

## Buddha's Parinirvana Brief Admonitions Sutra

When Shakyamuni Buddha first turned the Wheel of Dharma, he liberated the Venerable Ajñata-Kaundinya. The very last time he spoke the Dharma, he liberated the Venerable Subhadhra. All of those who were to be liberated had already been liberated. He lay between the twin Sala trees and was about to enter Nirvana. At this time, in the middle of the night, all was quiet, without any sound. Then, for the sake of all of his disciples, he spoke on the essentials of the Dharma: All of you monks! After my Nirvana, you should revere and honor the precepts, the standards of conduct. This is like finding a light in the darkness, or like a poor person obtaining a treasure. You should know that they are your great teacher, and are not different from my actual presence in the world ...

All of you monks! You should know that people with many desires suffer much, because they constantly seek for their own benefit. People who have few desires, who are free from seeking and longing, don't have much trouble. Straightaway reduce your desires and practice appropriately. For one who has few desires, merit increases. People who have few desires do not flatter in order to get what they want. Moreover they are not dragged along by their sense organs. People who have few desires have a mind which is peaceful, without worry or fear. Whatever situations arise, they are always satisfied and never discontent. One who reduces his desires can realize Nirvana. This is my teaching on having few desires.

All of you monks! If you wish to be free from all suffering and difficulty, you should know contentment. The dharma of contentment is the place of blessings, happiness, and peace. People who are content, although they might sleep on the ground are peaceful and happy. Those who are not content, although they might abide in the heavens, are still dissatisfied. Those who are not content, even if they are wealthy, are truly poor. Those who are content, although they might be poor, are truly rich. Those who are discontent are always dragged along by their five sense organs, and are pitied by those who are content. This is my teaching on contentment.

All of you monks! If you seek quietude, unconditioned peace, and happiness, you should be apart from confusion and disturbances, and dwell alone in serenity. The heavenly ruler Shakra and all celestial beings revere people who dwell in quietude. For this reason, cast away attachment to yourself and others, dwell alone in serenity, and contemplate the cessation of the root of suffering. If you delight in crowds, you will undergo much affliction. It is like when a flock of birds gathers in a great tree, the tree is in danger of collapsing. One who is bound to worldly affairs drowns in a multitude of suffering, like an old elephant sunk in mud, which is unable to get out. This is my teaching on serenity.

All of you monks! If you are diligent, nothing will be difficult for you; for this reason all of you should be diligent. It is like a small stream flowing for a long time, which is able to bore through stone. If, on the other hand, the mind of one who practices frequently becomes lax, it is like trying to make a fire by friction but resting before there is any heat; though you want to make a fire, the fire is hard to produce. This is my teaching on diligence.

All of you monks! If you are seeking for a good and wise advisor, or for a wholesome benefactor, nothing compares with mindfulness. If you do not neglect mindfulness, none of the 'thieves of the afflictions' can enter your mind. For this reason, all of you constantly sustain mindfulness. If you lose mindfulness you will lose all merit. If your power of mindfulness is firm and strong, though you mingle with the thieves of the five desires, they cannot harm you. It

is like joining a battle wearing armor; thus you have nothing to fear. This is my teaching on mindfulness.

All of you monks! If you collect your mind, your mind will be concentrated. If your mind is concentrated, you can know the arising and ceasing of all phenomenal appearances. For this reason, all of you should constantly and diligently practice concentration. If you attain concentration your mind will not be scattered. It is like a household that uses its water sparingly and is able to regulate its irrigation ditches. One who practices concentration is also the same; for the sake of the water of wisdom he practices meditative concentration, so it doesn't leak away. This is my teaching on concentration.

All of you monks! If you have wisdom, you will be free from greed and attachment. Always examine yourselves, and do not allow faults to arise; this way you can gain liberation within my Dharma. If you never examine yourself, I don't know what to call you, for you neither are a monastic practitioner of the way nor a layperson. One with wisdom rides in a secure boat for crossing over the ocean of old age, sickness, and death. Wisdom is also like a bright lamp in the darkness of ignorance, a good medicine for those who are sick, and a sharp ax for cutting down the tree of afflictions. For this reason all of you should increasingly benefit yourselves by hearing, contemplating, and cultivating wisdom. Even though a person only has physical eyes, if he has illuminating insight, he has clear understanding. This is my teaching on wisdom.

All of you monks! If you indulge in all sorts of idle discussions, your mind will be scattered, and even though you have left the home-life, you will not attain liberation. For this reason, monks, you should quickly renounce scattered thoughts and idle discussions. If you want to attain the happiness of still tranquility, you only need to eliminate the error of frivolous debate. This is my teaching on not having idle discussions.

All of you monks! ... The World-Honored One has now finished his compassionate teaching for your benefit. All of you need only to practice it diligently. Whether you are in the mountains, in a desolate marsh, beneath a tree, or in a quiet dwelling, be mindful of the Dharma you have received and do not forget it. You should always exert yourself and practice it vigorously. Don't wait until you reach the time of death and be filled with remorse because you spent your life in vain. I am like a good doctor who understands illness and prescribes medicine. Whether you take it or not is not the doctor's responsibility. Moreover I am like a virtuous guide who points out a good road. If one does not take that road, it is not the guide's fault ...

All of you monks! ... From now on all of my disciples must continuously practice. Then the Tathagata's Dharma body will always be enduring and indestructible. You should know, therefore, that everything in the world is impermanent. Meetings necessarily have separations, so do not harbor grief. Every appearance in the world is like this; be diligent, seek liberation right away! Destroy the darkness of delusion with the brightness of wisdom. The world is truly dangerous, unstable, and not reliable.

Birth and death have ceased for me, as if a chronic illness has been cured at last. This malign falsely named object, called the body, drowns in the ocean of birth, old age, sickness, and death. Let this body go! How can one who is wise not be happy when he lets go of it, like banishing a troublesome thief? All of you monks! You should always single-mindedly and diligently seek the way of liberation. All the moving and unmoving phenomena of the world are all decaying, unfixd appearances. All of you! Here I stop; there is nothing more to say. Time is passing away, and I am about to cross over to Nirvana. These are my last instructions.