers, first from the front gate, and later inside the house. The non-reaction of the brothers could not calm him down, he spat to the face of the younger brother, who did not dare to move or to escape, but just gently wipe his face. The older brother counseled him: "Do not wipe, he would become more angry and may even hit you. Let him spit until he has no more saliva, and becomes bored and then stops. It's like wood that catches fire, fire would stop when there is no more wood." The younger brother agreed and stopped reacting, the brutal person finally realized his bad behavior, knelt down to apologize to the brothers, who then gently comforted him.

Such is a good example that we must follow especially when we are religious. There was also a saying: "if we maintain patience in all daily matters, we would have harmony in our family." Oh! At this time of competition, it's

not easy to be patient, but it's not impossible. With determination, you would succeed. If you succeed, you would be not only happy, but also have smooth and harmonious life.

Mr. Han Tin, when he was young and poor, had to crawl under the bottom of a man in the bright light at a market, and was despised by everyone. Thanks to his patience, he became later the king of the Te country.

Mr. Ngu Vien, in his hard time, had to play flute and beg for foods and was also despised by people. With patience, he became later a high powerful general of the Ngo country.

Oh! How precious and noble is the patience! Wouldn't we honor it for all our life?

Thanks to the blessings of the Supreme Being, who founded the great way for us, of course there were many difficulties at the beginning, we just need to be patient, and then we may progress to higher levels of the Tao.

The patience is like gold,

Whoever is patient would be blessed with gold by God.

Khiêm – Modesty

Modesty, humbleness are yielding, and gentle. Even the sages do not see themselves as complete. King Nghieu and king Thuan have their own imperfections. The sages are just modest, and modesty is a very useful virtue for human. Aren't people usually critical and vain, not knowing modesty? Especially people of the higher class are proud, vain, consider themselves as saints, boasting themselves, considering people as nothing, despite criticism from others.

A person without humbleness may endure a lot of damage, thus we should not ignore it. In contrary, virtuous persons are always modest. Knowing their duty, they do not dispute. To the person who comes strong, they yield; to the taller, they consider themselves as smaller, to the person who fight to get in front of people, they step back. To deal with people, they are always humble. This manner would not lower their worth, but it is in contrary, one of the high

virtue. Just like a balloon, after being held in, it reinflates without any deformity. The more you are modest, the more your value increases.

Mr. Qui Trat many times yielded the throne to the Ngo, and became venerated thereafter as Think Duc. Tien Chua did the same to Tu Chau, remained as an hero, king Vo prostrated in front of a person who said the truth, king Thang took a long walk to greet the sage. The sages and heroes of the past were so humble, always considering selves as lower than others; what are we to not be?

There have been many talented, knowledgeable people who would make completely virtuous persons, but are so arrogant without any modesty that they are the subject of despise. What a regret!

In brief, the usefulness of modesty in life demands practice. Modesty brings harmony to family, peace to community, perfection to spirituality, prosperity to religions. We cannot overlook modesty as one of the virtues of humanity. The present world is a world of

communication, if one does not have modesty, one would not be able to socialize with anybody, and thus unable to spread the Tao.

Since the Great Way has come, the Supreme Being has generously spread it. The foundation of the faith is wide, and our contribution to the faith is very important. However, it is more from the outer appearance; if one examines carefully, especially deeply in the spiritual aspect, there remains much defect in regard of the humbleness. Many people act for power but not for virtues. If you are on the path of virtues, then power and wealth are ephemeral. What counts is virtuous practice, and from modesty, comes value.

Recently, there has been some turmoil in the religious community which has hampered the good progress because of the lack of modesty from some disciples.

Nowadays, the Third Amnesty has come for the general redemption, the Supreme Being assists any of us who wishes to repent. Let us place modesty as one of the first virtues.

I therefore place modesty as one of the five

virtues in the commandments and hope that you would attentively cultivate yourself in order to become a completely virtuous person.

Cung – Respect

Respect means that in regard of all aspects of life, all actions have to reflect a sense of respect and stay away from despise. Always think you are in the middle of a ceremony even when you are in a closed room, think that you are heard and watched by a multitude of ears and eyes. A saying in Kinh Thi stated: “Always consider yourself as standing on a fragile piece of rock on the edge of a deep abyss,” which means that you have to be extremely careful in any of your single movement. Man is considered as more sacred than animals because of the respect virtue. If human beings just eat and talk as they like, laugh when comfortable, worry when in poverty, live for eighty, ninety years, have five to ten children, but otherwise remain blurred and confused without any idea about respect, would it make sense? Their actions are coarse, behavior rude, motionless like stone or copper, are they different from a scare-crow or a machine? Those

persons are just useless, and if there are many of such a kind of people in community it is very unfortunate. If one does not pay attention to the virtue respect, no way one could progress on the path of purification. However, if one can realize harmony, patience and modesty, one would not have any trouble to realize respect.

Confucius mentioned the five good virtues of the sage as: warmness, honesty, respect, modesty, and patience. The virtue respect in the middle of others denotes that this virtue is of great importance among others.

Respect between king and people brings peace: King Nghieu used modesty as a commandment in dealing with his officers and remained known as famous holy king. Respect between parents and children brings prosperity to family: King Thuan paid respect to his parents for all his life and remained famous for his great piety. Respect between siblings brings love: Mr. Ly Tich was a great mandarin, although very old, but still paid respect to his older sister; one day, the sister was sick, he himself prepared porridge for her and got burned to his beard; the sister said: "we have

many servants, why do you have to do all that?" he replied: "you are now old, so am I, I wonder if later I may be any more able to cook for you?"

Respect between husband and wife brings harmonious conjugal love: The Khuoc Khuyet couple respected each other like distinguished guests, when he went to work on the field, she prepared and served meals attending respectfully to him until he finished. One day, a dignitary passing by saw the scene, reported to king Tan, who then rewarded the husband with a dignitary rank. Thus "the docile wife makes her husband a mandarin."

Respect between friends brings long lasting relationship. Tien Chua, Quan Thanh, and Truong Phi vowed at the Peach Garden, to be faithful brothers for life in all situations. Their mutual respect remains a bright example for human beings. When we reminisce those stories, we are moved deeply.

The two virtues modesty and respect have a close relationship in the five virtues. The Supreme Being has love to us, brings the great way to us, this is the time to go on the path. And part of the

purification relies on modesty and respect. What is modesty and respect?

I'm sure you have some idea from the text I recently mentioned. However, many disciples either have not understood or did not pay attention. Many lacked of modesty and respect and used outer appearance to deal with each other, showing despise for people. If we are brothers and sisters of the same faith, why do we discriminate and contemn each other? Please use morality to review the behavior, this really makes us ashamed.

Many people come to the temple, a solemn place, and do not show respect, continue to walk around in a rude manner just like if they go to a bar, talk coarsely without any respect. How detestable!

Pray for the Tao! needless to comment.

That is why I keep repeating for you this virtue respect in the Five Virtues of The Third Amnesty's Commandments.

I hope that all disciples would pay attention to this.

Ái – Love

Loving man (Nhan ai) and universal love to all living beings are not the love in human emotions (seven emotions). Man who has all other virtues such as harmony, patience, modesty, and respect would open his heart easily to have universal love. Religious persons who have realized love would be considered as liberated.

Confucius said: “The sage who studies the Tao is a loving person. The narrow minded person who studies the Tao is an obeying person.” There was also a saying: “Only may a Holy man love a hating person,” which denotes that even Holy person need to consider love as the most important virtue. In discussing on virtues, one would consider love as the first virtue, because once one loves humanity, one would understand humanity and then would indicate virtues for humanity to follow.

Confucius appreciates the love to humanity such as in the case of Duong Chau who has appreciated love and modesty.

Buddhism uses as basis love and compassion. Sakya Muni said: "If any living being has not become Buddha, I would not."

In Christianity, there was a saying: "Forget the self to love others." Jesus Christ said: I would stay on the cross until no more man would commit crime."

We may see that previous religious prophets founded religions to save humanity just because of love.

Thanks to love, people may live together in harmony and happiness, and only love may bring one to another in good relationship. An old saying stated: "People in the four corners of the world are like in one family." Being a human being, people have the same body and the same conscience regardless of races and countries. They are all brothers and sisters of one same family, if they love each other without discrimination, there would be no competition, and peace and prosperity would prevail on earth. If people are selfish, there would be no love to others, they consider others as enemies, they would be not better than animals





God and Humanity
Love and Justice

