

Singalovada Sutta

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On one occasion, the Buddha was living near the town of Rajagaha at a spot in the Bamboo Grove called the Squirrel's Feeding Place. At that time a young man named Sigalaka arose early and set out from Rajagaha with freshly washed clothes and hair. With palms together held up in reverence, he was paying respect towards the six directions: that is east, south, west, north, lower and upper.

Meanwhile the Buddha dressed himself in the early morning, took his bowl and robe and went in to Rajagaha on alms round. On the way, he saw Sigalaka worshipping the six directions. Seeing this, the Buddha said to him: "Young man, why have you risen in the early morning and set out from Rajagaha to worship in such a way?"

"Dear sir, my father on his deathbed urged me, 'My son, you must worship the 6 directions'. So, dear sir, realizing, honoring, respecting, and holding sacred my father's request, I have risen in the early morning and set out from Rajagaha to worship in this way."

"But, young man, that is not how the six directions should be worshipped according to the discipline of the noble ones."

"Then how, dear sir, should the six directions be worshipped according to the discipline of the noble ones? I would appreciate it if you would teach me the proper way this should be done."

"Very well, young man, listen and pay careful attention while I tell you."

The Buddha said this:

"Young man, by abandoning the four impure actions, a noble disciple refrains from harmful deeds rooted in four causes and avoids the six ways of squandering wealth.

"What four impure actions are abandoned? The harming of living beings is an impure action, taking what is not given is an impure action, sexual misconduct is an impure action, and false speech is an impure action. These four are abandoned."

"And what six ways of squandering wealth are to be avoided? Young man, heedlessness caused by intoxication, roaming the streets at inappropriate times, habitual partying, compulsive gambling, bad companionship, and laziness are the six ways of squandering wealth.

"These are the six dangers inherent in heedlessness caused by intoxication: loss of immediate wealth, increased quarreling, susceptibility to illness, disrepute, indecent exposure, and weakened insight.

"These are the six dangers inherent in roaming the streets at inappropriate times: oneself, one's family, and one's property are all left unguarded and unprotected; one is suspected of crimes; then rumors spread; and one is subjected to many miseries.

"These are the six dangers inherent in habitual partying: You constantly seek, 'Where's the dancing? Where's the singing? Where's the music? Where are the stories? Where's the applause? Where's the drumming?'

"These are the six dangers inherent in compulsive gambling: winning breeds resentment; the loser mourns lost property; savings are lost; one's word carries no weight in a public forum; friends and colleagues display their contempt; and one is not sought after for marriage, since a gambler cannot adequately support a family.

"These are the six dangers inherent in bad companionship: any rogue, drunkard, addict, cheat, swindler, or thug becomes a friend and colleague.

"These are the six dangers inherent in laziness: saying, 'It's too cold,' one does not work; saying, 'It's too hot,' one does not work; saying, 'It's too late,' one does not work; saying, 'It's too early,' one does not work; saying, 'I'm too hungry,' one does not work; saying, 'I'm too full,' one does not work. With an abundance of excuses for not working, new wealth does not accrue and existing wealth goes to waste."

That is what the Buddha said.

"Young man, be aware of these four enemies disguised as friends: the taker, the talker, the flatterer, and the reckless companion.

"The taker can be identified by four things: by only taking, asking for a lot while giving little, performing duty out of fear, and offering service in order to gain something.

"The talker can be identified by four things: by reminding of past generosity, promising future generosity, mouthing empty words of kindness, and protesting personal misfortune when called on to help.

"The flatterer can be identified by four things: by supporting both bad and good behavior indiscriminately, praising you to your face, and putting you down behind your back.

"The reckless companion can be identified by four things: by accompanying you in drinking, roaming around at night, partying, and gambling."

"Young man, be aware of these four good-hearted friends: the helper, the friend who endures in good times and bad, the mentor, and the compassionate friend.

"The helper can be identified by four things: by protecting you when you are vulnerable, and likewise your wealth, being a refuge when you are afraid, and in various tasks providing double what is requested.

"The enduring friend can be identified by four things: by telling you secrets, guarding your own secrets closely, not abandoning you in misfortune, and even dying for you.

"The mentor can be identified by four things: by restraining you from wrongdoing, guiding you towards good actions, telling you what you ought to know, and showing you the path to heaven.

"The compassionate friend can be identified by four things: by not rejoicing in your misfortune, delighting in your good fortune, preventing others from speaking ill of you, and encouraging others who praise your good qualities."

"And how, young man, does the noble disciple protect the six directions? These six directions should be known: mother and father as the east, teachers as the south, spouse and family as the west, friends and colleagues as the north, workers and servants as the lower direction, and ascetics and Brahmins as the upper direction.

"In five ways should a mother and father as the eastern direction be respected by a child: 'I will support them who supported me; I will do my duty to them; I will maintain the family lineage and tradition; I will be worthy of my inheritance; and I will make donations on behalf of dead ancestors.'

"And, the mother and father so respected reciprocate with compassion in five ways: by restraining you from wrongdoing, guiding you towards good actions, training you in a profession, supporting the choice of a suitable spouse, and in due time, handing over the inheritance.

"In this way, the eastern direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

"In five ways should teachers as the southern direction be respected by a student: by rising for them, regularly attending lessons, eagerly desiring to learn, duly serving them, and receiving instruction.

"And, teachers so respected reciprocate with compassion in five ways: by training in self-discipline, ensuring the teachings are well-grasped, instructing in every branch of knowledge, introducing their friends and colleagues, and providing safeguards in every direction.

"In this way, the southern direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

"In five ways should a wife as the western direction be respected by a husband: by honoring, not disrespecting, being faithful, sharing authority, and by giving gifts.

"And, the wife so respected reciprocates with compassion in five ways: by being well-organized, being kindly disposed to the in-laws and household workers, being faithful, looking after the household goods, and being skillful and diligent in all duties.

In this way, the western direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

"In five ways should friends and colleagues as the northern direction be respected: by generosity, kind words, acting for their welfare, impartiality, and honesty.

"And, friends and colleagues so respected reciprocate with compassion in five ways: by protecting you when you are vulnerable, and likewise your wealth, being a refuge when you are afraid, not abandoning you in misfortunes, and honoring all your descendants.

"In this way, the northern direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

"In five ways should workers and servants as the lower direction be respected by an employer: by allocating work according to aptitude, providing wages and food, looking after the sick, sharing special treats, and giving reasonable time off work.

"And, workers and servants so respected reciprocate with compassion in five ways: being willing to start early and finish late when necessary, taking only what is given, doing work well, and promoting a good reputation.

"In this way, the lower direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

"In five ways should ascetics and Brahmans as the upper direction be respected: by kindly actions, speech, and thoughts, having an open door, and providing material needs.

"And, ascetics and Brahmans so respected reciprocate with compassion in six ways: by restraining you from wrongdoing, guiding you to good actions, thinking compassionately, telling you what you ought to know, clarifying what you already know, and showing you the path to heaven.

"In this way, the upper direction is protected and made peaceful and secure."

That is what the Buddha said.

When all was said, the young householder, Sigalaka, exclaimed to the Buddha:

"Wonderful, dear sir! Wonderful! It is as though you have set upright what was overturned, or uncovered what was concealed, or shown the path to one gone

astray, or brought an oil-lamp into the darkness such that those with eyes could see. So too has the Buddha made clear the Dhamma by various ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha and to the Dhamma and to the monastic community.

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