

Sigalovada Sutta: The Discourse to Sigala

The Layperson's Code of Discipline

On one occasion the Exalted One was dwelling in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary, near Rajagaha.

Now at that time, young Sigala, a householder's son, rising early in the morning, departing from Rajagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worshipped with joined hands the various quarters (directions) — the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir, and the Zenith.

Then the Exalted One, having robed himself in the forenoon took bowl and robe, and entered Rajagaha for alms. Now he saw young Sigala worshipping thus and spoke to him as follows:

"Wherefore do you, young householder, rising early in the morning, departing from Rajagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship, with joined hands these various quarters — the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir, and the Zenith?"

"My father, Lord, while dying, said to me: The six quarters, dear son, you shall worship. And I, Lord, respecting, revering, reverencing and honoring my father's word, rise early in the morning, and leaving Rajagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship with joined hands, these six quarters."

"It is not thus, young householder, the six quarters should be worshipped in the discipline of the noble."

"How then, Lord, should the six quarters be worshipped in the discipline of the noble? It is well, Lord, if the Exalted One would teach the doctrine to me showing how the six quarters should be worshipped in the discipline of the noble."

"Well, young householder, listen and bear it well in mind; I shall speak." — "Very good, Lord," responded young Sigala.

"And how, young householder, does a noble disciple cover the six quarters?"

"The following should be looked upon as the six quarters. The parents should be looked upon as the East, teachers as the South, wife and children as the West, friends and associates as the North, servants and employees as the Nadir (below), ascetics and brahmans as the Zenith (above).

The six quarters/ directions

Parents as the East

"In five ways, young householder, a child should minister to his parents as the **East**:

(i) Having supported me I shall support them,

- (ii) I shall do their duties,
- (iii) I shall keep the family tradition,
- (iv) I shall make myself worthy of my inheritance,
- (v) Furthermore I shall offer alms in honor of my departed relatives.

"In five ways, young householder, the parents thus ministered to as the **East** by their children, show their compassion:

- (i) they restrain them from evil,
- (ii) they encourage them to do good,
- (iii) they train them for a profession,
- (iv) they arrange a suitable marriage,
- (v) at the proper time they hand over their inheritance to them.

"In these five ways do children minister to their parents as the **East** and the parents show their compassion to their children. Thus is the **East** covered by them and made safe and secure.

Teacher as the South

"In five ways, young householder, a pupil should minister to a teacher as the **South**:

- (i) by rising from the seat in salutation,
- (ii) by attending on him,
- (iii) by eagerness to learn,
- (iv) by personal service,
- (v) by respectful attention while receiving instructions.

"In five ways, young householder, do teachers thus ministered to as the **South** by their pupils, show their compassion:

- (i) they train them in the best discipline,
- (ii) they see that they grasp their lessons well,
- (iii) they instruct them in the arts and sciences,
- (iv) they introduce them to their friends and associates,
- (v) they provide for their safety in every quarter.

"The teachers thus ministered to as the **South** by their pupils, show their compassion towards them in these five ways. Thus is the **South** covered by them and made safe and secure.

Wife as the West

"In five ways, young householder, should a wife as the **West** be ministered to by a husband:

- (i) by being courteous to her,
- (ii) by not despising her,
- (iii) by being faithful to her,

- (iv) by handing over authority to her,
- (v) by providing her with adornments.

"The wife thus ministered to as the **West** by her husband shows her compassion to her husband in five ways:

- (i) she performs her duties well,
- (ii) she is hospitable to relations and attendants
- (iii) she is faithful,
- (iv) she protects what he brings,
- (v) she is skilled and industrious in discharging her duties.

"In these five ways does the wife show her compassion to her husband who ministers to her as the **West**. Thus is the **West** covered by him and made safe and secure.

Friends and associates as the North

"In five ways, young householder, should a clansman minister to his friends and associates as the **North**:

- (i) by liberality,
- (ii) by courteous speech,
- (iii) by being helpful,
- (iv) by being impartial,
- (v) by sincerity.

"The friends and associates thus ministered to as the **North** by a clansman show compassion to him in five ways:

- (i) they protect him when he is heedless,
- (ii) they protect his property when he is heedless,
- (iii) they become a refuge when he is in danger,
- (iv) they do not forsake him in his troubles,
- (v) they show consideration for his family.

"The friends and associates thus ministered to as the **North** by a clansman show their compassion towards him in these five ways. Thus is the **North** covered by him and made safe and secure.

Servants and employees as the Nadir (below)

"In five ways should a master minister to his servants and employees as the **Nadir**:

- (i) by assigning them work according to their ability,
- (ii) by supplying them with food and with wages,
- (iii) by tending them in sickness,
- (iv) by sharing with them any delicacies,

(v) by granting them leave at times.

"The servants and employees thus ministered to as the **Nadir** by their master show their compassion to him in five ways:

- (i) they rise before him,
- (ii) they go to sleep after him,
- (iii) they take only what is given,
- (iv) they perform their duties well,
- (v) they uphold his good name and fame.

"The servants and employees thus ministered to as the **Nadir** show their compassion towards him in these five ways. Thus is the **Nadir** covered by him and made safe and secure.

Ascetics and brahmans as the Zenith (above)

"In five ways, young householder, should a householder minister to ascetics and brahmans as the **Zenith**:

- (i) by lovable deeds,
- (ii) by lovable words,
- (iii) by lovable thoughts,
- (iv) by keeping open house to them,
- (v) by supplying their material needs.

"The ascetics and brahmans thus ministered to as the **Zenith** by a householder show their compassion towards him in six ways:

- (i) they restrain him from evil,
- (ii) they persuade him to do good,
- (iii) they love him with a kind heart,
- (iv) they make him hear what he has not heard,
- (v) they clarify what he has already heard,
- (vi) they point out the path to a heavenly state.

"In these six ways do ascetics and brahmans show their compassion towards a householder who ministers to them as the **Zenith**. Thus is the **Zenith** covered by him and made safe and secure."