

SECTION IV
SERMONS ON NIBBANA

§ 1. *What is Nibbana*



1. Once the Blessed Lord was staying at Shravasti in Anathapindika's Arama where Sariputta was also staying.

2. The Lord addressing the Brethren said: "Almsmen, be ye partakers not of the world's goods but of my doctrine; in my compassion for you all I am anxious to ensure this."

3. Thus spoke the Lord, who thereupon rose and passed to his own cell.

4. Sariputta remained behind and the Brethren asked him to explain what is Nibbana.

5. Then Sariputta in reply to the Brethren said: "Brethren, know you that greed is vile, and vile is resentment.

6. "To shed this greed and this resentment, there is the Middle Way which gives us eyes to see and makes us know, leading us on to peace, insight, enlightenment and Nibbana.

7. "What is this Middle Way? It is naught but the Noble Eight-fold Path of right outlook, right aims, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration; this, Almsmen is the Middle Way.

8. "Yes, sirs; anger is vile and malevolence is vile, envy and jealousy are vile, niggardliness and avarice are vile, hypocrisy and deceit and arrogance are vile, inflation is vile, and indolence is vile.

9. "For the shedding of inflation and indolence there is the Middle Way—giving us eyes to see, making us know, and leading us on to peace, insight, enlightenment.

10. "Nibbana which is naught but that Noble Eight-fold Path."

11. Thus spoke the reverend Sariputta—glad at heart, the Almsmen rejoiced at what he had said.



§ 2. *The Roots of Nibbana*

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1. Once the venerable Radha came to the Exalted One. Having done so he saluted the Exalted One and sat down on one side. So seated the venerable Radha thus addressed the Exalted One: "Pray, Lord, what for is Nibbana."

2. "Nibbana means release from passion," replied the Lord.

3. "But Nibbana, Lord,—what is the aim of it?"

4. "Rooted in Nibbana, Radha, the righteous life is lived. Nibbana is its goal. Nibbana is its end."

(ii)

1. Once the Exalted One was dwelling at Shravasti, in Jeta's Grove, at Anathapindika's Park. Then the Exalted One called the brethren, saying, 'Brethren.' 'Yes, Lord,' replied those brethren to the Exalted One. The Exalted One thus spake.

2. "Do ye bear in mind, brethren, the Five Fetters that bind to the lower world, as taught by me?"

3. Whereupon the venerable Malunkya-putta said this to the Exalted One :

4. "I, Lord, bear in mind those Five Fetters."

5. "And how, Malunkya-putta, do you bear them in mind?"

6. "I bear in mind, Lord, the view of bodyhood, as taught by the Exalted One, and wavering, and the moral taint of dependence on rite and ritual, the excitement of sensual delight, and malevolence, taught by the Exalted One as fetters that bind to the lower world. These are the Five Fetters that I bear in mind, Lord."

7. "As taught for whom, Malunkya-putta, do you bear in mind these Five Fetters? Will not the wanderers of other views reproach you, using the parable of a tender baby for their reproach and saying thus :

8. " 'But, Malunkya-putta, there can be no bodyhood for a tender baby-boy, dull of wits and

lying on his back. How, then, can there arise in him any view of bodyhood? Yet there is indeed latent in him a tendency to the view of bodyhood.'

9. "'Likewise, Malunkyaputta, there can be no mental conditions for a tender baby-boy, dull of wits and lying on his back. How, then, can there be in him any wavering of mental conditions? Yet there is in him a latent tendency to wavering.'

10. "'So also, Malunkyaputta, he can have no moral practice. How, then, can there be in him any moral taint of dependence on rite and ritual? Yet he has a latent tendency thereto.'

11. "'Again, Malunkyaputta, that tender babe has no sensual passions. How, then, can be known the excitement of sensual delight? But the tendency is there.'

12. "'Lastly, Malunkyaputta, for that tender babe beings do not exist. How then can it harbour malevolence against beings? Yet the tendency thereto is in him.'

13. "Now, Malunkyaputta, will not those wanderers of other views thus reproach you, using for their reproach the parable of that tender baby-boy?"

14. When this was said, the venerable Ananda thus addressed the Exalted One: "Now is the time, Exalted One. O Wayfarer, now is the time for the Exalted One to set."



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SECTION V

SERMONS ON DHAMMA

§ 1. *Why Right Views Rank First*

1. Of the noble Eightfold path the noblest is Right Outlook.

2. Right thinking is the preface and the key to everything else in the higher life, and ignorance.

3. The lack of understanding is the root of all evil.

4. For developing right outlook one must see “all phenomena of life as a process of causal law. To have right outlook is to recognise the law of cause and effect.

5. “Whatsoever individual, brethren, follows perverted views, perverted aim, perverted speech or acts or living, perverted effort, attention, and contemplation : whose knowledge and emancipation are perverted, for him every action of deed, word or thought, performed and achieved according to such perverted views ; every willed act, every aspiration, every resolve, all his activities, these things one and all conduce to what is distasteful, unpleasing, repulsive, unprofitable, and painful. And why so? Because of his evil view.”

6. To be right is not enough. A baby may be right but that does not mean that a baby knows what is right. To be right one must know what is right.

7. “Ananda, who can be rightly described as an almsman? Only he who has mastered what is rationally possible and what is rationally impossible.”

§ 2. *Why Bother About Life After Death*

1. On a certain occasion the venerable Kassapa the Great and the venerable Sariputta were staying near Benares at Isipatana in the Deer Park.

2. Then the venerable Sariputta rising up at eventide from solitude, went to the venerable Kassapa the Great and sat down on one side.

3. So seated, the venerable Sariputta said to the venerable Kassapa the Great. "How now friend Kassapa ? Does the Tathagata exist beyond death?"

4. "Undeclared is it, friend, by the Exalted One that the Tathagata exists beyond death.

5. "What then friend? Does the Tathagata both exist and not exist beyond death ?

6. "This also, friend, is undeclared by the Exalted One.

7. "How then, friend ? Does the Tathagata neither not exist beyond death ? That also, friend, is not declared by the Exalted One.

8. "But why, friend, has it not been declared by the Exalted One?"

9. "This is a question not concerned with profit to humanity or with the first principles of holy life. It does not lead to perfect wisdom nor to Nihbana. That, friend, is why it is not declared by the Exalted One."



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§ 3. *Prayers and Invocations to God are a Futility*

1. Once the Blessed Lord speaking to Vasettha said :

2. "If this river Achiravati were full of water even to the brim and overflowing, and a man with business to be done on the further bank of it should come up, and want to cross over :

3. "And standing on that bank, he should invoke the further bank and say : 'Come hither, O further bank ! Come over to this side !'

4. "Now what think you, Vasettha ? Would the further bank of the river Achiravati, by that man's invoking and praying, and hoping, and praising, come over to this side ?

5. "In just the same way, Vasettha, do the Brahmins, versed in the three Vedas, omitting the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahmin, and adopting the practice of those qualities which really make men non-Brahmins say thus :



6. “‘Indra we call upon, Brahma we call upon, Isana we call upon, Prajapati we call upon, Brahma, we call upon, we call, we call.’

7. “Verily, Vasettha, that these Brahmins, by reason of their invoking and praying and hoping and praising, should after death become united with Brahma—verily such a condition of things can in nowise be.”

§ 4. *It is Not What You Eat that Makes You Holy*

1. A Brahmin happened to meet the Lord and raised the question of the effect of food on a man’s character.

2. The Brahmin said : “ The millet-grain, palm-nuts, pulse, bulbs, and wilding shoots—this diet rightly got, ever prompts the good life. Tis eating carrion that is bad.”

3. The Blessed One replied: “Though you (Lord) say you touch no carrion, you eat choice dishes made with flesh of birds—I ask what you term ‘carrion.’

4. “Killing and maiming, stripes, bonds, theft, lies, fraud, deceit, adultery—not meats, but these are carrion.

5. “Pursuit of pleasure, lust for guzzlings, life unclean, blatant dissent—not meats, but these are carrion.

6. “Backbiting, cruelty, betrayals, ruthless pride, mean stinginess—not meats, but these are carrion.

7. “Anger, conceit, revolt, guile, envy, bluster, pride, low company—not meats, but these are carrion.

8. “Base living, slander, fraud, cheating, the trickster’s wiles, foul infamies—not meats, but these are carrion.

9. “This rage to slay and steal, these crimes, are fraught with doom and end in hell—not meats, but these are carrion.

10. “No abstinence from meat and fish, no nudity, no topknots, shaven crowns, or garb of pelt, no cult of sacred fire, no stark austerities to purchase

future bliss, no rinsing, burnt-offering, rites; can cleanse the man who doubts,

11. "Control thy sense, rule thy powers, hold to Truth, be kind. The saint who leaves all ties and vanquishes all ills, is stained by naught he either sees or hears."

12. Hearing the Lord preach these lofty, saving truths, denouncing 'carriage', and sweeping ills away, the Brahmin meekly knelt and asked to be enrolled as Almsman then and there.



§ 5. *Not Food But Evil Actions That Matter*

1. A Brahmin by name Amagandha was an ascetic who lived in the region of Himalayas with his pupils.

2. They ate neither fish nor flesh. Every year they came down from their hermitage in search of salt and acids. The inhabitants of the village received them with honour and gave them hospitality for four months.

3. Then the Blessed Lord with his monks visited the same village. The people on hearing the Lord preach his Dhamma became his followers.

4. That year even Amagandha and his disciples as usual went to the villagers but the villagers did not show the same enthusiasm.

5. Amagandha was disappointed to hear that the Lord did not forbid eating fish and flesh. Wishing to have the matter confirmed he went to Jeta Vana at Shravasti where the Blessed Lord was then staying and said :

6. "Millet, cingula-beans and peas, edible leaves and roots, the fruit of any creeper ; the righteous who eat these, obtained justly, do not tell lies for the sake of pleasures.

7. "Thou eatest whatever food is given by others, which is well prepared, nicely got up, pure and excellent. He who enjoys such food made of rice, he eats, Amagandha. You say that the charge of



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Amagandha, does not apply to me, while eating rice with well prepared bird's flesh.

8. "I inquire the meaning of this from you, of what kind is your Amagandha?"

9. The Lord replied : " Taking life, beating, cutting, binding, stealing, lying, fraud, deceiving, worthless knowledge, adultery ; this is Amagandha and not the eating of flesh.

10. "In this world those individuals, who are unrestrained in sensual pleasures, who are greedy for sweet things, who are associated with impure actions, who are of Nihilistic views, crooked, difficult to follow; this is Amagandha and not the eating of flesh.

11. "In this world those who are rude, harsh, backbiting, treacherous, unkind, excessively egoistic, ungenerous, and do not give anything to anybody; this is Amagandha, and not the eating of flesh.

12. "Anger, pride, obstinacy, antagonism, deceit, envy, boasting, excessive egoism, association with the unrighteous; this is Amagandha, and not eating of flesh.

13. "Those who are of bad morals, refuse to pay their debt, slanderers, deceitful in their dealings, pretenders, those who in this world being the vilest of men, commit such wrongdoings, this is Amagandha and not, the eating of flesh.

14. "Those persons who, in this world, are uncontrolled towards living beings, who are bent on injuring others, having taken their belongings ; immoral, cruel, harsh, disrespectful ; this is Amagandha and not the eating of flesh.

15. "Those who attack these living beings either because of greed or of hostility, and always bent upon (evil), they go to darkness after death and fall into hell headlong ; this is Amagandha and not the eating of flesh.

16. "Abstaining from fish or flesh, nakedness, shaving of the head, matted hair, covering with ashes, wearing rough deer skins, attending the sacrificial fire, nor all these various penances in the world (performed) for immortality, neither incantations, oblations, sacri-

fices nor seasonal observances, purifies a person who has not overcome his doubt.

17. "He who lives with his senses guarded and conquered and is established in the Dhamma, delights in uprightness and gentleness, who has gone beyond attachments and has overcome all sorrows ; that wise man does not cling to what is seen and heard.

18. "It is evil actions which constitute Amagandha and not the eating of fish or flesh."



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§ 6. *Not Enough Is Outward Washing*

1. Once the Exalted One was dwelling at Shravatsi. And the Brahmin Sangarava also dwelt there. Now he was a cleanser by water, and practised cleansing by water. Night and day he abode given to the habit of going down to bathe.

2. Now the venerable Ananda, robing himself at an early hour and taking outer robe and bowl, went forth to Shravatsi to beg. And when he had gone his rounds in Shravatsi and had eaten his meal, upon his return, he went to the Exalted One, saluted Him, and sat down on one side. So seated, the venerable Ananda said :

3. "Lord, there is here one Sangarava, a Brahmin, dwelling at Shravatsi, a cleanser by water, one who practises cleansing by water. Night and day does he abide given to the habit of going down to bathe. Well were it, Lord, if the Exalted One would pay a visit to the Brahmin Sangarava, out of compassion for him."

4. And the Exalted One consented by His silence.

5. So next day at an early hour, the Exalted One robed Himself and taking outer robe and bowl went to the dwelling of the Brahmin Sangarava, and when He got there He sat down on a seat made ready.

6. Then the Brahmin Sangarava came to the Exalted One and greeted Him, and after the exchange of mutual courtesies sat down on one side.

7. As he thus sat, the Exalted One said this to the Brahmin Sangarava : "Is it true, Brahmin, as they say, that thou art a cleanser by water, that thou dost



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practise cleansing by water, abiding night and day given to the habit of going down to bathe ?”

8. “ True it is, Master Gotama.”

9. “ Now, Brahmin, seeking what profit dost thou so practise the habit of going down to bathe, and so forth?”

10. “ It is in this way, Master Gotama. Whatsoever evil I do by day, I get it washed away that very evening by my bathing. Whatsoever evil I do by night I get it washed away next morning by my bathing. That is the profit I am looking for in being a cleanser by water and so forth.”

11. Then said the Exalted One :

12. “The Norm is the pool. It is clear and undefiled.”

13. “Hither when they have come to bathe, the masters of the lore, are cleansed in every limb, and pass unto the Further Shore.”

14. Whereupon the Brahmin Sangarava said to the Exalted One : “Excellent it is, Master Gotama. May the Master Gotama accept me as His follower, from this day forth so long as life doth last, as one who has taken refuge in Him.”

§ 7. *What is Holy Life*

1. Once while the Blessed Lord was on journey he gave, as was his practice, the following discourse to the Bhikkhus who were accompanying him.

2. Addressing the Bhikkhus the Lord said : “O brethren, this holy life is not practised with a view to deceive people, nor to seek their favour, nor for the purpose of gain, benefit, or fame, nor with the intention of getting out of difficulties in controversy, nor that one may be known as such and such by men. Indeed, brethren, this holy life is practised for the controlling (of body and speech), the cleansing (of corruptions) and the detachment (from) and cessation (of craving).”

SECTION VI
SERMONS ON SOCIO-POLITICAL
QUESTIONS



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**§ 1. *Do Not Depend on the Favour
of Princes***

1 Once the Exalted One was staying at Rajagraha in the Bamboo Grove in the Squirrels' Feeding ground.

2. At that time Prince Ajatasatru was supporting Devadatta who had turned hostile to the Blessed Lord.

3. He was maintaining the supporters of Devadatta, late and early with five hundred carts, conveying therein food brought in five hundred cooking-pots.

4. Then a number of the brethren came before the Exalted One, saluted Him, and sat down on one side, and there sitting they told all of these things to the Exalted One.

5. Then the Blessed Lord addressing the brethren said : "Do ye not long for gains, favours and flattery from the kings. So long, brethren, as Prince Ajatasatru thus supports Devadatta late and early, with five hundred carts, conveying therein food brought in five hundred cooking-pots, it is ruin, brethren, that may be expected of Devadatta, and not growth in good conditions.

6. "Just as if, brethren, one were to crumble liver on a mad dog's nose, the dog would only get the madder, even so, brethren, so long as Prince Ajatasatru thus supports Devadatta it is ruin that may be expected of Devadatta, and not growth in good conditions. Thus terrible, brethren, are gains, favours, and flattery of the princes.

7. "They are a bitter, painful hindrance to the attainment of the sure peace that passeth all.

8. "Wherefore, brethren, thus must you train yourselves: 'When gains, favours and flattery befall us, we will reject them, and when they do befall us, they shall not lay hold of and be established in our hearts, and make us slaves of the prince.'"



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§2. *If the King is Righteous His Subjects will be Righteous*

1. Once the Lord addressing the Almsmen said :
2. “Brethren during such time as kings are unrighteous their ministers and officers also become unrighteous. The ministers and officers, brethren, being unrighteous, Brahmins and householders also become unrighteous. The Brahmins and householders, brethren, being unrighteous, the town-folk and villagers become unrighteous.
3. “But whenever, brethren, kings are righteous, then kings’ ministers and officers also become righteous. Whenever kings’ ministers and officers become righteous the Brahmins and householders also become righteous. Whenever Brahmins and householders become righteous, the town-folk and villagers also become righteous.
4. “When kine are crossing, if the old bull swerves, they all go swerving, following his lead. So among men, if he who is reckoned chief walks crookedly, the others crooked go.
5. “Similarly, the whole realm suffers when the king goes wrong. When kine are crossing, if the bull goes straight they all go straight because his course is straight. So among men, if he who’s reckoned chief walks righteously, the others live aright. The whole realm lead happy lives when kings are good.”

§ 3. *It is the Social System on which Depends Political and Military Strength*

1. The Blessed One was once dwelling in Rajagraha, on the hill called the Vultures’ Peak.
2. Now at that time, Ajatasatru, the son of the queen consort of Videha origin, the king of Magadha, was desirous of attacking the Vajjins, and he said to himself, “I will root out these Vajjins, mighty and powerful though they be, I will destroy these Vajjins, I will bring these Vajjins to utter ruin !”

3. So he spoke to the Brahmin Vasakara, the Prime Minister of Magadha, and said :

4. "Come now, O Brahmin, do you go to the Blessed One, and bow down in adoration at his feet on my behalf and enquire on my behalf whether he is free from illness and suffering and in the enjoyment of ease and comfort and vigorous health.

5. "Then tell him that Ajatasatru, son of Videhi, the King of Magadha, is eager to attack the Vajjins, mighty and powerful though they be, I will destroy these Vajjins, I will bring these Vajjins to utter ruin !

6. "And bear carefully in mind whatever the Blessed One may predict and repeat it to me. For the Buddha speaks nothing untrue."

7. Then the Brahmin Vasakara hearkened to the words of the king, saying, "Be it as you say." And ordering a number of magnificent carriages to be ready he went to the Vultures' Peak.

8. On arriving there he exchanged with the Blessed One the greetings and compliments and then delivered to him the message even as the king had commanded.

9. Now at that time the venerable Ananda was standing behind the Blessed One. And the Blessed One said to him: "Have you heard, Ananda, that the Vajjins hold full and frequent public assemblies?

10. "Lord, so I have heard," replied he.

11. "So long, Ananda," rejoined the Blessed One, "as the Vajjins hold these full and frequent public assemblies; so long may they be expected not to decline, but to prosper.

12. "So long, Ananda, as the Vajjins meet together in concord, and rise in concord, and carry out their undertakings in concord.

13. "So long as they enact nothing not already established, abrogate nothing that has been already enacted and act in accordance with the ancient institutions of the Vajjins as established in former days.

14. "So long as they honour and esteem and revere and support the Vajjin Elders, and make it a point of duty to hearken to their words.





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15. "So long as no women or girls belonging to their clans are detained among them by force or abduction.

16. "So long as the Vajjins respect and follow religion.

17. "So long, Ananda, the Vajjins may be expected not to decline but to prosper and no one can destroy them."

18. In short, the Blessed Lord declared that so long as the Vajjins believe in democracy and practise democracy there is no danger to their State.

19. Then the Blessed One addressed Vasakara and said :

20. "When I was once staying, O Brahmin, at Vaishali I taught the Vajjins these conditions of welfare.

21. "We may expect then," answered the Brahmin, "the welfare and not the decline of the Vajjins, so long as they observe these conditions. So, Gotama, the Vajjins cannot be overcome by the king of Magadha."

22. So Vasakara heard the words of the Blessed One, rose from his seat and went back to Rajagraha to inform the king of what the Lord had said.

§ 4. War is Wrong

1. It so happened that Ajatasatru, the king of Magadha, mustering an army of cavalry and infantry, invaded Kasi, a part of the kingdom of king Pasenadi. And Pasenadi, hearing of the expedition, also mustered a similar army and went to meet him.

2. The two fought with one another and Ajatasatru defeated the king Pasenadi, who retreated to his own capital Shravasti.

3. The Bhikkhus who were in Shravasti returning from their alms round came and told the Exalted One of the battle and the retreat.

4. "Almsmen, the king of Magadha, Ajatasatru, is a friend of whatever is evil. King Pasenadi is a

friend of whatever is good. For the present, Pasenadi will pass the night in misery, a defeated man.

5. "Conquest engenders hate; the conquered lives in misery. But whoso is at peace and passionless, happily doth he live ; conquest hath he abandoned and defeat."

6. Again it so happened these two kings met in battle a second time. But in that battle the Kosala king Pasenadi defeated Ajatasatru and captured him alive. Then king Pasenadi thought : "Although this king injures me who was not injuring him, yet is he my nephew. What if I were now to confiscate his entire army, elephants, horses, chariots and infantry and leave him only his life ?" And he did so.

7. And almsmen returning from their alms tour in Shravasti brought word of this to the Exalted One. Thereupon the Exalted One said : "A man may spoil another, just so far as it may serve his ends, but when he's spoiled by others, he, despoiled, spoils yet again.

8. "So long as evil's fruit is not matured, the fool doth fancy 'now's the hour, the chance!' But when the deed bears fruit, he fareth ill.

9. "The slayer gets a slayer in his turn ; the conqueror gets one who conquers him ; the abuser wins abuse from another.

10. "Thus by the evolution of the deed, a man who spoils is spoiled in his turn."

§ 5, *The Duty of the Victor Who Has Won Peace*

1. When the Victor in war has won the Peace he claims the right further to degrade the vanquished if not to enslave him. The Buddha had a totally different view on the matter. In His view if Peace had any meaning it means that the Victor has a duty to use his victory for the service of the vanquished. This is what he said to the Bhikkhus on this subject :

2. "When Peace is won, the adept in warfare needs to prove an able, upright man, of gracious speech,



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kind mood, devoid of arrogance, an easy, grateful guest, no busybody wants but few sense-disciplined, quick-witted, bluster-free, never importunate; and let him never stoop to conduct mean or low, evoking grave rebuke.

3. "May creatures all abound, in weal and peace; may all be blessed with peace always, all creatures weak or strong, all creatures great and small; creatures unseen or seen dwelling afar or near, born or awaiting birth, may all be blessed with peace !

4. "Let none cajole or flout his fellows anywhere; let none wish others harm in dudgeon or in hate.

5. "Just as with her own life a mother shields from hurt her own, her only child, let all-embracing thoughts for all that lives be thine, an all-embracing love for all the universe in all its heights and depths and breadths, unstinted love, unmarred by hate within, not rousing enmity.

6. "So, as you stand or walk, or sit, or lie, reflect with all your might on this : ' 'Tis deemed a state divine.' "

BOOK V
The Sangh

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- Part II — The Bhikkhu—The Buddha's Conception of him.
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PART I
The Sangh

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