



Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center

Ajahn Kumāro Bhikkhu, Resident Monastic
122 Arlington Street, Unit B, Asheville, NC 28801
Elisha Buhler's telephone #: (910) 922-1549
website: mittameditation.com
email: mittameditation@gmail.com

August 2022 Newsletter



The Practice of Generosity (dāna)

Generosity is the foundation and cause for spiritual development, it serves as a basis and preparation for the training of mind to free itself from the defilements (ignorance, greed and ill will) and thereby realize Nibbāna.

Selfishness is caused by identification with the egoic personality. The practice of generosity helps to train the mind to let go of selfishness and to be liberated from the egoic personality. Liberation from the egoic personality purifies the mind of the defilements that realizes Nibbāna.

The practice of generosity may be initiated by contemplating the impermanence of material possessions and financial wealth.

- Material possessions lose their value with use, can be stolen or lost.
- The enjoyment of material possessions declines after the initial pleasure becomes mundane.
- Financial wealth are reduced due to theft or economic recession.
- There is the burden of protecting material possessions and financial wealth from theft, natural and economic decline.
- Material possessions and wealth are left behind when the physical body dies.

There is therefore, wisdom in giving and sharing material possessions and financial wealth to others in order to accumulate merit and to free the mind from the burden of worrying over their lost and decline.

The Practice of Giving by Susan Elbaum Jootla

An article found in Dāna - The Practice of Giving by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wheel Publication 367; p. 23

The Buddha said that the practice of giving will aid us in our efforts to purify the mind. Generous gifts accompanied by wholesome volition help to eradicate suffering in three ways.

- First, when we decide to give something of our own to someone else, we simultaneously reduce our attachment to the object; to make a habit of giving can thus gradually weaken the mental factor of craving, one of the main causes of unhappiness.
- Second, giving accompanied by wholesome volition will lead to happy future births in circumstances favourable to encountering and practising the pure Dhamma.
- Third, and most important, when giving is practised with the intention that the mind becomes pliant enough for attainment of Nibbāna, the act of generosity will help us develop virtue, concentration and wisdom (sīla, samādhi, paññā) right in the present. These three stages make up Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path, and perfecting the path leads to the extinction of suffering.

Generosity is found in various dhammas taught by Lord Buddha, as the:

1. first topic in the progressive instruction of the Dhamma (anupubbikathā),
2. first of the three bases of meritorious actions (puññakiriyaṅga),
3. first of the four bases of sympathy (sangahavattū),
4. first of the ten perfections (pāramī),

5. an essential attribute of the good or superior person (sappurisa), and
 6. weakens greed and ill will, and helps to train the mind for the eradication of ignorance.
1. In the Pāli suttas we find that "talk on giving" (dānakatha) was the first topic to be discussed by the Buddha in his "progressive instruction" of the Dhamma (anupubbikathā) as the following passages indicate.

Mahavagga

Translated from the Pāli by I. B. Horner, M.A.

Mv 1:7.5

Then Yasa, the young man of family, thinking: "It is said that this is not distress, that this is not affliction", exultant and uplifted, having taken off his golden sandals, approached the Lord; having approached, having greeted the Lord, he sat down at a respectful distance. As he was sitting down at a respectful distance, the Lord talked a progressive talk to Yasa, the young man of family, that is to say, talk on giving, talk on moral habit, talk on heaven, he explained the peril, the vanity, the depravity of pleasures of the senses, the advantage in renouncing them.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya

Translations from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Then the Blessed One gave the householder Upāli progressive instruction, that is, talk on giving, talk on virtue, talk on the heavens; he explained the danger, degradation, and defilement in sensual pleasures and the blessing of renunciation. When he knew that the householder Upāli's mind was ready, receptive, free from hindrances, elated, and confident, he expounded to him the teaching special to the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth with all marks removed would take dye evenly, so too, while the householder [Upāli] sat there, the spotless immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in him: "All that is subject to arising is subject to cessation." Then the householder Upāli saw the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, fathomed the Dhamma; he crossed beyond doubt, did away with perplexity, gained intrepidity, and became independent of others in the Teacher's Dispensation.

2. Meritorious Actions (puññakiriyāvatthu)
 - dāna maya: generosity,
 - sīla maya: moral virtue,
 - bhāvanā maya: mental development/cultivation, meditation

Merit (puñña) is that which has a lasting effect on our existence.

3. The Four Bases of Sympathy or Assistance (sanghavatthu)
 - dāna: generosity,
 - piyavaca: speak kind words,
 - atthacariya: render service for the benefit of others, and
 - samanāttatā: treat everyone equally, impartiality and behave properly in all circumstances.

Sangaha-vatthu means qualities that bond people in unity or principles for helpful integration.

4. The Ten Perfections (pāramī),
 - dāna pāramī: generosity,
 - sīla pāramī: moral virtue,
 - nekkhamma pāramī: renunciation,

- paññā pāramī: wisdom,
- viriya pāramī: energy,
- khanti pāramī: patience,
- saccā pāramī: truthfulness,
- adhiṭṭhāna pāramī: determination,
- mettā pāramī: loving-kindness, and
- upekkhā pāramī: equanimity.

The Ten Perfections are virtues to be cultivated for the realization of Nibbāna.

5. A Good or Superior Person (sappurisa)

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya

Translations from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Bodhi

5.147 (7) A Bad Person

“Bhikkhus, there are these five gifts of a bad person. What five? He gives casually; he gives without reverence; he does not give with his own hand; he gives what would be discarded; he gives without a view about the returns of giving. These are the five gifts of a bad person.

“Bhikkhus, there are these five gifts of a good person. What five? He gives respectfully; he gives with reverence; he gives with his own hand; he gives what would not be discarded; he gives with a view about the returns of giving. These are the five gifts of a good person.”

5.148 (8) A Good Person

“Bhikkhus, there are these five gifts of a good person. What five? He gives a gift out of faith; he gives a gift respectfully; he gives a timely gift; he gives a gift unreservedly; he gives a gift without injuring himself or others.

“(1) Because he has given a gift out of faith, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and he is handsome, attractive, graceful, possessing supreme beauty of complexion.

(2) Because he has given a gift respectfully, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and his sons and wives, slaves, servants, and workers are obedient, lend an ear, and apply their minds to understand.

(3) Because he has given a timely gift, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and timely benefits come to him in abundance.

(4) Because he has given a gift unreservedly, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and his mind inclines to the enjoyment of the five kinds of fine sensual pleasures.

(5) Because he has given a gift without injuring himself or others, wherever the result of that gift is produced, he becomes rich, with great wealth and property, and no damage comes to his property from any source, whether from fire, floods, kings, thieves, or displeasing heirs.

These are the five gifts of a good person.”

6. Generosity weakens greed and ill will, and helps in the training of mind for the eradication of ignorance.

Identification with the selfish egoic personality produces the defilements of ignorance, greed and ill will. Ignorance is the state of mind that takes the five clinging aggregates (material form, thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and sense consciousness) to be I, me and myself. Greed is caused by ignorance and the perception that there is lack, not enough, and the thirst for more. Ill will is caused by ignorance and the fear of having material possessions or wealth stolen or reduced by another.

Giving and sharing material possessions and wealth to benefit another is a condition that cultivates loving-kindness (metta). The cultivation of metta acts to liberate the mind from the grip of the selfish egoic personality. As identification with the egoic personality is reduced, wisdom shines forth and the dark clouds that defile the mind scatter.

The practice of generosity arises from the motive of renunciation, the intention of reducing and eventually eliminating all attachments to material possessions, financial wealth and to the physical body; i.e., to eliminate the ignorance that values the egoic personality. By giving and sharing material possessions and financial wealth to others, attachment to them are reduced by letting them go and ignorance thereby is diminished. The practice of generosity helps to put an end to craving. The elimination of craving is the cause for the elimination of psychological suffering, as taught by the Buddha in the Four Noble Truths.

This Was Said by the Buddha: Itivuttaka

Translated from the Pāli by Ven. Kiribathgoda Gnanananda Thero

The Section of the Ones, 26 Dānaśaṃvibhāga Sutta: Giving and Sharing

This discourse was taught by the Blessed One, taught by the Arahant, the fully enlightened Supreme Buddha. This is as I heard:

“Monks, if people knew as I know the results of giving and sharing, they would not eat without having given nor would the stain of stinginess overcome their minds. Even if it were their last bite, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared, if there was someone to share it with. But, monks, because people do not know as I know the results of giving and sharing, they eat without having given. The stain of stinginess overcomes their minds.”

Announcements

- The days of the full moon, new moon and the two half moons are called in Pāli: The Uposatha, and is a Buddhist day of observance. A lunar calendar is available at <https://cal.forestsangha.org>. Ajahn Kumāro will perform the ceremony of giving the eight precepts on the full and new moon days after the 5:30PM meditation. You may elect to take the five precepts instead of the eight and may determine to keep the precepts as long as you see fit (one night, a week, a lifetime, etc).
- Meditation Workshop on the first Sunday of each month between 11:00AM and 1:00PM. The workshop will provide instruction and practice for sitting and walking meditation. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the Dhamma.
- Question and Answer Tea on the third Sunday of each month at 3:00PM.
- Make merit by helping to clean the Meditation Center every three weeks or so, an email will be distributed that will provide the date and time.
- Our website www.mitameditation.com had a makeover and is a work in progress. There are additional web pages, beautiful pictures and layout.

Activities of the Meditation Center

- Sitting meditation is held everyday at 6:30AM and 5:30PM. After meditation, Ajahn Kumāro is available to answer questions and discuss the Dhamma.
- Everyday at 8:40AM Ajahn Kumāro leaves for alms-round in order to give residents of Asheville the opportunity to earn merit by practicing generosity of giving food and placing it into the alms bowl. Ajahn does not accept or handle money. Ajahn usually arrives at the Whole Foods Market, 70 Merrimon Ave. just before 9:00AM and stands in front of the store for alms.

- Ajahn is available at other times during the day to meet with individuals or groups when requested.
- For more information please send an email to mittameditation@gmail.com. We also have a presence on Facebook and Meet-Up social media.

Covid Prevention Policy

- Please do not go to the Meditation Center if you have Covid symptoms and send an email or telephone letting us know of the details of your situation.
- We follow North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) recommendation that face masks should be worn when you are unvaccinated or not up-to-date on your vaccines.
- Face masks are optional if you are vaccinated against Covid and have no symptoms.

Request for Support

The Meditation Center is in need of support in order to accomplish its' mission and vision. The support may take various forms. You will support the Meditation Center by:

- Being present at the Meditation Center for group meditation.
- Giving alms during alms-round.
- Bringing to the Meditation Center items that are listed on the support page of the website: www.mittameditation.com.
- Volunteering your skills, energy and time at the Meditation Center.
- Informing your family and friends about the Meditation Center and encouraging them to participate in the activities.
- Donating financial contributions for the Meditation Center's expenses. Kalyana-Mitta Meditation Center is recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Donations are deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Financial contributions may be made on the support page of the website: www.mittameditation.com and additional means for making financial donations may be discussed with Elisha Buhler at (910) 922-1549.