
The Model of Bodhisattva Precepts Practice for Sustainable Cultivation Development in Chinese Buddhism in Modern Society

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Abstract

This study employs a qualitative documentary research design to examine the practice of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism in the context of modern society. The research has three objectives: (1) to investigate the evolutionary values and effects of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism in modern society; (2) to identify ways to promote the sustainable cultivation and development of bodhisattva precepts practice; and (3) to propose a model of bodhisattva precepts practice for sustainable cultivation and development in Chinese Buddhism in modern society. Data were collected from primary Buddhist texts, Chinese and English academic studies, and modern literature related to Buddhist ethics, cultivation, and contemporary social development. The data were analyzed through descriptive, thematic, analytical, and interpretive approaches.

The findings show that bodhisattva precepts have maintained enduring significance in Chinese Buddhism through their strong ethical foundation, adaptability, and capacity to respond to changing historical and social conditions. Their continuity across Chinese Mahāyāna traditions demonstrates both doctrinal resilience and practical relevance. The study further finds that sustainable cultivation development depends on several interrelated conditions, including continuous study, systematic training, precept ordination, ongoing preaching and learning, adaptation to contemporary social life, and constructive integration with broader social and developmental agendas. On this basis, the study proposes a model of bodhisattva precept practice comprising six interdependent dimensions: mental content, theory, practice, system, adaptation, and application. In this model, bodhicitta serves as the moral foundation; theory provides guidance; practice forms the cultivation path; the system sustains continuity; adaptation ensures relevance; and application extends the model's social function. The study concludes that this model offers a feasible framework for strengthening sustainable ethical cultivation in modern Chinese

Buddhism and for extending the contemporary relevance of bodhisattva precepts in both religious and socially engaged contexts.

Keywords: Bodhisattva Precepts; Sustainable Cultivation Development; Chinese Buddhism; Bodhicitta; Buddhist ethics

Introduction

Bodhisattva precepts have long occupied a central position in the ethical and spiritual formation of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism. Since the transmission of Buddhism into China, bodhisattva precept literature, ordination traditions, and interpretive commentaries have contributed to the formation of a distinct Buddhist ethical culture. Over time, these precepts were not only preserved as doctrinal teachings but also adapted to different schools, monastic systems, and patterns of lay practice. Studies have shown their importance in the development of Chan traditions, the shaping of Mahāyāna moral discipline, and the broader evolution of Chinese Buddhist practice (Lin, 2017; Peng, 2016; Yifa, 2005).

This historical importance does not remove the need for renewed inquiry. In modern Chinese society, rapid social transformation, new educational structures, shifting state-religion relations, urbanization, and changing modes of everyday life have created conditions that differ markedly from earlier Buddhist contexts. Under these circumstances, the practice of bodhisattva precepts cannot be sustained merely through textual preservation or ritual continuity. It must also be transmitted through systematic cultivation, practical guidance, institutional support, and forms of adaptation that remain faithful to Mahāyāna ethical principles while responding to contemporary realities.

Existing scholarship has provided valuable insights into the history of bodhisattva precepts, doctrinal interpretation, and certain modes of practical application, yet the field remains imbalanced. Much of the literature emphasizes origins, scriptural authority, or sectarian interpretation, while relatively few studies examine how bodhisattva precepts may be cultivated sustainably in present-day Chinese Buddhism (Chiu, 2019; Xia, 2019). This gap is significant because sustainable cultivation involves more than moral instruction alone; it requires an integrated framework that connects inner motivation, theory, practice, institutional continuity, adaptability, and social application.

At the same time, recent Buddhist scholarship has increasingly highlighted the value of integrating Buddhist ethical resources with contemporary forms of

human development, systematic thought, and social well-being. Studies on peace, systematic thinking, and Buddhist integration suggest that traditional teachings remain relevant when translated into coherent, practical models for modern life (Mahatthanadull & Mahatthanadull, 2018; Mahatthanadull et al., 2024; Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull, 2022). Accordingly, this study employs qualitative documentary research to examine the values, effects, and practical pathways of bodhisattva precepts in modern Chinese Buddhism and to propose a model for their sustainable cultivation and development (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). In doing so, it seeks to bridge the gap between classical Mahāyāna ethics and contemporary Buddhist practice in Chinese society.

Research Objectives

1. To study the evolutionary values and effects of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.
2. To study the ways for sustainable cultivation and development of bodhisattva precepts practice in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.
3. To present the model of bodhisattva precepts practice (BPP) for sustainable cultivation development (SCD) in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.

Literature Review

The study of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism occupies an important place in the broader field of Mahāyāna Buddhist ethics, yet research has tended to focus more on doctrinal origins, textual transmission, and sectarian interpretation than on sustainable models of practice in contemporary society. Existing scholarship has shown that bodhisattva precepts played a formative role in the development of Chinese Buddhist moral life and were deeply integrated into the ethical self-understanding of Mahāyāna traditions. In particular, studies on the Brahma Net Sūtra and related precept traditions demonstrate that bodhisattva precepts were not merely disciplinary rules, but also vehicles for cultivating bodhicitta, compassion, and morally oriented social action (Lin, 2017; Yifa, 2005). This suggests that bodhisattva precepts have historically functioned as both doctrinal standards and living guides for cultivation.

Scholars have also emphasized that Chinese Buddhism did not simply inherit Indian precept systems unchanged; rather, it adapted them to local cultural,

institutional, and philosophical contexts. The long historical development of bodhisattva precepts in China, therefore, reflects a process of ethical localization in which scriptural authority, monastic discipline, lay participation, and school-specific interpretations evolved together. Research on Chinese Buddhist history and moral formation indicates that bodhisattva precepts became widely accepted across major Mahāyāna schools and acquired enduring legitimacy as a flexible ethical framework (Peng, 2016). This adaptability helps explain their continuity despite historical disruptions and changing social conditions.

At the same time, the modern study of bodhisattva precepts remains uneven. Although there are historical and doctrinal works on precept development, relatively few studies focus specifically on bodhisattva precepts as a practical system of cultivation in contemporary Chinese society. Existing research often stops at textual exposition or institutional history, leaving underdeveloped the question of how bodhisattva precepts may be practiced sustainably under conditions of modernization, social transformation, and ethical pluralism (Chiu, 2019; Xia, 2019). This is a significant gap because modern society requires forms of Buddhist cultivation that are not only doctrinally valid but also pedagogically structured, socially relevant, and practically sustainable.

Recent Buddhist scholarship has begun to move toward broader integrative frameworks that connect Buddhist ethics with contemporary human development, social harmony, and peace-oriented practice. Studies on Buddhist ethical living, mindfulness, and social applications suggest that Buddhist principles can contribute to modern life when presented through coherent systems of training, interpretation, and application (Mahatthanadull & Mahatthanadull, 2018; Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull, 2022). Similarly, work on Buddhist models of well-being and applied ethics indicates that traditional teachings can remain relevant when they are adapted to current needs without losing their doctrinal core (Mahatthanadull et al., 2024). These studies are important because they provide a conceptual basis for understanding bodhisattva precepts not only as inherited moral rules, but also as a dynamic ethical resource.

Nevertheless, a clear research gap remains. Current scholarship has yet to adequately develop a systematic model that integrates the historical values, practical mechanisms, institutional supports, adaptive strategies, and broader applications of bodhisattva precepts in modern Chinese Buddhism. The present study addresses this gap by synthesizing the historical, theoretical, and practical dimensions of bodhisattva precepts and by proposing a model for sustainable

cultivation development. In doing so, it extends the literature from descriptive analysis toward model-oriented understanding and contributes to both Buddhist studies and applied ethical research in contemporary Chinese society.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is as follows:

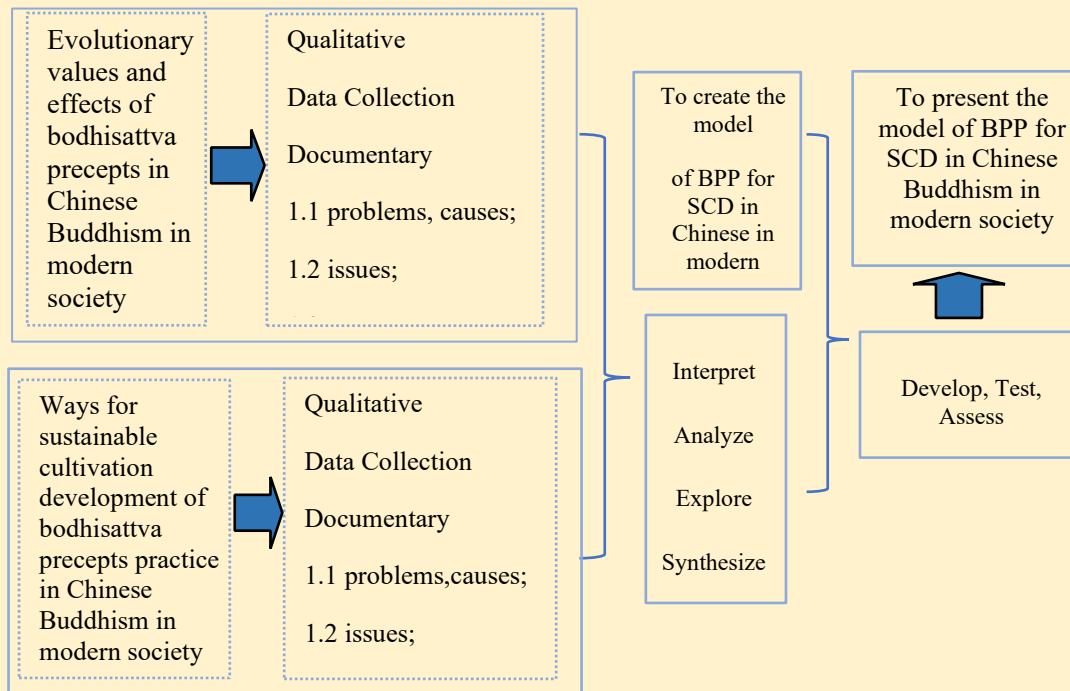


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

As shown in the conceptual framework above, data collection for the first two objectives has been conducted using a qualitative research method, with problems, relevant causes, and solutions studied. Data analysis and interpretation have been conducted to develop a model of bodhisattva precept practice aligned with the third objective. Through final analytical and practical studies, a model of bodhisattva precept practice for sustainable cultivation development has been clearly established through careful development and assessment.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative research design to develop “The Model of Bodhisattva Precepts Practice for Sustainable Cultivation Development in Chinese Buddhism in Modern Society”. Given the interpretive and theoretical nature of the objectives, this methodology is appropriate for in-depth documentary study and theoretical synthesis. The study examines the

evolutionary values and effects of BPP (Objective 1), identifies ways to SCD BPP (Objective 2), and presents a final model of BPP for SCD in Chinese Buddhism in modern society (Objective 3).

The data for this study consist of textual and scholarly materials categorized as follows:

Primary Sources: Original Buddhist texts related to bodhisattva precepts, including key scriptures from the Chinese Tripitaka and their English translated counterparts (e.g., Brahma Net Sūtra, Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra).

Secondary Sources: Modern academic literature, including books, research articles, and dissertations in Chinese and English, focusing on the values, theory, and practice of bodhisattva precepts in modern Chinese Buddhism. These include analyses of contemporary Buddhist models.

Data collection was conducted using modern academic instruments, such as specialized databases (e.g., CNKI, JSTOR, and major university libraries) and digital search tools, to support comprehensive and targeted qualitative studies.

The collected documentary data were subjected to a multi-stage qualitative analysis to achieve the research objectives:

Thematic and Descriptive Analysis (Objective 1 & 2): Data were first analyzed using descriptive and thematic theories to categorize and synthesize existing knowledge regarding the evolutionary values and contemporary practice ways of bodhisattva precepts. This involved charting historical trends and identifying recurring themes of ethical application.

Analytical and Interpretive Analysis (Objective 1 & 2): Analytical and interpretive theories were applied to assess the significance and underlying reasons for the identified values and ways. This stage determined the efficacy and sustainability of current practices while simultaneously identifying the scholarly and practical gaps that necessitate a new model.

Model Synthesis (Objective 3): The final stage involved theoretical synthesis, in which the analyzed values, effective approaches, and identified gaps were integrated using systems thinking and principles of sustainable development to propose a new, comprehensive BPP-SCD model. This process involved interpreting foundational Buddhist doctrines to establish the model's core (e.g.,

bodhicitta) and applying modern organizational principles to establish its practical system.

In conclusion, the methodology, centered on rigorous qualitative documentary study and multifaceted theoretical analysis, ensures a systematic approach to developing the BPP-SCD Model. By grounding the study in foundational Buddhist texts and critically synthesizing contemporary academic literature, this research establishes the empirical and theoretical basis needed to propose a feasible and sustainable model of BPP for SCD in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.

Research Results

Objective 1: The evolutionary values and effects of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism in modern society

Four points have been found related to evolutionary values and effects of bodhisattva precepts for sustainable cultivation development in Chinese Buddhism in modern society: (1) evolutionary development features; (2) evolutionary practice features; (3) evolutionary values and positive effects; (4) evolutionary negative effects.

Firstly, by reference to literature records in Chinese Tripitaka in ancient Chinese Buddhism, three aspects have presented the evolutionary development features: (1) development stages of bodhisattva precepts; (2) increase of commentaries and works on bodhisattva precepts; (3) the elevating status of bodhicitta-based bodhisattva precepts, with bodhisattva precepts of Brahma Net Sūtra as the most popular type until modern times.

Secondly, it has been found that the evolutionary practice features of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism could be illustrated by three points: (1) bodhisattva precepts practice as the complementary type; (2) mental cultivation as the major theme of bodhisattva precept practice; (3) the application of skillfulness in bodhisattva precept practice.

Thirdly, three aspects have been found as the evolutionary values and positive effects of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism in modern society: (1) continuity of bodhisattva precept ordination; (2) universal welcome and acceptance by all Chinese Mahāyāna schools and Mahāyāna Buddhists; (3) high

adaptability and suitability for modern China's development blueprint and Chinese people's spiritual health and pursuit.

Fourthly, the negative evolutionary effects of BPP in Chinese Buddhism in modern society have been identified: improper records of bodhisattva precepts; translated bodhisattva precept sūtras with unclear translators; Buddhists' improper understanding of bodhisattva precept practice, ordination, and violations; practitioners' wrong attitudes toward bodhisattva precept practice, etc. In addition, due to historical changes in secular society and in Buddhism, such as dynasty changes, natural disasters, social ups and downs, Buddhist persecutions, practitioners' low awareness of the importance of bodhisattva precepts, etc., bodhisattva precept practice has not been systematic and has not been as beneficial as was recorded in sūtras.

Through exploration and analysis, important values and positive effects serve as key reference data for setting up a model. Comparatively, relevant factors related to negative effects or the opposite of positive effects will be avoided by designing the model to achieve sustainable cultivation development.

Objective 2: Ways for sustainable cultivation development (SCD) of bodhisattva precepts practice (BPP) in Chinese Buddhism in modern society

Six aspects have been found suitable as ways for SCD of BPP in Chinese Buddhism in modern society: (1) continuous studies on theory and practice of bodhisattva precepts as the way for SCD of BPP; (2) positive and cooperative response to governmental policies and social needs as the way for SCD of BPP; (3) adaptation to people's preferred healthy activities as the way for SCD of BPP; (4) holding bodhisattva precept ordination as the way for SCD of BPP; (5) continuous bodhisattva precepts learning and preaching as the way for SCD of BPP; (6) twofold application between SDGs and bodhisattva precepts practice as ways for SCD of BPP in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.

(1) The studies on bodhisattva precepts have been continuous. Such continuity reflects the sustained study of bodhisattva precepts; it contributes to the historical analysis of those precepts; and it confers significant advantages for BPP in Chinese Buddhism in modern society, both directly and indirectly. The direct advantage of influence is the continuous devotion to the bodhisattva precepts, theory, and practice, which generates wholesome karma rooted in bodhicitta and brings a series of benefits to Buddhists and scholars. The indirect

advantage of influence is the ongoing research on bodhisattva precepts, which is conducive to Buddhist academic studies, cultural inheritance, and social ethics.

(2) It has been analyzed and clearly found that governmental policies and rulers' attitudes are different in ancient China and modern China, which requires the adaptability of BPP to the Buddhist contemporary situation in modern China. There is a freedom-of-religion policy in modern China. The Chinese government aims to establish a people-centered government that serves the people and the country. Such a people-centered value is properly consistent with bodhicitta-based BPP and even with the very spirit of Mahāyāna. This requires a cooperative and positive response to modern Chinese governmental policies during the BPP process, as they largely share the aims of people's well-being, a people-centered service ethos, and a morality-based legal approach.

(3) It has been found that the content of bodhisattva precepts practice (BPP) has been innovated with new characteristics, no longer restricted to items of bodhisattva precepts recorded in Buddhist scriptures. In modern Chinese Buddhism, the content adaptation of BPP is mainly reflected in people's preferred healthy activities, such as charity, animal release, medical services, volunteering, and online activities. People are increasingly drawn to Chan tea culture, meditation, calligraphy, copying Buddhist scriptures by hand, and chanting sūtras. Therefore, it is necessary to thoroughly understand and analyze the role of BPP in these Buddhist and social activities, which will help improve BPP's adaptation to sustainable activities in modern society.

(4) It has been found that holding bodhisattva precept ordination is the essential way for SCD of BPP in Chinese Buddhism in modern society, which is very important for practitioners to obtain the essence of bodhisattva precepts during bodhisattva precept ordination. Bodhisattva precept ordination has become increasingly popular, with the growing number of independent bodhisattva precept ordinations as a typical sign in modern Chinese Buddhism.

(5) In view of the popularity and contribution of bodhisattva precept learning and preaching in modern Chinese Buddhism, in view of the fact that people have not fully understood bodhisattva precepts in content and value although great masters have been devoted to bodhisattva precepts preaching, it is necessary to treat learning and preaching bodhisattva precepts as the fifth way for sustainable cultivation development of bodhisattva precepts practice in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.

(6) Twofold application between SDGs and bodhisattva precept practice for sustainable cultivation development in Chinese Buddhism in modern society has been interpreted and analyzed as follows:

The first is the application of SDGs to the practice of bodhisattva precepts. Among 17 goals of SDGs, such as Goal 1 No Poverty, Goal 2 Zero Hunger, Goal 3 Good Health and Well-being, Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, Goal 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, Goal 13 Climate Action, Goal 14 Life below Water, Goal 15 Life on Land, these goals are closely related with bodhisattva precepts practice, because the content of bodhisattva precepts practice includes all wholesome dharma or moral activities. Moreover, the content of SDGs is close to people's social life and environment, so that the application of SDGs to bodhisattva precepts practice will make bodhisattva precepts practice more suitable and adaptable to people's daily life and social needs. Generally speaking, applying the SDGs to the practice of bodhisattva precepts is a necessary choice for the sustainable cultivation and development of that practice in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.

The second is the application of BPP, based on bodhicitta, to the SDGs, which elevates the SDGs to a higher level of moral development and within the entire ecological system. In the bodhisattva precepts of Brahma Net Sūtra, there are 10 grave precepts and 48 light precepts, among which grave precept 1 (non-killing), light precept 2 (drinking alcohol), light precept 3 (eating meat), light precept 20 (not releasing), light precept 32 (hurting beings), are typically related to SDGs. Moreover, the practice of bodhisattva precepts is much superior because it is based on bodhicitta, loving-kindness, and compassion, so that SDGs grounded in this practice will bring harmony, peace, and happiness to people and society, and will ultimately achieve coexistence between humanity and nature.

Objective 3: The model of bodhisattva precepts practice (BPP) for sustainable cultivation development (SCD) in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.

The necessities for creating a BPP model for SCD in Chinese Buddhism in modern society have been identified and analyzed from the following three aspects.

Firstly, nine factors evidently and convincingly form sustainable factors for creating the model of BPP for SCD in Chinese Buddhism in modern society: (1) bodhicitta; (2) adaptability; (3) theory; (4) practice; (5) subjective efforts; (6) system; (7) integration with modern elements; (8) easy replication; (9) skillful application.

Secondly, in addition to these nine sustainable factors in Chinese Buddhism in modern society, other factors which impede people from being able to sustain cultivation include: (1) limited time, busy and engaged in daily things; (2) no notion or intention to constantly keep practicing bodhisattva precepts; (3) no awareness of the importance and value of BPP; (4) no integration or adaptation perfectly into people's daily life, with BPP disconnected from daily activities; (5) imbalanced development of bodhisattva precepts, more on theory rather than practice.

Thirdly, based on the above nine sustainable factors and ten unsustainable factors, the necessities for creating the model of BPP for SCD in Chinese Buddhism in modern society have been found and concluded:

1. Complex and diverse factors that influence SCD of BPP require setting up a systematic model.

2. SCD requires a model to form the habit of BPP.

3. SCD requires a model to balance and manage all factors effectively and efficiently to work together by integration and cooperation.

4. The benefit and advantage of setting up a model: (1) establishing BPP system; (2) visible process and schedule for cultivation; (3) easily discovering weak points for cultivation; (4) improving confidence and diligence in cultivation; (5) a bridge between theory and practice; (6) convincing and trustworthy standard disciplines and projects; (7) guaranteeing macro management and micro cultivation.

5. The imperfect situation of BPP and the negative effects of BPP have impeded SCD, making it necessary to set up a model for sustainable cultivation.

6. BPP is not systematic, because just bodhisattva precept ordination, theoretical works, adapting people's favor, and governmental policies are not sufficient to achieve SCD of BPP in modern Chinese Buddhism.

In general, it could be convincing that only a model could successfully and systematically run through the abundant and diverse factors related to BPP. Moreover, extensive cooperation, adaptation, and integration are required for creating the model. Meanwhile, it is necessary to overcome certain barriers in creating the model to integrate Buddhist wisdom, cultivation, faith, and modern science.

To develop the model of BPP for SCD in Chinese Buddhism in modern society, the following aspects should be included based on data collection and analysis by documentary studies: 1. Notion and aims of the model; 2. Content of the Model.

1. The Notion and Aims of the Model

The model's notion and aims are so significant that they should be illustrated first in developing the model. The model is based on bodhicitta, developing the Buddha's loving-kindness, compassion, and wisdom by integrating modern elements to adapt to people's needs and to support the development of the country, society, and culture in various aspects. The model's aims can be explained from different perspectives. The direct aim of the model is to achieve SCD of BPP in Chinese Buddhism in modern society. The final aim of the model is to benefit people, the country, society, and the world in the long run, to maintain balance among different sustainable development factors, and to guide people toward ultimate happiness based on bodhicitta.

2. Content of the Model

Based on the above research findings, the content of the model should include the following six aspects: (1) mental content; (2) theory; (3) practice; (4) system; (5) adaptation; (6) application. The model content plays a decisive role in developing the model reasonably, logically, and successfully. Therefore, the content should be elaborated in great detail in this part to ensure a feasible and practical model establishment.

(1) Mental content

Since this model is for bodhisattva precepts practice, the mental content as the subjective factor of the model refers to a series of practitioners' mental activities, including setting up deep faith in bodhisattva precepts practice, generating bodhicitta by vow and by action, cultivating power of diligence, making great

bodhisattva vows, eradicating defilement, making confession for violating bodhisattva precepts by body, speech and mind, returning merits to all beings, etc.

(2) Theory

Theory offers instruction to practice. Without the right theory, there is no right practice. Therefore, the theory of this model serves an instructive function. Bodhisattva precepts are the primary theoretical content of this model, and related sūtra translations, commentaries, works, and other studies have been produced since the transmission of bodhisattva precepts to China. Furthermore, other bodhisattva theories related to bodhisattva precepts, such as bodhicitta, bodhisattva vows, and the bodhisattva path, will also be included when necessary.

In addition to the bodhisattva theory, other Buddhist doctrines required by the model will be used, such as Dependent Arising, Two Truths, and the Middle Way. In addition to theoretical content related to the BPP model for SCD, other secular theories will be used in this model, such as social laws, political policies, environmental protection, and management.

(3) Practice

The practice of bodhisattva precepts is the core practice of this model. The key feature of practicing bodhisattva precepts in this model is skillfulness, which could help guide people to gradually and sustainably form the habit of practicing bodhisattva precepts. Skillful practice and habitual practice could help the model achieve SCD of BPP. For the practice component of the model, a series of five aspects has been selected and listed: practice types, practitioners, practice content, practice ways, and practice steps.

(4) System

The system is the sustainable core of this model, which helps link mutually influencing content and operate the model systematically and sustainably. In this model, a series of systematic aspects should be established: system of mental cultivation; system of model theory; system of model practice; system of model feedback and follow-up; system of model transmission; system of model management; system of model development; system of model localization.

(5) Adaptation

Adaptation is the adaptable and acceptable content of this model, which determines its transmission and development, because only the model's proper adaptation to people, society, and the environment can enable it to be widely accepted and popularly developed. In this model, adaptation content includes: adapting to bodhicitta; adapting to Buddha Dharma; adapting to notion and aims of the model; adapting to rules of BPP; adapting to rules of SCD; adapting to secular laws; adapting to people's capacity; adapting to people's favor and need; adapting to cultivation levels; adapting to mental development features and situation; adapting to contemporary development in society, economy, culture and politics; adapting to policies.

(6) Application

Application is the functional content of this model. It refers to the model's application across various areas, so that it fulfills its function and achieves its aims through multiple uses. The basic applications of this model include: application to monastic members; application to Buddhists; application to people in various secular jobs; application to various moral activities regardless of religion, race, nation, occupation, or financial level; etc., especially to the SDGs. One key feature of the application is skillfulness. To achieve widespread and effective application, skillfulness is crucial in applying bodhisattva precepts to daily life and social activities. It is fortunate that skillful means are permissible and widely applied in the cultivation of bodhisattva precepts, with bodhicitta as the basic line. To some extent, with skillfulness, the practice of bodhisattva precepts has no limits in environment, behavior, object, identity, theory, capacity, career, time, space, religion, etc., making universal value possible through limitless application.

Discussion

The findings of this study may be discussed in direct relation to the three research objectives. First, regarding the evolutionary values and effects of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism in modern society, the study demonstrates that they have maintained their significance not merely through scriptural preservation but also through their capacity for adaptation, institutional continuity, and moral relevance. This finding is consistent with earlier scholarship showing that bodhisattva precepts became deeply integrated into the

ethical life of Chinese Mahāyāna traditions and were interpreted in ways that supported both inner cultivation and communal religious life (Lin, 2017; Peng, 2016; Yifa, 2005). The present study extends this line of interpretation by showing that their enduring value is both functional and historical: bodhisattva precepts remain significant because they continue to provide a viable framework for disciplined compassion and morally oriented practice under modern conditions.

At the same time, the study identifies negative effects and limitations, including incomplete transmission, inadequate understanding, weak systematic training, and historical disruptions in practice. This is an important contribution because it shows that the sustainability of the practice of bodhisattva precepts cannot be assumed solely from textual authority or religious prestige. Ethical traditions remain effective only when doctrinal legitimacy is supported by pedagogical clarity, institutional continuity, and lived applicability. In this respect, the findings move beyond a purely celebratory account of bodhisattva precepts and offer a more balanced interpretation of their current state.

Second, regarding ways to develop sustainable cultivation, the findings indicate that sustainability depends on an interrelated set of educational, institutional, adaptive, and practical conditions. Continuous study, ordination, preaching, adaptation to social realities, and constructive engagement with broader social concerns work together as a cultivation ecology rather than as isolated variables. This interpretation resonates with contemporary Buddhist scholarship that emphasizes systematic thinking and integrative approaches to applying Buddhist principles to modern life (Mahatthanadull & Mahatthanadull, 2018; Mahatthanadull et al., 2024; Piyabhani & Mahatthanadull, 2022). Thus, sustainable cultivation should be understood not only as a matter of individual morality but also as a relational and institutional process through which inner intention, community support, and social relevance are mutually reinforced.

Third, regarding the proposed model, the study contributes by translating scattered historical and practical findings into a coherent six-dimensional structure. The emphasis on mental content, theory, practice, system, adaptation, and application allows the model to bridge doctrinal integrity and contemporary practicality. Its most important contribution lies in positioning bodhicitta as the moral center of the model, thereby ensuring that sustainable cultivation does not collapse into formalism, managerialism, or purely external compliance. At the same time, the inclusion of adaptation and application demonstrates that the

model is responsive to modern life and not confined to traditional monastic settings.

Overall, the discussion suggests that bodhisattva precepts remain relevant in modern Chinese Buddhism because they combine ethical depth, historical adaptability, and practical potential. Their future vitality, however, depends on whether they can be cultivated through systematic structures that preserve doctrinal meaning while responding intelligently to contemporary conditions. The study, therefore, contributes to Buddhist studies by advancing a model-oriented understanding of the practice of bodhisattva precepts and by clarifying how classical Mahāyāna ethics may continue to guide sustainable cultivation in the modern world.

Knowledge from the Research

Based on the three objectives of the research, the knowledge obtained can be summarized in the following three aspects.

Firstly, knowledge of the evolutionary value and positive effects of bodhisattva precepts has been obtained by exploring the developmental features, practice features, values, and positive effects of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism in modern society. Among these evolutionary values and positive effects, the continuity of bodhicitta-based bodhisattva precept learning and practice to benefit all sentient beings in modern Chinese Buddhism is one of the most valuable and positive effects of bodhisattva precepts, based on which bodhisattva precept practice by applying and integrating multiple activities has become more and more welcome and suitable for Chinese people and China's development. The prevailing trend of bodhisattva precept practice not only reflects their adaptation to Chinese people and China's contemporary situations, but also maintains and further deepens bodhicitta-based Mahāyāna development and consolidates their dominant status in both ancient and modern China, which are key values and effects of bodhisattva precepts in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.

Secondly, the knowledge about the ways for SCD of BPP in Chinese Buddhism in modern society includes six aspects: (1) continuous studies on bodhisattva precepts; (2) positive and cooperative response to governmental policies; (3) adapting to people's preferred healthy activities; (4) holding bodhisattva precept ordination; (5) continuous bodhisattva precepts learning and preaching; (6) twofold application between SDGs and bodhisattva precepts

practice. These ways are promising for sustainable cultivation development because of their long historical legacy and new characteristics, and because of their popularity in Chinese Buddhism in modern society, which have been beneficial for people, society, and the globe in peace, harmony, and happiness.

Thirdly, knowledge about the targeted model has been convincingly and reasonably presented through a series of model knowledge collection and development, avoiding subjective, dogmatic, and impractical ideas and practices, with the model content including mental content, theory, practice, system, adaptation, and application. The model notion, values, features, and benefits have been concluded. The model is feasible and well-suited for the sustainable development of bodhisattva precepts practice in Chinese Buddhism in modern society.

Based on a series of data interpretation, analysis, and synthesis, the model has been set up, with problems as the starting point, along with input, process, output, outcome, and impact, which together form the basic structure of the model, as shown in the following Figure 2.

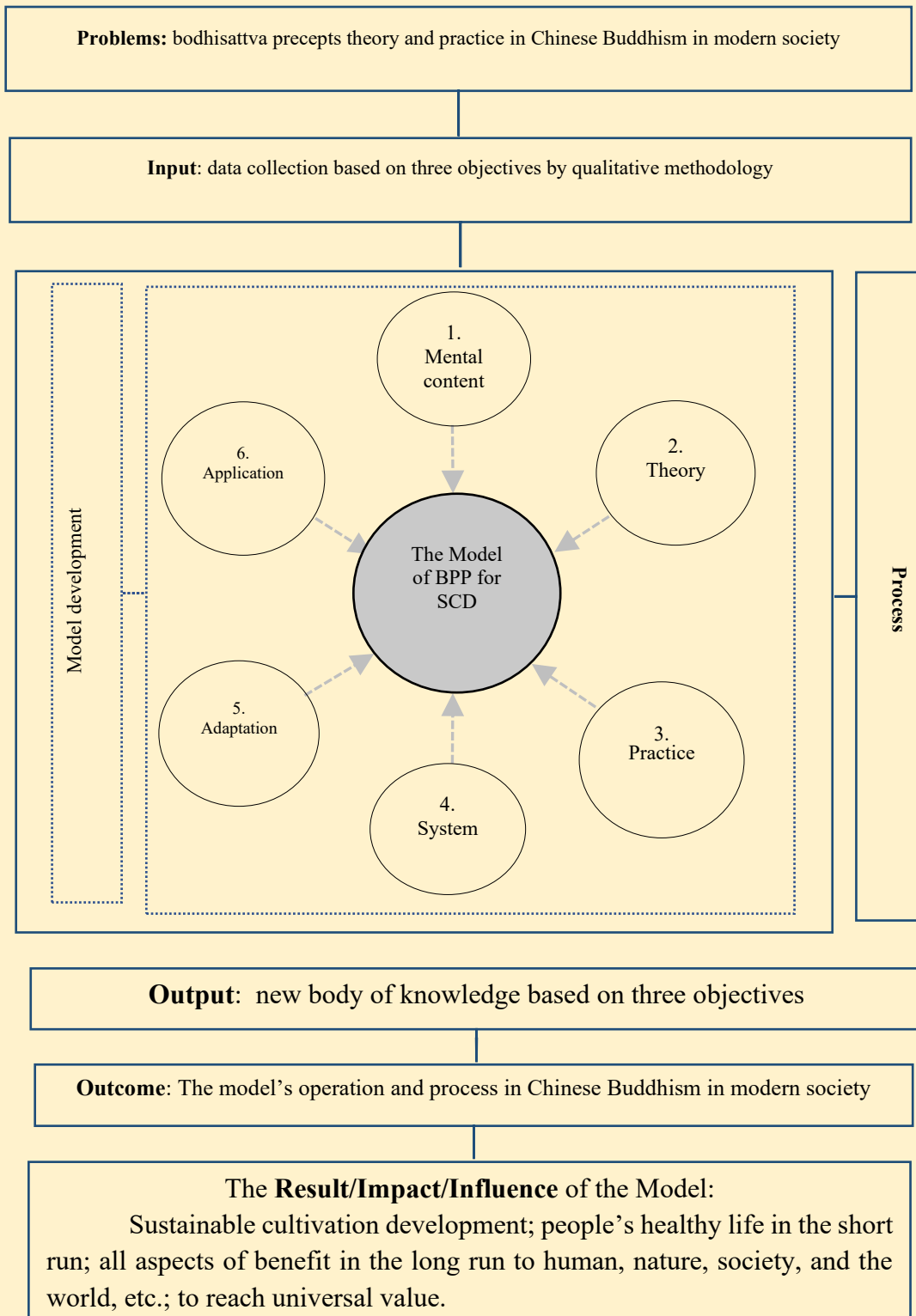


Figure 2: The Model of BPP for SCD in Chinese Buddhism in Modern Society

Conclusion

This study has examined the role of bodhisattva precepts in modern Chinese Buddhism and proposed a model for their sustainable cultivation and development. The findings demonstrate that bodhisattva precepts are not merely a historical legacy of Mahāyāna ethical discipline, but a dynamic and adaptable framework for moral cultivation, spiritual development, and socially beneficial practice. Their historical continuity, broad acceptance across Chinese Mahāyāna traditions, and capacity for adaptation confirm their continuing relevance in contemporary Chinese Buddhist life.

The study further shows that sustainable cultivation development cannot depend solely on doctrinal preservation or ritual ordination. Rather, it requires a more integrated process that combines theory, practice, system, adaptation, and application, while remaining firmly grounded in bodhicitta. In this regard, the proposed model provides a systematic framework for practicing bodhisattva precepts more effectively and sustainably in response to the needs of modern society. Its six interrelated dimensions—mental content, theory, practice, system, adaptation, and application—offer a structured approach for linking classical Buddhist ethics with present-day realities.

The contribution of this study is therefore both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it extends current scholarship by moving beyond historical and textual analysis toward a model-oriented understanding of the practice of bodhisattva precepts. In practice, it provides a feasible framework for promoting continuous cultivation, institutional support, and broader social application in Chinese Buddhism. More broadly, the model suggests that bodhisattva precepts can function as an ethical resource for sustainable personal development, social harmony, and compassionate engagement in the modern world.

In conclusion, the model of bodhisattva precepts practice proposed in this study helps bridge the gap between traditional Mahāyāna moral discipline and contemporary Buddhist practice. It offers a meaningful pathway for Chinese Buddhism to preserve its doctrinal foundations while responding constructively to the ethical, cultural, and developmental challenges of modern society.

Suggestions for Further Study

Future research should extend this study in several directions. First, comparative studies should examine how bodhisattva precepts are interpreted and practiced across different ethical traditions in China, especially in relation to Confucian and Daoist moral frameworks, to clarify both the convergences and the uniquely Buddhist contributions to sustainable ethical cultivation. Second, cross-national research could compare Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Mahāyāna contexts to identify shared principles and culturally specific forms of bodhisattva precepts practice. Third, empirical studies should investigate differences in practice between monastic and lay practitioners, as well as between monks and nuns, so that the proposed model may be refined in light of actual cultivation conditions and institutional realities. Fourth, future work may develop measurable indicators to assess the model's effectiveness in areas such as continuity of practice, ethical transformation, communal participation, and social application. Finally, further studies may explore how bodhisattva precepts can be transmitted in digital and educational settings, especially among younger generations, while preserving doctrinal depth and practical authenticity. These directions would strengthen both the theoretical foundation and the applied relevance of the practice of bodhisattva precepts in modern society.

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