

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
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DANA – THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (4)

How does one offer sustenance to the Triple Gem?

There are many rivers in Taiwan. Let us consider this question – is it possible to fetch water from all these rivers at one go?

The Buddha taught us a very simple method. It is to collect water from the ocean. Isn't this method very simple?

On hindsight, it is only after we learnt of the method that the task appears to be very simple. However, as long as we are unaware of the way to do it, the task would remain daunting and impossible to accomplish.

In the same way, it would be difficult to comprehend and attain realization of the profound Dharma without actually knowing the way through practice.

The World Honored One had sacrificed his bodies and lives throughout incalculable kalpas to acquire the Dharma. When he attained Buddhahood, the *Brahma King* appeared before the Buddha and beseeched the Buddha to remain in the world so that the Dharma can be propagated. This shows that it is indeed not easy to acquire the Dharma.

Although we cannot meet the Buddha in present times, we are still able to listen to the Dharma. This is truly extraordinary and hard to come by.

We usually do not realize how rare it is for us to be able to learn and listen to the Dharma. Since we have this valuable opportunity to come in contact with the precious Dharma, we must show utmost respect for the Dharma by practicing and cultivating ourselves diligently.

Example

How do we offer sustenance to the Triple Gem? We can take a leaf out of the earlier analogy of fetching water from the ocean so that we may be able to drink the water from all the different rivers and apply this wisdom in the practice of Dana.

To elucidate: There is an instance recorded in the Agama Sutra where General Simha invited the Buddha's disciples to

accept his offering of sustenance. Before the great general carried out his offering, he personally invited five hundred Arahats including Maha Sariputra, Maha Maudgalyayana, Maha Katyayana, Maha Purna Maitrayaniputra, *Sramanera* Jun Tou, and Maha Rahula. After the offering of sustenance, he gave each Arahata a very exquisite roll of white fabric. Maha Rahula returned to see the Buddha at the end of the offering.

The Buddha asked Rahula, "Did anyone offer sustenance today?"

"Yes, General Simha did. He even offered some very exquisite white cloth," replied Maha Rahula.

The Buddha said, "For a donor who wishes to offer sustenance to five hundred Arahats, is it possible for him to make five hundred invitations to all of these Arahats and other members of the precious Sangha at one go?"

As if giving Rahula a prompt, the Buddha added, "Similarly, is it possible to drink the water from all the rivers at one go?"

Rahula could not think of a good answer.

So the Buddha explained, "If you drink from the ocean, you will be able to drink the water flowing through five hundred rivers."

This teaching eventually reached the great general. When he learnt of this, he went to see the Buddha, "World Honored One! I know what I should do in future. When I wish to offer sustenance to all the monastics, I only need to invite one Bhikshu to receive my offering as he represents all the monastics. The Sangha is akin to the ocean of the Triple Gem. Thus, offering sustenance to a Bhikshu from the Sangha is equivalent to offering sustenance to the Sangha. I should offer sustenance equally to all of them regardless of their accomplishments."

Following this, while General Simha was making the next offering to the monastics, a deva told him about the different achievements and stages of liberation that each monastic has attained. These achievements include the various levels of meditative contemplation or if the monastic is upholding or transgressing his precepts.

The deva then suggested to General Simha to make offerings only to those accomplished monastics.

However, the general remembered the Buddha's teachings and was unmoved by the deva's remarks. He went ahead to offer sustenance to all monastics impartially instead.

Having made the offering, General Simha went to seek Buddha's teaching, "When I was offering sustenance, a deva came by my side and pointed out to me the monastics who had attained the fruition as a Srotapanna, a *Sakradagamin*, an *Anagamin*, or an Arahata; and who upheld the precepts, transgressed the precepts, or has meditative contemplation. What should I do?"

The Buddha replied, "You should offer sustenance with an impartial mind."

The general replied, "Yes! I had offered sustenance to all monastics without discrimination."

The Buddha praised him for his right action similar to a Bodhisattva who practices giving impartially with no discrimination between accomplishments, wealth, status, or between those who uphold and those who transgress the precepts.

Thus, there is no discrimination when offering sustenance between great Masters and young Bhikshus; Bhikshu and Bhikshuni; Sramanera and Bhikshu; or Venerables whom we are more acquainted with and Venerables whom we are less

familiar with. Through this right action, we will reap immeasurable merits.

The connection between the cause and conditions of giving and the fruits of merits

When we comprehend the connection between the cause and conditions of giving and the resulting merits, we not only reap fruits of merits but also generate wisdom.

There are three cause and conditions that make an act of giving complete. These are listed as follow:

First, the donor's mind and action.

Secondly, the recipient, also known as the field of merits (punya-ksetra). This comprises the field of loving-kindness and compassion (otherwise known as field of compassion), and the field of respect.

Thirdly, the gift. There are two kinds of gifts – material gifts and the sharing of the Dharma.

These three cause and conditions combine to complete the act of giving.

(1) Donor

The mindset of the donor is the most important in the act of giving. Giving with right motivations can lead to great merits and returns. The act of giving generously gravitates towards detachment from miserliness and greed. This gives rise to a respectful mind filled with loving-kindness, which is then expressed through caring actions or speech of compassionate words for others.

Four kinds of merits are generated through giving with sincerity:

- (a) The merits of giving cannot be taken away and these lead us towards Nirvana and liberation from the *cycle of existence*.
- (b) We may take rebirth in a wealthy family in the human realm or be born in the heavenly realm with greater merits than other heavenly beings with all things in abundance.
- (c) Enjoy fulfillment of materialistic needs.
- (d) Gain respect from others.

However, delightful-resulting merits can be impeded by a regretful state of mind towards the act of giving. As a result, we may not be able to enjoy the returns of mundane pleasures and will not be respected by our servants.

If we become upset with a Venerable's actions and demand the return of past gifts, it will reap the future unwholesome result of losing the derived merits. It will also lead to the suffering of separation from the things we desire and the suffering of unattainability.

Now that we know about the kind of results that entail from a mind that does not give with steadfast sincerity, we should develop a happy and respectful mind whenever we give. And with it, may we completely eliminate our miserliness and greed.

(2) Field of merits – field of respect and field of compassion.

(a) Field of respect – This refers to our parents, teachers, and the Triple Gem whom we should respect.

(b) Field of compassion – This means people who are suffering or less fortunate.

There are instances when both respect and compassion arise simultaneously in the mind such as when we give offerings to monastics who are unwell.

As we contemplate about human realm, sentient beings in the hell realm, hungry ghosts, or animals, we should generate loving-kindness and compassion. They are our potential fields of compassion.

(3) Gifts – Sharing of Dharma and giving of material wealth.

(a) Sharing of Dharma – This refers to sharing of the Right Dharma expounded by the Buddha or the wholesome teachings of the mundane world.

(b) Giving of material wealth – There are intrinsic and extrinsic wealth.

Extrinsic wealth includes money, food, drinks, and houses. People of ancient times considered wives and children to be part of their wealth.

Intrinsic wealth refers to one's body and life.

Example

Once, there was a very wealthy *national preceptor* named Velama. He offered all his belongings at the four gates of the city and wherever the Triple Gem was maintained. However, he exhausted all these merits of giving.

The Buddha explained to his disciples, "Great merits of this giving cannot be compared to the merits of constructing a shelter for the monastics to practice, cultivate, and propagate the Dharma."

Yet again, the merits of giving shelters to monastics cannot be compared to one's merits of taking refuge in the Triple Gem.

And in turn, the merits of taking refuge in the Triple Gem pale in comparison to the merits of upholding the five precepts.

Subsequently, the merits of upholding the five precepts cannot be compared to the merits of cultivating and practicing the *Four Divine States of Mind* – Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Altruistic Joy, and Equanimity.

Finally, the merits of cultivating and practicing the Four Divine States of Mind cannot be compared to the merits of contemplating the five aggregates of form, feeling, perception,

volition, and consciousness. None of the five aggregates is desirable and we should develop abhorrence for this body. We should also contemplate everything in this mundane world as impermanent, suffering, emptiness, and devoid of an ego entity. We must therefore seek liberation.

The World Honored One taught us that desires are impure, afflictions bring about great demerits, and that renunciation is most important. As we grasp the concept of the progressive merits of giving, it will also increase our wisdom.

Having comprehended the three cause and conditions of giving – the donor, the field of merits, and the gift, we would know how to use the cause and conditions wisely to amplify the ensuing merits.

Even though we know about the connection between the cause and conditions and the different ensuing merits, we should not crave for the merits but continue to maintain a state of non-attachment.

Furthermore, knowing how to apply this knowledge and to share it with others is also an instance of sharing of the Dharma.

The connection between the donor and the resulting merits

(1) The seven virtuous assets

Gradations in the seven virtuous assets – faith, observance of precepts, conscience, moral shame, listening to and learning the Dharma, giving, and wisdom – affect the merits that a donor may reap.

We should have faith in the Triple Gem, uphold the precepts diligently, learn and listen attentively to the Dharma, have constant self-reflection on behavior to others with moral shame, practice giving diligently, and continued growth of wisdom.

The more diligent the practice of the seven virtuous assets, the greater the corresponding merits will be.

Example

There was a poor elder who was invited to a banquet where everyone was given a flower garland. Upon receiving these flowers, everyone except the elder started adorning their hair with the flower garlands.

"Why didn't you adorn your hair with the flower garland? What do you want to do with the flower garland? Do you intend to sell it?" asked one of the invitees.

"Yes! I want to offer these flowers to the highest bidder."

Who is this highest bidder? It is none other than the Buddha!

The elder knew that his present poverty was a result of not giving in his past life. Thus, when he received the flower garland, he did not keep it for his self-enjoyment as it is useless once the flowers wither. Instead, he offered it to the Buddha. Doing so generates great merits in the future.



The elder was very wise. His poverty did not stop him from listening to and learning the Dharma.

So from the time of Vipasyin Buddha, he took rebirth in the heavenly and the human realms for ninety-one kalpas. In his

final birth, he met Sakyamuni Buddha, renounced to be a monastic, and attained Arahatsip.

What is the reason for this person's achievement of such wonderful merits? It is because he had strong faith in the Buddha and the Triple Gem, and upheld the precepts.

After listening to and learnt the Dharma, he realized that his lack of meritorious results was because he had not cultivated fields of merits in the past and felt ashamed. So he grasped this opportune cause and conditions to give offering. With the wisdom of seeking liberation as motivation, he accomplished all the seven virtuous assets.

(2) Giving with respect

A donor who gives with respect will be honored and respected in return.

Example

Once, a man offered sustenance to an Arahats. Although the Arahats knew about his motivation for doing so, the Arahats asked him, "Is there anything that you wish for?"

The donor answered, "I want to take rebirth in the heavenly realm or in the human realm as a king."

The Arahāt then told him that the three lower realms were also filled with abundance of form, sound, and flavor.

The donor was baffled by the Arahāt's answer. The other Bhikshus who had yet to realize the Dharma also did not understand why their Elder Bhikshu gave such an unusual blessing.

The Elder Bhikshu explained, "Your wish now is for rebirth in the heavenly realm or to be a king in the human realm, but when the time comes for you to be king, you will amass a lot of power and become very conceited.

"Under the influence of your arrogance, you will berate people with unkind words and even kill people. Moreover, you will take the lives of many animals just to satiate your desires for food and at times even seize other men's wives.

"All these are extremely unwholesome karma. Thus, even though you still reap the merits of giving, you will end up suffering in the three lower realms in your future life."

Therefore, when we practice giving, we must generate sincere vows or aspirations and dedicate the merits towards attaining liberation and Buddhahood instead of aspiring to take rebirth in the human or heavenly realm.

(3) Giving in person

A donor who gives in person will enjoy immeasurable joy and bliss in the future.

There is a phrase in the Ksitigarbha Sutra:

"Give humbly and joyously in person."

A conceited person might remark disparagingly while giving, "Here! Take this money and go get yourself some medication."

However, a person who gives with humility would say, "Please accept my offering and take good care of yourself."

Giving in person with humility and joy shows our sincerity. The recipient will feel joy through our warm giving. Even the kings should practice giving in this way.

Example

Bhikshu Hua Tian (华天比丘) was a poor man in one of his past lives and would often pick vegetables from the wilderness. Though poor, he understood the law of karmic cause and effect. Thus, upon gathering some vegetables, he would sincerely offer them to the Sangha to cultivate fields of merits. As a result, he took rebirth in the heavenly and the human realms for ninety-one kalpas. He became a monastic and attained liberation during the time of Sakyamuni Buddha.

From these examples, we learn that the time taken for each of them to attain liberation varies according to their merits, virtues, and vows.

We should therefore learn to give in person instead of offering sustenance to the Sangha or performing charitable deeds through others. The merits that we reap are lesser when others do the giving on our behalf.

(4) Giving at opportune moments

A donor who gives at opportune moments according to the appropriate cause and conditions would receive future merits at opportune times.

For example, the donor would receive assistance in times of financial difficulties.

Giving according to the appropriate cause and conditions refers to offering suitable items as required.

There are five kinds of situations:

(a) A person setting forth on a long journey – Giving to one setting forth on a long journey is like a concerned mother. She, who feels for the child, would prepare him with the necessary items for his overseas trip. We should always seize the opportunities to offer travelling funds or other necessities for someone setting forth on a long journey.

(b) Guests from abroad – Taking care of someone who comes from abroad by helping to settle him or providing him with food and lodging is another form of giving.

(c) The sick and frail – People suffer immensely when they fall sick. Hence, we render great comfort to an unwell person when taking care of him. Even though the patient experiences physical pain, a calm and settled mind would definitely hasten the speed of his recovery.

- (d) **The caregiver** – Likewise, the caregiver needs concern and encouragement. We could help by relieving the caregiver when visiting patients, so that he could continue to take care of the patient with more compassion after the short break.
- (e) **The less privileged** – Regardless of the cause and conditions that led to their poverty, we could offer food or lodging to the less privileged. In aftermaths of earthquakes, many victims are left homeless and without food. Giving food, blankets, clothes, and shelters to the victims is an example of giving at opportune moment. Helping others in need brings about great merits in the future.

(5) Giving unblemished items

A donor who gives unblemished items to others is not affected in times of impermanence and uncertainty such as the five adversities² of floods, fires, thieves and robbers, kings, and prodigal sons.

Merits vary according to the donors' mindset.

² One's wealth is said to belong to these five adversities of floods, fires, thieves and robbers, kings, and prodigal sons as each of these adversities can take away one's wealth at any time.

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A donor who sincerely offers excellent gifts prevents the recipient from getting vexed. In such deeds, future wealth that accrues to the donor cannot be taken away by the five adversities. For instance, the donor can avert crisis.

Thus, it is extremely important to acquire the seven virtuous assets:

- (a) Establish strong faith in the Triple Gem.
- (b) Uphold precepts.
- (c) Constant self-reflection on behavior to others.
- (d) Endeavor to observe moral shame.
- (e) Listening to and learning the Dharma.
- (f) Giving unblemished items in person and with respect.
- (g) Cultivate wisdom.

The connection between the different fields of merits and the resulting fruits of merits

(1) Differences in the six realms

Giving to sentient beings of the six realms will bring about varying merits.

For a monastic, offering excess food to ants brings about merits. Similarly, laypeople could offer excess food to animals by leaving them at clean places to avoid inconveniencing others. These are all meritorious acts.

We should generate a wholesome mind of giving towards all beings in the six realms. Furthermore, we should teach our children to practice giving in the right way from young. Over time, nurturing a benevolent mind would generate a complementary respectful attitude towards others.

(2) The field of compassion (varying degrees of suffering)

Merits of giving to someone who is suffering immensely are greater when compared to giving to another who endures less suffering.

~ DANA – THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (4) ~

The intensity of suffering leads the donor to have greater compassion, resulting in a stronger will to practice giving. Thus, the accruing merits are greater.

Example 1

What might the merits of taking care of a sick person be compared with?



The Buddha told us that caring for the sick is comparable to respecting the Tathagata.

Why is this so? From the sutras, we learn that the Buddha manifested illnesses because he wanted sentient beings to be able to cultivate fields of merits. The sick has to endure a lot

of pain and suffering; his body and mind are in great discomfort.

Hence, we must have *great compassion* to take care of the sick. The merits of taking care of the sick are comparable to the merits of respecting the Buddha.

Taking care of the sick is first amongst the eight fields of merits.³

So nurses who take care of patients will enjoy tremendous merits in the future.

Example 2

A common saying goes, "The act of saving a life is greater than building a seven-level pagoda."

In the time of the Buddha, there was a man named Gangadatta who wanted to renounce but was stopped by his disagreeing parents. Gangadatta thought, "Since I am unable

³ The eight fields of merits refer to the Buddha, the Sangha, the four pairs and eight categories of Sravaka practitioners, father, mother, Buddhist teachers (upadhyaya), Buddhist preceptors (acarya), and the sick.

to renounce in this life, I have no other choice but to kill myself in the hope that I may renounce in my next life."

With this thought, he climbed up and jumped off a cliff but did not die. He then tried to drown himself but was washed ashore by the currents. He took poison but survived it as well. In the end, he snuck into the palace when the palace maids were bathing and stole their clothes, hoping that he would be caught and be sentenced to death for this crime.

When King Ajatasatru learnt about this, he ordered for his arrest. Tied up in ropes, he was shot with arrows thrice but three times the arrows rebounded off him. Seeing this unusual phenomenon, the king hurriedly went to see the Buddha.

The Buddha explained to the king, "This person had, in his previous life, saved another person. This is why his present merits are so tremendous that he can come away unscathed. Please allow him to renounce."

On behalf of the parents, King Ajatasatru granted Gangadatta's wish to renounce. After renouncing, Gangadatta attained Arahatsip sometime later.

The Buddha said to King Ajatasatru, "This man was a high minister of a country in one of his past lives. At that time, the king wanted to execute a person who had sang together with the palace concubines and maidens after overhearing them sing from outside the palace.

"When the high minister heard about this, he generated loving-kindness and compassion towards this person and appealed to the king, 'Although this person sang with the concubines and maidens, he did not actually see them so it cannot be that he lusted after them. He may have committed a crime, but it does not warrant death. So please pardon him from execution.'

"The king accepted the minister's appeal and spared the life of the person.

"The high minister then invited the freed person to his home where the latter reflected, 'I merely sang outside the palace but the king wanted to put me to death thinking that I had lusted after the concubines and maidens. This mundane world is too terrifying. A man could easily lose his life because of desires.'

"Upon reflection, the freed man said to the high minister, 'I wish to renounce and be free from the *five desires* of the mundane world. I want to attain fruition and be liberated.'

"'Everyone has his own wishes. When you have attained liberation, I hope you will return to accept my offering of sustenance', replied the high minister.

"The freed man retreated into the mountains where he began practicing diligently. Soon, he severed all afflictions from the mind and became a Pratyeka Buddha. He went back to accept the offering from the high minister whom he was grateful to. Having accepted his offering, the Pratyeka Buddha displayed eighteen kinds of supernatural transformations, before relinquishing his body, and entering into Nirvana.

"This high minister had tremendous merits because he had saved a life (field of compassion) and offered sustenance to a Pratyeka Buddha (field of respect). As such, he took rebirth in the heavenly and human realms for ninety-one kalpas. Subsequently, his attempts to end his life in his present life were always foiled."

(3) Field of gratitude

We reap great merits through giving to our parents, teachers, elders, and Dharma teachers whom we should be grateful to.

Our parents gave birth to us, take care of us, and teach us to be good while our teachers and elders teach us moral values and the right ways of interacting with people intellectually.

Dharma teachers teach us the causes and effects of wholesome and unwholesome deeds. This helps us to be acquainted with the Triple Gem and attain the Dharma.

They are all our benefactors and are our great field of merits. Hence, we should show full respect and gratitude to them.

Example 1

Which of the two following merits is greater? The merits of being filial to and taking care of our parents or the merits of offering sustenance to Maitreya Bodhisattva?

We might think that the merits of offering sustenance to Maitreya Bodhisattva are far greater. But in the Agama Sutra, the Buddha taught that both kinds of offering produce equally great merits and returns because they are people whom we should respect and are indebted to.

Our parents gave birth to us and brought us up. In the Sutra of Contemplation of the Mind, the Buddha expounded on the great kindness of our parents through the ten virtues of a mother.

Concerned for the well-being of the child in the mother's womb, parents take extreme care to keep the child safe and sound to prevent a miscarriage from occurring. Hence, our mother's womb in safeguarding the fetus is just like the great earth protecting its inhabitants.

During childbirth, our mother endures excruciating labor pains comparable to suffering in the hell realm.

After we are born, our parents take care of us attentively, to the extent of neglecting their rest and meals. Moreover, they lead a frugal life, spending their hard-earned money provide us with the best of everything.

They also teach us the way of life and how to deal with people and matters in the right way. More importantly, they teach us the karmic law of cause and effect accruing to our actions.

When we grow up, they worry about the prospects of our marriage. Even after we are married, our parents continue to

help by taking care of our children. Therefore, we should be filial and show gratitude to our parents for their great kindness. The Buddha taught us that the merits of being filial to our parents are akin to the merits of respecting Bodhisattvas in their final cycle such as Maitreya Bodhisattva, Manjusri Bodhisattva, and Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva.

Thus, besides consecrating Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Maitreya Bodhisattva at home, we must also remember to be filial and take care of our parents.

For Buddhists who respect the Triple Gem especially, do not forget the "Bodhisattvas" at home – our elderly parents.

Example 2

In the time of the Buddha, there was a very filial son. His parents had lost their visions and had difficulties moving about. So the son resorted to begging for food in the streets. Whenever he received any food, he would offer the best to his parents, leaving only leftovers for himself.

Venerable Ananda and the Buddha saw this while collecting alms and Venerable Ananda praised the child's filial piety.

The World Honored One said, "Truly, this son has done well. He will have magnificent merits and virtues in the future."

If we know how filial the World Honored One was towards his parents in the past lives, we would be even more respectful of the Buddha and the Triple Gem.

The Buddha expounded that in one of his past lives, he and his parents were exiled to another country. During their journey to the country that they were exiled to, they lost their way and it took them two weeks instead of the usual seven days to reach their destination. As they ran out of food along their way, the father thought of killing the wife so that he and the child could survive the journey.

Just as the father was going to kill his wife, the child stopped him, "There is no child in this world who would eat the flesh of his parents. Please let me perform my duty as a child. I am willing to give up my body to ensure that both of you will reach the final destination safely."

The parents were very upset and could not bear to eat their child's flesh, but the child's plea made it difficult for them not to accept the offer.

The child said, "If I were to die now, you would still not be able to complete the journey as my flesh would start to rot once I am dead. We would each have a share of the flesh that is cut so as to sustain our lives. I will hold on to the end, and unless both of you reach the destination in safety, I will not give up my life."

With this extremely sufferable and painful manner, the family of threesome ultimately survived to reach their destination. Just then, King Sakra appeared and asked the child, "Are you sincere in your piety towards your parents?"

The child replied that his filial piety was sincere.

"How would you prove it?" asked King Sakra.

The child replied, "If I am sincere, may my body regain its original form."

As soon as he made this vow, the power of his magnificent merits and virtues, along with the sincerity of his wholesome mind resulted in his body regaining its original form.

This child is none other than Sakyamuni Buddha.

While we may not be able to do what Sakyamuni Buddha did, we can still offer the best things to our parents and do whatever we can for them with true sincerity.

Also, we should not defy our parents and anger them, causing them to scold us as this is being unfilial and would result in us being condemned to rebirth in the hell realm. So let us all not displease our parents.

(4) Field of virtue

Giving to virtuous people such as one who upholds the precepts, a noble one who practices and cultivates himself, the Sangha, or the Buddha results in great merits. This is also the case for giving to temples or monasteries.

Example 1

A Bhikshu wanted to build a monastery and so he went out in search for a big tree trunk which he could use as the beam. When he finally found a big tree, the people informed him that the tree was heavily guarded by a venomous dragon ready to poison anyone to death.

Undaunted, the Bhikshu told them, "It does not matter. I will tell the dragon that I am using the tree to build a monastery."

So the Bhikshu fell the tree and used it for building the monastery. The venomous dragon, however, did not appear to harass him.

Everyone was puzzled, "Why did the venomous dragon not appear but leave the Bhikshu to fell the tree?"

Just then, the venomous dragon appeared in the form of a human and explained, "This tree belongs to the Triple Gem. No one else has the right to use it as it was kept solely for building of Buddhist monasteries."

The venomous dragon knew that the reason for being a dragon in this life was because it had forgotten the law of cause and effect and had created very unwholesome karma in its past life.

Now that it knew the law of cause of effect, it wanted to practice giving to cultivate merits. So it had safeguarded the forest and trees, hoping that it could accumulate merits and virtues by offering them to the Triple Gem to build pagodas, monasteries, and abodes.

Through this anecdote, we know that giving to a virtuous person who upholds the precepts, a person who has

abandoned the five desires, or the Triple Gem of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha leads to great merits in return.

Example 2

The Sutra of Forty-two Chapters uses comparisons to demonstrate the varying merits of giving food to different groups of people.

The merit of giving to a hundred villains is not as great as the merit of giving to one virtuous person.

The merit of giving to a thousand virtuous people is not as great as the merit of giving to a person who upholds the five precepts.

The merit of giving to ten thousand people who uphold the five precepts is not as great as the merit of giving to a Srotapanna.

The merit of giving to a million Srotapannas is not as great as the merit of giving to a Sakradagamin.

The merit of giving to ten million Sakradagamins is not as great as the merit of giving to an Anagamin.

The merit of giving to a hundred million Anagamins is not as great as the merit of giving to an Arahata.

The merit of giving to a billion Arahats is not as great as the merit of giving to a Pratyeka Buddha.

The merit of giving to ten billion Pratyeka Buddhas is not as great as the merit of giving to a Buddha of the ten directions and the *three periods*.

The merit of giving to a hundred billion Buddhas of the three periods is not as great as the merit of giving to a Bodhisattva practitioner who is able to grasp the *Bhutatathata*.

Such a practitioner is one who has *Prajna* wisdom and has overcome the five obstructions. He guards the six sense bases and is well-grounded. He has also subdued the four Maras of Klesa-mara (afflictions), Devaputramara (*Mara King*), Skandhamara (five aggregates) and Mrtya-mara (death).

If this Bodhisattva has not attained the stage of perseverance based on awareness of the non-arising of phenomena, he may attain Arahatahip but chooses not to do so. Instead, he continues to learn and acquire all the Dharma over countless lives so that he may liberate and save sentient beings.

~ DANA – THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (4) ~

This is how much hardship and suffering he has to endure. Hence, it is very rare to have the opportunity to meet and give offerings to such a Bodhisattva whose merits and virtues are extremely magnificent.

The Agama Sutra also teaches that giving one grain of rice to animals brings about merits of a hundred grains of rice in return.

Giving to a person who has transgressed the precepts brings about a thousand-fold merit.

Giving to a person who upholds the precepts produces a ten thousand-fold merit.

Giving to a person who has abandoned the desires and has meditative concentration generates a hundred million-fold merit.

The merits continue to multiply for giving to the *four pairs and eight categories of Sravaka practitioners*, Pratyeka Buddhas, Bodhisattvas in their final cycle; and the Buddha.

Although we are aware that merits vary according to the fields of merits, we should not cling on to their differences.

Example 3

Just like the Buddha, our parents are our field of merits. We should always give any good items to our parents as soon as we acquire them.

If we have altars at home, we should make offerings to the Buddha first even if it is just a cup of tea or a small amount of food.

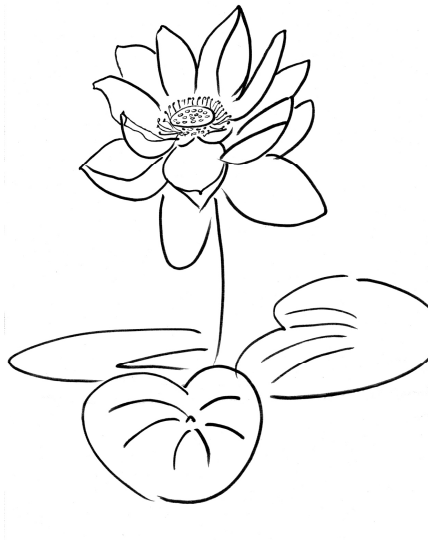
If one can keep to this practice every day, the merits would grow, day after day.

And if one has children at home, one should teach them to do so similarly. As the saying goes:

*"Better than giving a child family wealth is teaching him a skill.
Better than teaching the child a skill is teaching him the law of
cause and effect."*

Doing so not only makes one a good parent. We also become their virtuous companion.

~ DANA – THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (4) ~



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-Damya-Sarathi - 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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