THE TEN USEFUL AND TEN HARMFUL ACTIONS

All beings want to have happiness and avoid suffering. To achieve this, Buddha gave appropriate advice to live a happy and meaningful life for oneself and others.

Through positive actions, good impressions are built up in the mind, leading to deep confidence and the development of all abilities and qualities.

Negative actions are performed out of basic ignorance and dualistic view because one does not realize that ultimately everything we do, think and say reflects back on oneself.

Buddhist teachings on cause and effect are aimed at mindful and conscious use of body, speech and mind. In Buddhist meditation, one practices creating enough distance from disturbing feelings and confused concepts so that stuck habitual patterns accumulated through many lifetimes dissolve. One gains more and more distance from everything constricting and disturbing, and becomes more and more able to experience the fearlessness, joy, and boundless compassion of enlightenment.

Therefore, on the level of the body, Buddha gave the following advice:
1. protect life
2. be generous
3. practice sexual behavior that creates happiness

In contrast, one should
1. not kill
2. not take what has not been given to you
3. avoid any form of sexual coercion (of others)

On the level of speech, which can reach a lot of people and has a correspondingly great effect, Buddha gave the following advice:
1. tell the truth
2. create harmony
3. speak calmly and confidently
4. speak sensibly

In contrast, one should
1. not lie
2. not conspire and slander
3. not speak rudely and hurtfully
4. not talk senselessly

Often people are not aware of the effects of negative speech. For example, lying damages any relationship of trust and also confuses one's own mind. The biggest lie would be the one about a non-existent spiritual realization. A "false" guru builds up negative karma and, according to Buddha, blocks the development of his followers for many lifetimes. Intriguing and backbiting leads to rebirth in completely obscure circumstances and unfavorable living conditions. Meaningless chatter makes people dumb and in the long run one remains unappreciated.

On the level of the mind, Buddha gave the following advice:
1. be frugal and content
2. be benevolent
3. develop the correct view that cause and effect work without exception

In contrast, one should
1. avoid greed and do not envy
2. do not be malicious and hateful
3. not to have wrong views about cause and effect

Malice has a particularly negative effect. It arises from rejection and fear. One can hardly stand to see others doing well and reacts with reluctance and even anger. Hatred and anger destroy all good impressions in the mind in an instant.

Finally, having wrong views means that you think you can trick cause and effect and be right with a truth of your own making. A wrong view is also shown in the assumption that everything experienced is real and permanent.

Disturbing feelings and sorrowful actions result from the fundamental ignorance, because an independently existing I, which is separated from the outside world, is experienced. Once this dualistic view is overcome, liberation is attained. The meaning of Buddha's teaching and the goal of all Buddhist meditation is to dissolve being trapped in this dualistic delusion.

The more body, speech and mind work together, the stronger the results.

Breathing and mindfulness meditations of all Buddhist schools help to achieve more distance from inner and outer experiences in this context. The resulting calmness of mind allows the freedom to leave suffering behind and to decide in favor of behavior that brings happiness. One no longer takes things personally and, through the resulting freedom, is able to act meaningfully and powerfully for the good of all beings.