

## EIGHT AWAKENINGS OF GREAT BEINGS

All buddhas are great beings. What great beings practice is called the eight awakenings. Practicing these awakenings is the basis for nirvana. This is the last teaching of our original teacher Shakyamuni Buddha, which he gave on the night he entered pari-nirvana.

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[The *Buddha's Pari-nirvana Admonition Outline Sutra (Buddha's Willed Teaching Sutra)* says:]

**The first awakening** is to have few desires. To refrain from widely coveting the objects of the five-sense desires is called “few desires.”

The Buddha said, “Monks, know that people who have many desires intensely seek fame and gain; therefore they suffer a great deal. Those who have few desires do not seek fame and gain and are free from them, so they are without such troubles. Having few desires is itself worthwhile. It is even more so because it creates various merits: Those who have few desires need not flatter to gain others’ favor. Those who have few desires are not compelled by their sense organs; they have a serene mind and do not worry because they are satisfied with what they have and do not have a sense of lack. Those who have few desires experience nirvana. This is called ‘few desires.’”

**The second awakening** is to know how much is enough. Even if you already have something, you set a limit for yourself for using it, so you should know how much is enough.

The Buddha said, “Monks, if you want to be free from suffering, you should contemplate knowing how much is enough. By knowing it, you are in the place of enjoyment and peacefulness. If you know how much is enough, you are content even when you sleep on the ground. If you don’t know it, you are discontent even when you are in heaven. You can feel rich even if you are poor. You can feel poor even if you have much wealth. You may be constantly compelled by the five-sense desires and pitied by those who know how much is enough. This is called ‘to know how much is enough.’”

*Written at the Eihei Monastery the sixth day, first month, fifth year of the Kencho Era [1253].*