

Everlasting Happiness,
as Buddha Attains 5

Presented by Venerable Da Shi

**Translated by
The Dharma Committee
Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)**

Preface

Buddha came into this world to lead all sentient beings away from suffering and towards enlightenment. He forsook his throne and worldly possessions for the pursuit of enlightenment. It was his wish to guide all sentient beings in their understanding of the karmic cycle and the path to Nirvana. After his passing into Parinirvana, his teachings were collected and compiled by his followers.

It is Venerable Da Shi's wish to continue the Buddha's teachings, spread the seeds of compassion, and carry on his wish for all sentient beings to attain Nirvana. Since his ordination, Venerable Da Shi has been actively involved in the teaching of the Dharma in many places, including Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore. In 2004/2005, Venerable Da Shi was invited by the Life Television Station in Taiwan to present talks on various Dharma topics. This book was written based on the consolidated content of Venerable Da Shi's televised talks, in hope that his compassionate wish would be furthered through the spreading of the Dharma.

Foreword

EVERLASTING HAPPINESS, AS BUDDHA ATTAINS

Editorial Notes

The Buddha was born into this world out of great compassion with the aim to help all mortal beings avoid sufferings and attain endless bliss.

The world of mortal beings is full of suffering. It is a surreal world of endless desires and yet fulfillment of all desires is impossible. We have to work hard to find fulfillment but it is all transient. It is like a trap where we relentlessly pursue wealth, appearance, fame, gastronomic satisfaction, and excessive sleep without ever pondering what all these could lead to. We repeatedly go through birth, aging, sickness, and death and in this continuous cyclic existence, we suffer immeasurably.

The Buddha is like an expert doctor with the ability to diagnose and treat all kinds of ailments. Indeed, he dispenses

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eighty four thousands procedures for as much trouble that mortal beings could possibly face in this world. All these are found in the Buddha's teachings. If we practice his teachings with complete faith and realization, besides saving ourselves from suffering in this life, we can also find liberation in time to come.

There are very few fortunate beings that have the chance to hear the Buddha's teachings. The number of people who are able to hear and learn the Buddha's Dharma teachings is said to be like the amount of soil caught in one's nail if one were to use hands to dig into the ground.

Everlasting Happiness, as Buddha Attains is translated from a Chinese compilation of Venerable Da Shi's Dharma teachings on television in Taiwan, R.O.C. He has used the Agama Sutra as the central focus of these teachings, supplemented by relevant Dharma from Mahayana Sutras, including the Prajna Sutras, the Middle Way, the Maha-prajna-paramita-Sastra, the Dasabhumika-Vibhasa-Sastra, the Saddharma-Pundarika, etc. for better understanding. Through his skillful narration and explanation, Venerable Da Shi has made the Buddha's Dharma very easy to understand and at the same time, interesting. There are also many citations of examples where one can apply in one's life and practice.

It is the wish of Venerable Da Shi that these teachings should reach out to more people, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. For Buddhists who have sought refuge in the Triple Gem, these teachings serve to strengthen their understanding of the Dharma and improve practices. For non-Buddhists, may it serve as a guide to attain true bliss.

The theme of this book is on Dana. A simple act of giving can lead us towards attaining Buddhahood. Thus, the first step to end suffering and attain everlasting happiness is to practice offering. Through the seven chapters of this book, we learn about the significance and splendid merits of giving. This is the fifth installment of a translated series and it will also be made available on our website at www.mypty.sg. Other topics in the series will be published progressively in subsequent books.

The Dharma introduced in this series is in the Chinese Mahayana tradition, the text of which are translated from Sanskrit scriptures. Hence, Sanskrit has been used for the names and specific Buddhist terminologies in the text. Readers can find help from the footnote on the relevant page and the Glossary at the end of the book for explanation of common Buddhist terms (first appearance in italics in the text) and concepts.

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The Dharma Editorial Committee at Miao You Pu Ti Yuan in Singapore wishes all readers blissful fulfillments in reading.

@@@ This work is an effort to uphold and support Venerable Da Shi's great vow of spreading the Dharma in gratitude of the Buddha's compassion. Please help to spread the wisdom and cheers of the Dharma by passing this book on to someone else should you feel that you do not need it anymore. As the Buddha taught, the gift of the Dharma excels all gifts! May all have the chance to know the Buddha's Dharma! @@@

***The Dharma Editorial Team
Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)***

***Dana* – The Practice of Giving (1)**

The start point to end suffering and attain everlasting happiness is to practice giving

From teachings on ending suffering and attaining everlasting happiness, we have found that the *Buddha*, the Blessed One, is able to give us true happiness.

We are able to attain true happiness through seeing the Buddha, learning and listening to the *Dharma*, and knowing the teachings of the three vehicles leading to the cessation of suffering.

The Buddha propagated the Dharma progressively in the Agama Sutras. He began with the teachings on giving, to the teachings of upholding precepts, and on taking rebirth in the heavenly realm. Buddha then proceeded to the teachings about the impurity of desires, the demerits of having afflictions, and the importance of renunciation. Finally, the

~ DANA – THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (1) ~

Buddha expounded on the *Four Noble Truths* and the *Twelve Links of Dependent Origination*.

Thus, the first step to end suffering and attain everlasting happiness is the practice of giving (Dana).

The term 'miser' is widely used to describe someone who is selfish and uncharitable. On the contrary, someone who gives generously would be known as a good person.

Example 1

There is a very successful renowned entrepreneur who receives a lot of dividends and earns good income annually. This entrepreneur is a wise person. He knows that having great savings and being capable of earning money is not as significant as being able to bring the wealth to his next life.

So how might we realize this? We need to understand that it is through giving that our accumulated 'wealth', in the form of merits, can be brought to our next life.

Example 2

Our body goes through birth, old age, sickness, and death like the fire of impermanence that burns unendingly. This fire of

impermanence begins at the time of our birth and can never be ceased in this life. Therefore, we must generate as much merits as possible from giving our possessions so that these merits can be brought forward to our next lives.

This is just like the following illustrated analogy – When a burning house is beyond salvage, one would try to rescue as much valuables as possible. The more valuables recovered, the higher the opportunities for reconstruction of a new house.

Example 3

Wisdom is the key to understanding and practicing the meritorious deed of giving.

A man once faced a bandit who merely wanted his money. However, the captive man held on to his money tightly and refused to let it go. This unwise act led to his death.

When the bandit forcefully opened the dead man's fist, he was surprised to discover that this man had chosen to battle over a penny!

This story tells us that a miserly mind is more horrific as compared to a bandit or a beast of prey.

Example 4

It is common for people to think that we should keep our money for ourselves instead of giving to others.

But over the last few years in Taiwan, we witnessed many people showing *compassion* and *loving-kindness*, helping and empathizing with distraught victims of earthquakes and floods. This goes to show that nothing is achievable with good merits alone, if no opportunity is given.

How do we manage money with wisdom?

An old saying goes that we should not waste time pursuing money obsessively as we can never keep up with it. It is but a wild-goose chase!



Instead, a wise person knows how to reverse the act of pursuing money, which is through the practice of giving. A wise man knows to sow wholesome deeds through giving. In turn, he would enjoy the fruits of his merits when the cause and conditions of giving ripen.

Likewise, a wise warrior would arm himself with 'wisdom' and 'generous giving' as his weapons so as to conquer and triumph over the afflictions of pettiness and greed.

Thus, we must learn to give so as to avoid being a 'miser'.

What fragrance prevails with and against the wind?

The Agama Sutra records an instance of Venerable Ananda seeking Dharma teaching from the Buddha, "In the mundane world, there are three types of superior incense that emit exquisite fragrance – root incense, stem incense, and flower incense. But their fragrances prevail only with the wind, not against the wind. Is there any type of fragrance in this world that may prevail even against the wind?"

~ DANA – THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (1) ~

The Buddha replied that there are three types of fragrance that prevail with and against the wind:

- (1) The first fragrance comes from giving.
- (2) The second fragrance comes from upholding the precepts.
- (3) The third fragrance comes from the wisdom through listening to and learning the Dharma diligently.

If we do not practice generous giving, our miserly and greedy mind leaves a bad impression to others; likewise for one who neither upholds the precepts nor listens to the Dharma to gain wisdom.

Example 1

In Taiwan, if someone gives to charity, others around the world will come to know of this good person through word of mouth or media publicity.

On the other hand, if someone transgresses the precepts, commits wrongdoings, or is an extreme miser, others around the world may then know of his bad reputation.

So, let us hope that everyone around the world is able to learn Buddhism and accumulate good merits in their daily lives. The fragrance that comes from meritorious actions is not affected by the directions of the wind and is capable of diffusing far and wide to different parts of the world.

Therefore, the Buddha praises someone who gives, as one with fragrance (good reputation) while one who is greedy and miserly will bear ill reputation.

Connection between the amount of gifts offered and the growing merits

Giving brings about merits across the *six realms*:

- (1) Heavenly realm** – A celestial being is extremely joyful. But the level of joy experienced by each celestial being differs according to individual merits. Their duration of life spans, luminosity, appearances, and companions vary accordingly.
- (2) Human realm** – In the human realm, people may have savings accounts, but there are differences in the amounts that they save. Some have big savings while others have much less.

The merits that each person reaps differ depending on:

(a) Whether the act of giving is practiced.

(b) The significance of giving.

In this regard, people with more merits would have others earning money for their use, whereas people with fewer merits would have to work very hard for money. People with the least merits would try very hard to earn money but to no avail.

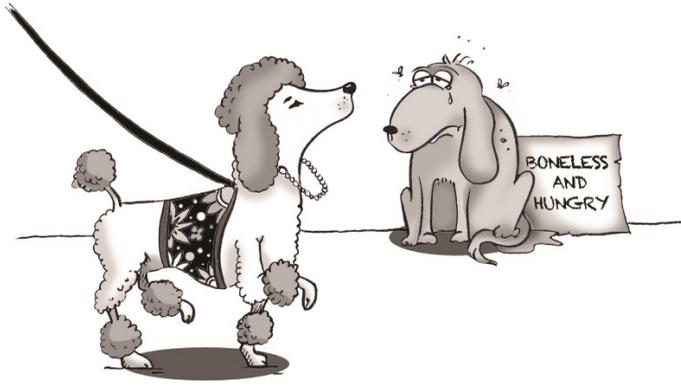
(3) Ghost realm – There are ghosts that lack possessions, ghosts with little means, and ghosts with great wealth and means.

In Taiwan, some temples receive many incense offerings and donations from large groups of believers annually and this increases the prosperity of these temples. Why is this so? It is because the ghost-deity had given generously in its past life. Nonetheless, it had transgressed some precepts in its past life and is now born as a ghost-deity.

(We can refer to the relevant karmic cause and effect in the chapter on Buddhist Philosophy of Life¹).

¹ "Buddhist Philosophy of Life" can be found in the third volume of this series.

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(4) Animal realm – Some dogs enjoy very good merits. Their owners bathe them, clothe them during winter times, feed them with branded dog food, send them to animal spa, and even share beds with them. But then again, this is not without cause and conditions.

The gathering of events is due to cause and conditions. These animals reaped the result of being a dog because they had given charity with arrogance (adhimana) in their past lives.

Though there are dogs whose merits far exceed that of some human beings, there are also stray dogs that lack merits. They are constantly chased away by people, have to endure hunger, and even suffer from various skin diseases. This is extremely miserable!

~ DANA – THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (1) ~

Therefore, whether the act of giving is practiced in the past life has a huge impact in the merits received.

- (5) Hell realm** – The practice of giving also plays a part in the hell realm. It affects the degree of suffering hell beings have to endure. Generally, sentient beings who take rebirth in the hell realm have to undergo many great sufferings. Some hell beings are extremely thin and weak while others are strong and mighty. Those with greater strength would find it easier to pull the carts compared to those who are weaker. This shows that the merits of hell beings differ from one to the other.

The blessings which *King Yama* gained in the hell realm, is the highest insofar as that realm is concerned. 'Lesser kings' have lesser blessings, and hell wardens receive even lesser blessings. Every hell being is suffering, so does King Yama. The only difference is that King Yama is more privileged than the rest.

King Yama has to endure some degree of suffering before he interrogates hell beings for their wrongdoings. Why is this so? What deed did he commit in his past?

King Yama performed many meritorious deeds but also created much enmity with others in his past life. He, together with his friends, made a foolish vow to be born in the hell realm to try those people for their wrongdoings in their future lives.

When they took rebirth in the hell realm, the chief aspirant became King Yama while the others became 'lesser kings'.

Here, we learn that we should not generate vows indiscriminately. We must make good use of the merits and not expend them in the hell realm.

Why should we practice giving?

From the mundane world's perspective: "Misery befalls upon poor couples." If a person does not practice giving, he ends up less privileged and nothing goes smoothly for him. His family would eventually end up in constant bickering.

Nowadays, the cost of education is soaring. Expenses incurred from elementary schooling to pursuing a higher degree are hefty. People who are less privileged are therefore easily burdened and distressed.

So if we understand the benefits and meaning of giving, we would gradually learn how to practice giving, observe the cause and conditions of giving, and attain wisdom.

Generous giving helps to gladden our mind. In turn, this aids us to uphold the precepts, attain meditative concentration, develop wisdom, and ultimately become Buddha. So let us learn to give.

How might we be wise?

We should contemplate as to why the Buddha first expounded on the teachings on giving, before propagating on upholding the precepts and taking rebirth in the heavenly realm. How might we develop wisdom?

Example

There were two women who each planted a fruit tree. When the fruits ripened, one of the women consumed all the fruits without saving any seeds.

The other woman, on the contrary, ate the fruits but kept the seeds for replanting. She sowed the seeds and took good care of the new crop diligently. Hence, this woman is able to enjoy good harvesting in the following year.

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Most people end up like the first woman who is unable to enjoy continuous harvests. They may have cultivated giving in their past lives but do not continue with the practice of giving. As such, they expend all their merits brought about from their past giving and this will lead them to be born less privileged in their future lives.

On the other hand, a wise Buddhist is like the second woman who had saved the seeds for replanting. This is an intelligent decision made by a wise person as he will be able to continue to enjoy the merits in his future lives.



People who practice giving

Giving is akin to sowing seeds in spring and reaping their fruits in autumn. From this analogy, we see three kinds of people who practice giving:

- (1) Affluent donors who continue to give after harvest.
- (2) Less privileged donors who endeavor to give despite small harvest yields.
- (3) People who discontinue to give despite harvest –
 - (a) This is analogous to affluent people who do not sow seeds of giving after reaping fruits of merits. Their affluent status will decline in the future.
 - (b) The same goes for less privileged people who are unwilling to offer things that they obtained through great effort. Instead, they keep them for their own use.

Example 1

Elder Anathapindika is an example of the first kind of donor. The elder offered the Jetavana Monastery for the *Sangha* to

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practice and for the Buddha and Sangha to propagate the Dharma to benefit sentient beings. We are able to listen to and learn the Dharma now because of this cause and conditions.



Indeed, we would be very grateful to Elder Anathapindika whenever we hear of Jetavana Monastery. His good reputation is just like the 'fragrance' generated from giving.

During the Buddha's time, wealthy men in Sravasti would offer giving in the city, at the four main gates, and at their houses.

Elder Anathapindika was a wealthy man who knew he had to practice giving after harvest. Thus, when his life span ended, he took rebirth in the Thirty-Three Heavens. Although there are other heavenly beings residing in the same heaven as him, the elder's appearance, luminosity, and happiness far exceed that of the others. Moreover, he had the admiration and faith of the other heavenly beings due to his dignity and virtue.

His life span was also longer than most heavenly beings. The life span of the heavenly beings in the Thirty-Three Heavens is a thousand years, which is equivalent to thirty-six million human years.

Hence, it is important to practice giving. We should learn to give generously like Elder Anathapindika, especially when we are more blessed as compared to others.

Example 2

However, what could the less privileged do? There was a very impoverished woman who would beg from others, but often to no avail. One day, she managed to pick some wild vegetables and sold them for two dollars.

Although that was all she had, she thought, "I am so poor in this life. This means that I did not practice giving in my past

life. If I continue not to give in this life, I would be even poorer in my next life."

So she offered her only two dollars to the Buddha and the Sangha for their sustenance and received blessings from the monastics.

Giving generates merits and a small act of giving leads to great results. After she received the blessings, she was very happy and rested under a tree.

The shades of trees would usually shift according to the time of the day. But it happened that the shade sheltered the woman throughout her rest. Auspicious clouds of five hues also appeared over the tree top.

At that time, the king who was saddened by his queen's recent demise decided to go for a hunting trip and came across this phenomenon. He found the woman attractive, noted the auspicious clouds hanging above the tree, and also witnessed the shade which did not shift.

Intrigued, the king thought, "This woman is certainly blessed."

Thus, he decided to receive her as his new queen.

When the woman was enthroned as the new queen, she became very rich and continued to give generously. The rector then blessed her for her giving.

Someone asked the Elder *Bhikshu*, "In the past, it was you who blessed her. But this time, it is the rector who had blessed her. Why is this so?"

The Elder *Bhikshu* replied, "When she was still a poor girl, she had made an offering with a pure and sincere mind although she offered only two dollars. She gave all she had and that is not something that most people would do."

It is a magnificent feat for a millionaire to even give ten thousand dollars. But the woman gave her only two dollars, which is her entire possession.

From this account, we know that the essence of giving lies in the motivation of the mind. A less privileged person would enjoy very great merits if he knows to give. Therefore, we should endeavor to give, even more so when we are not rich.

Example 3

What happens if we enjoy merits but do not practice giving?

During the Buddha's time, the law of Sravasti stated that, if a person is heirless, his entire possession would be transferred to the king's treasury following his demise.

One day, a wealthy elder named Bhadraka passed away. Since there were no heirs to whom his possessions could be transferred, King Prasenajit went to claim the elder's possessions.

By the time King Prasenajit had finished the task, he was extremely exhausted and felt emotionally troubled. So he visited the Buddha at the Jetavana Monastery.

The Buddha saw him and asked, "You look tired and you are covered with dust. Why is this so?"

King Prasenajit answered, "I had just completed taking over the property of a wealthy man who possessed eighty thousand catty of pure gold among other valuables."

It is impossible for us to evaluate the worth of eighty thousand catty of pure gold. Besides, there were many other valuables that were uncountable.

Although the elder was a wealthy man, he lived a very frugal and shabby life. He did not practice giving in his lifetime, and his wife, relatives, and friends did not get to share his fortune.

King Prasenajit asked the World Honored One, "Why did this person behave as such?"

The Buddha replied, "The wealth that he possessed in this life came from his offering of sustenance to a *Pratyeka Buddha* in his past life. But he had a second thought while offering to the Pratyeka Buddha, 'Why should I offer sustenance to him? Is it not better if I offer the food to my servants?'

"He regretted the offering made to the Pratyeka Buddha and so, he was not able to enjoy the enormous merits accrued to his present and future lives.

"Moreover, he did not make offering to the *Triple Gem* and was not generous in sharing or offering good things with others."

In summary, although he had merits, he neither sowed seeds of giving nor helped others. Thus, he was not able to enjoy his fortune even though he was a wealthy man in his present life, and upon passing away, he took rebirth in the *Hell of Screaming*.

Why is this so? This is because the elder was merely exhausting his meritorious past deeds and failed to generate new ones. He had depleted the merits that came from offering to the Pratyeka Buddha. Instead, he was left with demerits that arose from his past unwholesome deeds, rendering his rebirth in the hell realm.

Having learnt of this, we must remind ourselves to be generous and bring all good merits to our next life.

What is the cause for poverty or affluence?

Why is a person born less privileged in this world? The Agama Sutra mentions two cause and conditions for an impoverished birth:

(1) Unwilling to give.

(2) Hindering others in giving – A person with a joyous mind might want to offer to the Triple Gem, be filial to his parents, or give to the less privileged. If we dissuade him from giving, we will suffer poverty because not only have we failed to give, but we have also obstructed others in their giving.

Conversely, how do results of affluence arise?

(1) Enjoys giving.

(2) Encourages others to give – Together, everybody will be wealthy and will continue to give and enjoy results of affluence.

(a) Rejoice giving - When we see others give, we ought to rejoice in their giving and praise the good deed performed. Being able to rejoice in their giving and to praise the good deed done by others is also a means for generating merits. It could be very tiresome for a person to give all by himself.

(b) Encourage giving - Apart from practicing giving, we should encourage others to do the same, praise them for the deed of giving, and even praise the Dharma of practicing giving. This can bring us out of poverty and towards affluence in the future.

There are other cause and conditions for people born into less privileged or wealthy families.

Birth in a less privileged family:

- (1) Being disrespectful and unfilial.
- (2) Being disrespectful and refuse to serve those who outperform us in terms of competence, knowledge, and those who cultivate and practice conscientiously.

Birth in a wealthy family:

- (1) Being respectful to all people.
- (2) Giving charity to others.

These are the causes that lead to rebirth in prestigious and wealthy family.

Once we have understood the Dharma in the Agama Sutra, we would stop being envious of those born into rich families. They are simply reaping the results that they cultivated in their past through the good deeds of practicing giving, being filial to parents, and being respectful to teachers, seniors, the Triple Gem, and other people.

In contrast, a person is born less privileged because he was arrogant and disrespectful of others in his past life.

Some unwise people, who feel that they are being deprived, even blame their parents for giving birth to them. They fail to realize that it is due to their own karmic actions that they have taken rebirth in less privileged families.

A clear understanding of this prevents us from blaming others or becoming envious or jealous of others.

Thus, we should get started giving joyously and generously after learning the law of karmic cause and effect.

Why is one born without wisdom?

The two cause and conditions for a person to be born without wisdom:

- (1) Dislikes learning and listening to the Dharma or making inquiries about the Dharma** – A person who does not like to inquire about the Dharma may obstruct others from listening to the Dharma. He fails to contemplate the gist of Dharma and will not grow in wisdom.
- (2) Greed for sleep and lack of diligence** – An unwise person is one who likes to spend time in sleep. He will be lazy and will not make the effort to listen to the Dharma.

How might we develop wisdom?

(1) Learns, listens to, and inquires about the Dharma – We should contemplate and seek clarifications from the learned after listening to the Dharma.

(2) Diligence – We practice and cultivate wisdom diligently.

The Analects provide that, "Confucius inquires about everything when he steps into a shrine hall."

Every time Confucius entered a shrine hall, he never failed to inquire about all the offerings and rites taking place in the hall. Although Confucius was a very knowledgeable person, he would nonetheless sincerely inquire and seek clarifications from others when he encountered anything that he was not aware of. As such, Confucius is known as a great teacher in this mundane world.

Confucius' disciple, Zai Yu, was lectured by Confucius for sleeping in the day, "A rotten wood cannot be used for sculpting. A wall of feces cannot be whitewashed."

Zai Yu could not develop wisdom because he liked to sleep and was lazy.

~ DANA – THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (1) ~

We must be diligent and not crave for too much sleep. Moreover, we must acquaint ourselves with virtuous companions, from whom we could listen to and learn and inquire about the Dharma.

Therefore, when we encounter a less privileged person, we ought to reflect, "I could have been as impoverished as this person in my past life. Fortunately, I practiced giving and thus I am better-off in this life."

If someone comes to us for offering, we ought to contemplate, "It is most fortunate that he has come to me for offering as he is giving me an opportunity to give. Merits will accrue upon giving."

When we have grasped this teaching, we would know how to apply wisdom in our daily lives, and integrate it into giving, securing a better future for ourselves.

Glossary

Altruistic Joy: Also known as Sympathetic Joy or Mudita. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Amitabha Buddha: The Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life, who presides over the Western Pure World, to which anyone can be reborn through single minded recitation of or meditation on the Buddha's name.

Anagamin: One who has attained the third stage of Liberation. Such a person has abandoned sensuous desires. Upon passing from the human realm, he will take rebirth in one of the five special worlds in the World of Form, called the Suddhavaśa worlds, or "Pure Abodes", from which he will attain Arahatship and will never return to the human realm. Hence, he is also known as a Non Returner. An Anagamin has abandoned the five lower fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatship.

Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi: The Supreme and Complete Enlightenment.

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Arahat: One who has traversed the Eightfold Noble Path to reach the fourth and final stage of Liberation, called Arahatship. An Arahat has abandoned all ten fetters that bind beings to the cycle of existence. Also known as the Perfect One. See also Arahatship.

Arahatship: The fourth and final stage of Liberation, in which one is fully liberated from Samsara and is no longer subject to death and rebirth. The four stages of Liberation are: The First stage known as Srotapanna; the Second stage known as Sakradagamin; the Third stage known as Anagamin; and the Fourth stage known as Arahat.

Avici Hell: Also known as the Hell of Uninterrupted Torture. It is the deepest and worst hell. Those born in this hell suffer, die, and are instantly reborn to suffering without interruption, until they have exhausted the retribution for their evil karma.

Bad existences: The three lower realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals; as opposed to the good existences, which are the three realms of humans, asuras, and heavenly beings. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

Bardo: A Tibetan term for the state of existence intermediate between two lives.

Bhikshu: A fully ordained male member of the Buddhist Sangha or monk observing two hundred and fifty Precepts.

Bhikshuni: A fully ordained female member of the Buddhist Sangha or nun observing five hundred Precepts.

Bhutatahata: The true character of reality. The inherent or true nature of phenomena or true suchness. (诸法实相)

Bodhicitta: Also known as the Bodhi-mind or the Bodhi-heart, in which "Bodhi" means "enlightened". It is the aspiration to attain supreme Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Bodhisattva: A being who has developed Bodhicitta and is striving for enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Brahma King: The King of the Brahma World.

Brahma World: In the widest sense, this is the name of the World of Form; in a narrower sense, it is the collective name of the first three heavens of the World of Form. See also Three planes of existence.

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Buddha: The Fully Enlightened One, who possesses perfect wisdom and compassion.

Compassion: Also known as Karuna. See also Four Divine States of Mind and Great Compassion.

Cycle of existence: See Samsara.

Dana: Charity; benevolence; generosity.

Defilements: The mental states of greed, hatred, and delusion which temporarily cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. These defilements are seen as the very roots of Samsaric existence and are known as the three poisons.

Deva: A heavenly being.

Dharma: The Teachings of the Buddha.

Dharma-kaya: The Dharma body, the truth body, the reality body.

Eight precepts: Observed by lay Buddhists during certain retreats: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in

sexual activities; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not take intoxicants; (6) do not wear bodily adornments, use perfumes, engage in singing and dancing, and watching dances or plays; (7) do not sleep in a raised bed; and (8) do not eat after noon.

Eightfold Noble Path: The fundamental teaching of the Buddha that shows the path that leads to the cessation of suffering: (1) Right View or Right Understanding; (2) Right Thought; (3) Right Speech; (4) Right Action; (5) Right Livelihood; (6) Right Effort; (7) Right Mindfulness; and (8) Right Concentration.

Eighteen kinds of transformation: Includes (1) moving objects or even worlds; (2) emitting fire from the body; (3) illuminating innumerable worlds; (4) causing sentient beings in all the six realms to be seen; (5) changing an object into something different; (6) roaming freely by penetrating walls, mountains, water, air, and so on; (7) rolling anything into a minute size; (8) enlarging objects to gigantic proportions; (9) storing up swarms of people, mountains, or earth within the body; (10) entering any group, assuming their forms and voices, preaching to them, and then disappearing; (11) magnifying the body to a thousand fold; (12) hiding this magnified metamorphosis; (13) subjecting sentient beings to one's will; (14) controlling the supernatural powers of those

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below one in spiritual achievements; (15) endowing sentient beings with eloquence; (16) restoring memory to those who forget the Dharma; (17) giving joy to listeners; and (18) lighting up the creatures in all the worlds.

Eon: See Kalpa.

Equanimity: Also known as Upeksa. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

First Stage of Fruition: Also known as the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained the first stage of fruition is known as a Srotapanna or Stream Enterer.

Five aggregates: Form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness.

Five desires: Wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep.

Five precepts: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; and (5) Do not take intoxicants.

Five sensual pleasures: Pleasurable feelings derived from the contact between the five sense bases of eye, ear, nose,

tongue, and body, and the five sense objects of form, sound, odor, flavor, and tactile object.

Four Divine States of Mind: (1) Maitri or Loving-kindness; (2) Karuna or Compassion; (3) Mudita or Altruistic Joy; and (4) Upeksa or Equanimity.

Four Foundations of Mindfulness: (1) Contemplation of the body; (2) Contemplation of feelings; (3) Contemplation of the state of mind; and (4) Contemplation of phenomena. See also Right Effort.

Four Noble Truths: (1) The noble truth of suffering; (2) The noble truth of the cause of suffering; (3) The noble truth of the cessation of suffering; and (4) The noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Four pairs and eight categories of Sravaka practitioners: This refers to Sravaka practitioners who practice the Srotapanna path and those who have attained Srotapannaship; the ones who practice the Sakradagamin path and those who have attained Sakradagaminship; the ones who practice the Anagamin path and those who have attained Anagaminship; the ones who practice the Arahat path and those who have attained Arahatship.

Good existences: The three upper realms of humans, asuras and heavenly beings; as opposed to the bad existences of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

Great Compassion: The aspiration to remove the sufferings and causes of sufferings of all sentient beings.

Heavens of the Four Deva Kings: Also known as the Heavens of the Deva Kings of the Four Heavens. This is the first of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

Hell of Screaming: One of the Eight Hot Hells. The other seven are: the Hell of Thoughts, the Hell of Iron Chains, the Hell of Crushing, the Hell of Great Screaming, the Scorching Hot Hell, the Extreme Scorching Hot Hell, and the Hell of Uninterrupted Torture (also known as the Avici Hell).

Kalpa: Also known as Eon. It is often used to denote a very long period of time. There are small, medium, great, and incalculable kalpas. A great kalpa indicates the length of time between the creation and recreation of a universe, spanning the period of the universe's formation, existence, destruction, and non-existence.

Karma: The deeds carried out by a person and their effects on the person's future, especially in relation to their succeeding rebirths. Karma can be classified as actions of the body, speech, and mind, each of which can have the moral quality of wholesomeness, unwholesomeness, or indeterminate.

Karuna: Also known as Compassion. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

King Yama: The King in charge of the hell realm.

Law of causality: Also known as the law of cause and effect. This is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations, in which all actions, which is a cause, will produce a corresponding effect. It is also stated as good begets good, evil begets evil; good will not beget evil, evil will not beget good.

Law of Dependent Origination: The principle that phenomena do not come into existence on their own but as a result of cause and conditions.

Loving-kindness: Also known as Maitri. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Maitri: Also known as Loving-kindness. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

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Mara: The Demon King who resides in the Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven.

Mudita: Also known as Altruistic or Sympathetic Joy. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Naga: Dragon or serpent. A beneficent divine being who governs the various water bodies, such as seas, lakes, rivers, and springs.

National Preceptor: The Religious Adviser to the King equivalent to the position of a Prime Minister.

Nirmanarati Heaven: This is the fifth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

Nirvana: The perfect state of mind that is free from greed, hatred, and delusion, and hence all suffering. See also Parinirvana and Residue-less Nirvana.

Non Returner: See Anagamin.

Once Returner: See Sakradagamin.

Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven: This is the sixth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Mara, the Demon King, resides in this heaven. See also Three planes of existence.

Parinirvana: Also known as the Great Nirvana; it indicates the Buddha's entering into the state of residue-less Nirvana. See also Nirvana and Residue-less Nirvana.

Perfect One: See Arahant.

Prajna: Wisdom; insight; divine intuition.

Pratyeka Buddha: Also known as the Silent Buddha, or Self-enlightened One. The Pratyeka Buddha appears in an era when there is no Buddha or the Buddha's teachings. He lives apart from others and achieves enlightenment through self-contemplation and realization of dependent arising.

Pure Dharma Eye: The pure vision of the true Dharma.

Residue-less Nirvana: Also known as Nirvana without residue. It refers to the state of total liberation from all physical and mental conditions. This is in contrast with Nirvana with residue, where the body still exists. See also Nirvana and Parinirvana.

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Right Action: To conduct oneself in moral, peaceful, and honorable ways, that is in keeping with the precepts of not killing, not stealing, and not committing sexual misconduct. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Concentration: To develop one's meditation according to the four Dhyanas. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Effort: To develop the four types of efforts: (1) the effort to get rid of unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind, such as the desire to take another's property; (2) the effort to prevent the arising of unwholesome thoughts; (3) the effort to develop wholesome thoughts of loving-kindness and compassion; and (4) the effort to maintain and develop further wholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Faith: To develop faith in the Triple Gem and the Four Noble Truths, that through practicing Buddhism, all sentient beings can eventually attain liberation from Samsara.

Right Livelihood: To live honorably in a profession which is in no way harmful to sentient beings, and in keeping with the precepts. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Mindfulness: To practice the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. See also Four Foundations of Mindfulness and Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Speech: To abstain from telling lies, slandering, frivolous speech, and harsh speech. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Thought: To have only thoughts which are in line with Buddhist teachings. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Understanding: See Right View.

Right View: To develop the understanding or view that complies with the Buddhist teaching of causality or the law of cause and effect; understanding the Four Noble Truths. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Right Understanding.

Right View of Dependent Arising: Also known as Law of Dependent Origination. It is the principle that phenomena do not come into existence on their own but as a result of cause and conditions. It is an elaboration of the Principle of Cause and Effect, highlighting the concept of inter-dependency of existence, and also the duality/non-duality.

Rupa-kaya: The material body.

Saha World: The secular world, which is known as the world that must be endured as it is full of sufferings.

Sakra: The King of Trayastrimsat Heaven.

Sakradagamin: One who has attained the second stage of Liberation. Such a person, upon passing from the human realm, will take rebirth in the heavenly realms, after which he will be reborn in the human realm one last time to attain Arahathship. Hence he is also known as a Once Returner. A Once Returner has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. He is distinguished from the Stream Enterer by the fact that the Once Returner has weakened greed, hatred, and delusion to a greater degree. Therefore, he has fewer than seven rebirths. See also Arahathship.

Samadhi: Meditative concentration. Often used to denote the deepest state of pure concentration, in which the mind is free from distraction and totally absorbed in the object of concentration. There are many levels and types of Samadhi, such as the Samadhi of Loving-kindness and Compassion.

Samsara: Also known as the Cycle of existence or cyclic existence. This refers to the endless cycle of suffering caused by birth, death, and rebirth in the six realms of cyclic existence.

Sangha: The Buddhist monastic order or community.

Seven Factors of Enlightenment: (1) Mindfulness; (2) Discriminative investigation of the Dharma; (3) Effort; (4) Joy; (5) Ease of body and mind; (6) Concentration; and (7) Equanimity.

Sila: The precept; code of morality; Buddhist ethics.

Siksamana: A female novice nun in waiting observing Six Precepts.

Six consciousnesses: The consciousnesses of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

Six Paramitas: The Sanskrit word Paramita means to cross over to the other shore. Paramita may also be translated as perfection, perfect realization, or reaching beyond limitation. Through the practice of these six Paramitas, we cross over the sea of suffering (Samsara) to the shore of happiness and

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awakening (Nirvana); we cross over from ignorance and delusion to enlightenment. The six Paramitas refer to:

- The Perfection of Generosity (Dana Paramita),
- The Perfection of Ethics (Sila Paramita),
- The Perfection of Patience (Ksanti Paramita)
- The Perfection of Joyous Effort / Enthusiastic Perseverance (Virya Paramita),
- The Perfection of Concentration (Dhyana Paramita),
- The Perfection of Wisdom (Prajna Paramita).

Six realms: The realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, asuras, and heavenly beings.

Six sense bases: Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Six sense objects: Form, sound, odor, flavor, tactile object, and phenomena.

Sramanera: A male novice monk observing Ten Precepts.

Sramanerika: A female novice nun observing Ten Precepts.

Srotapanna: One who has attained the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained this stage is said to have

entered the Stream that leads to Liberation, hence he is also known as a Stream Enterer. Due to the fact that the Stream Enterer has attained an intuitive grasp of Buddhist teachings ("Right View") and has complete confidence in the Triple Gem, he will not be reborn in the three bad existences again, and will take at most seven cycles of rebirths alternating between the heavenly realm and the human realm before attaining the final stage of Liberation, Arahatsip. A Stream Enterer has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatsip.

Stream Enterer: See Srotapanna.

Supernatural powers: The six supernatural powers are: (1) Divine eye or clairvoyance; (2) Divine ear or cliraudience; (3) mental telepathy or ability to read the thoughts of others; (4) psychic travel or telekinesis; (5) knowledge of the past and future; and (6) ending contamination. The first five supernatural powers can be acquired by one who practices deep concentration, but the sixth supernatural power is only attainable when one has attained Arahatsip.

Sympathetic Joy: Also known as Altruistic Joy or Mudita. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Ten directions of space: The directions of North, South, East, West, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, Zenith, and Nadir, thus covering all spaces.

Ten epithets: The ten honorable titles of Buddha. These ten epithets are common to all Buddhas.

- Tathagata - Thus-Come One or Thus-Gone One,
- Arhat - Worthy of Offerings,
- Samyak-Sambuddha - Equally, Perfectly Enlightened One,
- Vidyacarana-Sampanna - Knowledge and Conduct Perfected,
- Sugata - Well-Arrived One or Well-Gone One. Tathagata is completely in control of his own births and deaths,
- Lokavid - Understanding the World,
- Anuttara - Unsurpassed One,
- Purusa-Damyasarthi - Tamer of Men,
- Sasta Deva-Manusyanam - Teacher to Gods, Humans, and heavenly beings,
- Buddha-Bhagavan - Buddha the World Honored One.

Ten Kinds of Mindfulness: (1) Mindfulness of the Buddha; (2) Mindfulness of the Dharma; (3) Mindfulness of the Sangha; (4) Mindfulness of the Precepts; (5) Mindfulness of Generosity; (6) Mindfulness of the Heavens; (7) Mindfulness of the

Cessation of Thoughts; (8) Mindfulness of Breath; (9) Mindfulness of the Impermanence of the Body; and (10) the Mindfulness of Death.

Ten Stages of Bodhisattva Practice: According to the Prajna sutras, the ten stages of Bodhisattva Practice are:

- the stage of dry wisdom,
- the stage of nature,
- the stage of the eighth person,
- the stage of insights,
- the stage of diminishment of afflictions,
- the stage of freedom from desire,
- the stage of completion of discernment,
- the stage of the Pratyeka Buddha,
- the stage of the Bodhisattva, and
- the stage of the Buddha.

Tenfold meritorious cause of action: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not slander; (6) Do not engage in frivolous speech; (7) Do not engage in harsh speech; (8) Do not bear greed; (9) Do not bear hatred; and (10) Do not stay deluded.

Three periods: The past, present, and future.

Three planes of existence: The World of Sensuous Desires, the World of Form, and the Formless World. All beings in the six realms of cyclic existence can be found in the World of Sensuous Desires as these beings are plagued by various sensuous desires. Beings in the World of Form have abandoned sensuous desires but still cling on to physical forms, while beings in the Formless World have even relinquished the physical forms and exist only in mental states.

Three poisons: See Defilements.

Trayastrimsat Heaven: Also known as the Thirty-Three Heavens. It is the second of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

Tripitaka: The three main collections of the Buddhist canon – sutra-pitaka (sermons collection), vinaya-pitaka (rules collection), and abhidharma-pitaka (philosophical treatises collection). Also known as the Three Baskets.

Triple Gem: The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Tusita Heaven: This is the fourth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Maitreya Bodhisattva is currently residing in this heaven, awaiting for the cause and conditions

to ripen for him to descend to the human realm and become the next Buddha to save and liberate all sentient beings. See also Three planes of existence.

Twelve Links of Dependent Origination: The twelve links of dependent origination provide a detailed description on the problem of suffering and rebirth. They are: ignorance, mental formation, consciousness, name and form, the six senses, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, becoming, birth, aging and death. There is no existing phenomenon that is not the effect of dependent origination. All phenomena arise dependent upon a number of casual factors, called conditions.

- Ignorance is the condition for mental formation.
- Mental formation is the condition for consciousness.
- Consciousness is the condition for name and form.
- Name and form is the condition for the six senses.
- The six senses are the conditions for contact.
- Contact is the condition for feeling.
- Feeling is the condition for craving.
- Craving is the condition for clinging.
- Clinging is the condition for becoming.
- Becoming is the condition for birth.
- Birth is the condition for aging and death.

Upekṣa: Also known as Equanimity. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Western Pure World: Also known as Sukhavati in Sanskrit. It refers to the Pure World of Amitabha Buddha.

Wheel Turning Monarch: Also known as Chakravartin. A universal emperor and protector of Buddhism. It is a term used for an ideal universal ruler, who rules ethically and benevolently over the entire world. Wheel turning literally means whose chariot is rolling or whose Dharmachakra (Wheel of the Dharma) is turning everywhere without obstruction.

Yama Heaven: This is the third of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

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