

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 (6)

What is the fundamental cause of giving?

The practice of giving is wonderful. It eliminates the afflictions of miserliness and greed as well as the vexation of not having any material possessions.

A complete giving derives from three cause and conditions -

First, the donor's motivation or sincerity.

Secondly, the field of merits or the recipient of gifts.

Thirdly, the gift.

The coming together of these three cause and conditions complete the giving, which will bear fruit in the future.

Example 1

When the cause and conditions have ripened, a seed from a tree, a flower, or a fruit, will eventually grow into a big tree and bear fruits when it comes into contact with soil, water, fertilizer, and sunlight.

Amongst these cause and conditions, which is the most important or fundamental factor of this fruition?

From the perspective of the mundane world, a fruit derives from a seed. The fruit manifests only when the seed converges with other cause and conditions. No fruit can be produced without a seed, even if the other cause and conditions such as soil, sunlight, water, and fertilizer exist.

Hence, there is a direct connection between a seed and a fruit, whilst the other cause and conditions are merely supplementary factors.

However, according to the Ultimate Truth, all things are equal. Despite being equal, a seed is not a fruit. Why is this so?

If the seed were a fruit, then we could have just eaten the seed, just like how we would eat a fruit. But this is impossible. Similarly, the soil, water, and fertilizer are also not the seed.

So, which is the fundamental cause that brings about merits amongst the three cause and conditions that complete a giving?

Is it the field of merits? No. Why is this so? If the fundamental cause were the field of merits, all people should be reaping the merits from one person's offering.

This shows that the recipient is not the direct cause of merits.

In that case, could it be the material wealth? No. Why is this so? If this is the cause, anyone who possesses the wealth would also have reaped the merits.

Thus, the gift is also not the main cause of merits.

The fundamental cause of merits is the motivation of the donor at the time of giving. This is just like the seed, which is the fundamental cause for fruits to be borne.

Once we understand that the gift and the field of merits are just the supplementary factors, we should be able to better appreciate the fundamental cause for the merits of our giving.

When we intend to give, we should always do so with a mind that inclines towards detachment from miserliness and greed.

The elimination of these two afflictions gives rise to loving-kindness, compassion, and respect. Thus, our subsequent actions or speech will be very wholesome.

Taking the seed as an analogy - if we plant the seed in a good field, the seed will eventually grow into a tree bearing abundant fruits. But if the seed is planted in a less fertile field, we may not harvest decent crops.

The earth is just like the field of merits. Our miserliness and greedy mind would be eliminated if we are able to meet The Great Buddha, who is an extraordinarily great field of merits.

We have a high regard for The Great Buddha's compassion for all sentient beings and therefore, we will follow the Buddha's footstep. Making offers to The Great Buddha diligently is like increasing the amount of fertilizers to the field. This in turn, will generate great merits.

Therefore, the cause and conditions of giving and the eventual results are connected. The merits will not diminish, as long as we have the intention to give, even if we are not able to complete the giving.

This is because the fundamental cause (i.e., the wholesome mind that inclines to give to a pure field of merits) was

already developed, as the seed of giving had already been planted, even though the other factors are not fulfilled.

Example 2

There was a very poor man who saw the Buddha walking from afar in his direction when he was herding buffaloes. He was extremely happy when he saw The Great Buddha's golden-hued body, his Thirty-two Major Marks, and Eighty Minor Marks. Just then, he wanted to pluck some flowers to offer to the Buddha.

But before he could complete his offering to the Buddha, he was gored to death by the buffaloes and took rebirth in the heavenly realm. As a heavenly being, he was able to use his supernatural knowledge of past lives and recount the incident. The cause of his rebirth in the heavenly realm was the act of his respectful mind generated while offering to The Great Buddha.

Thus, the giving was made complete by the herder's respectful mind, the Buddha as the great field of merits, and the herder's intention of offering the gift of flowers to the Buddha.

Delving deeper, we would then understand that the returns for upholding precepts are also extremely meritorious, as are

the returns of cultivating and practicing loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity.

What is the essence of giving?

The donor will still reap merits in the future even when the recipient does not receive or use the gift. Hence, the merits for giving are determined through the motivations of the donor, the recipient, or the gift.

(1) Merits are generated from the motivation of the donor and the gift offered

When we place offerings on the altars for Buddha, we know that we will reap merits in the future even though the Buddha did not consume or use the offerings.

The workings of this are extremely intricate. The mind that gives is freed of miserliness and greed. Instead, respect or compassion arises. As soon as the act of giving is performed, we will have generated merits. This is the wonderful essence of giving. Therefore, this is an illustration of merits brought about by both the donor's motivation and the gift offered.

(2) Increasing merits and virtues of the recipient can build up a donor's merits

For example, if we were to give offerings to a Srotapanna, our merits would grow if the Srotapanna were to continue to practice and cultivate diligently to become a Sakradagamin.

If the Sakradagamin were to practice and cultivate diligently and became an Anagamin, our merits would again upsurge.

When he attained Arahatsip, our merits would be even greater. If we were to offer sustenance to a sage who would attain Buddhahood in the future, our merits would be incredibly magnificent.

This shows that a donor's merit accumulates according to the recipient's merits and virtues.

The recipients are akin to a plot of land. If the soil becomes more fertile, the seed of giving planted will grow well and blossom.

Having now understood this principle, we would be mindful and pleased to practice giving. The act of giving would be perfect if wonderful fields of merits, gifts, and the genuine donor's right concept are nicely fulfilled.

The seven kinds of people whom giving to would lead to one's present enjoyment of merits; and the six kinds of people whom giving to would lead to one's present and future enjoyments of merits

People who do not have a *right understanding* of the Dharma might feel uninspired that merits of giving can only be reaped in future life.

A self-centered person will also reap lesser merits of giving.

In the Agama Sutra, the Buddha taught us that if we were to give respectfully and compassionately to the following seven kinds of people, we would be able to reap the merits in the present life.

(1) A person with loving-kindness

A person with loving-kindness wishes for everyone to be happy and thinks of others whenever he receives any good gifts.

For example, our parents are very kind and loving. But if we are more obedient and filial, often helping them with household chores, they tend to love and treat us better than

our other siblings, even though each child is equal in the parent's mind.

This can also be observed in the workplace. All sentient beings cannot bear to see others suffer and so all of us do have some loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity.

When we work for people who radiate loving-kindness and compassion, we would be able to reap merits in our present life.

Giving to the elderly also enables us to reap the merits in our present life.

Similarly, in our circle of friends, if we are able to help someone who is always looking to make others happy, we will be able to reap merits in this life.

(2) A compassionate person

When a compassionate person sees the suffering of others, he would hope to help them abandon their suffering. If we are acquainted with a compassionate person, he will readily help us in times of need. This is the welfare that we get in the present life.

(3) A person with a mind of altruistic joy

When a person with a mind of altruistic joy sees others perform good deeds, he rejoices and helps them to accomplish their tasks. If we are acquainted with this person, he would rejoice in helping us accomplish our work.

(4) A person with a mind of equanimity

A person with an equanimous mind will always protect and guard us. He is always there when we are in need of help.

(5) A person who realizes nothingness

Nothingness refers to the lack of ego. A person who realizes nothingness is not self-centered and puts the interests of others before his. If we are able to help this person by giving to him, then the merits generated will be received immediately in this life.

(6) A person who does not grasp onto forms

This person does not differentiate between wealth and gender. Nor is he influenced by our race or status. He treats everyone equally and reciprocates our kindness, always

coming to our assistance irrespective of our status. Thus, practicing giving to a person who does not grasp onto forms will bring us merits in this life.

(7) A person who is not attached to what is being done

This person is aware of the law of cause and effect, but does not expect any merits in return as he does not dwell on what has already been done. When we help this person, he would in turn help us to reap our merits in this life.

Giving to the following six kinds of person would lead to one's present and future enjoyments of merits:

- (a) Srotapanna
- (b) Sakradagamin
- (c) Anagamin
- (d) Arahat
- (e) Pratyeka Buddha
- (f) Buddha

What is impure giving?

The donor's motivation is most crucial amongst the cause and conditions of giving. However, a situation may arise where giving generates little or no merits. Let us analyze this using the three cause and conditions that complete a giving.

© The donor's motivation

- (1) Offering under the influence of past habits** – Many acts of giving will not bring about any merits because of the donors' imprecise motivations.

For instance, many people are ignorant about making offerings in the seventh month of the Lunar Calendar. They simply continue the practice set out by their ancestors. As the intention is inexplicit, it does not produce any merit.

- (2) Giving only when prompted** – Some people give because they are prompted to do so and not voluntarily. They give out of courtesy and not from a respectful or compassionate mind. No great merits can be brought about as the mindset of giving is not positive and genuine.

- (3) **Giving in the hope for wealth** – Some people give with desires for wealth and fame.
- (4) **Giving out of guilt** – There are people who may give out of guilt. For example, some people try to repent by offering valuables to those they slandered.
- (5) **Giving to avoid criticisms** – There are times when people give to avoid being criticized and labelled as miserly or uncharitable.
- (6) **Offering out of fear** – There are people who give because they live in fear of losing their properties whereas others may give so as not to antagonize their requestors.
- (7) **Giving to gain recognition** – Certain people give with desires for recognition. In the business world, clients receive many invitations to prestigious restaurants and this seems like a form of generous giving from entrepreneurs. We should not mistake this as an act of charity giving because it is merely an engagement between business partners.

(8) Offering out of fear for death – Kong Ming (孔明) lit up seven lanterns in hope of extending his life span when he knew that his life was ending. His intention to offer light was out of fear for death but in the end, it was still impossible to prolong his life span.

Likewise, people offer or pray to deities in hope to be blessed with health and longevity. This form of giving is tainted.

(9) Giving to deceive others – People who harbor ill intentions of betrayal would perform acts of giving to deceive others.

(10) Giving to display wealth – Certain people give to flaunt their affluence.

For example, some rich and famous people enjoy hosting big feasts and send out many invitations in hope to attract the media's attention. Their intention is to publicize their wealth and great fortune. Such doings are not the act of correct giving.

(11) Giving to compete with others – Giving to pit our wealth against others is impure and not proper.

For example, this is commonly seen during wedding banquets whereby hosts always compete and compare the number and status of invited guests. This is a foolish and unwholesome act.

(12) Giving out of jealousy and anger – There is a Taiwanese saying:

*"A man who is defeated should never lose the defenses,
as giving up the defenses is a dishonor."*

Therefore, we are always busy striving to outshine others and we get jealous if others outperform us.

(13) Egoistic and supercilious giving – Some people show disdain as they give. One with such character would display arrogance while giving.

This undesirable act would deter others from accepting things that were offered as they were given with contempt and despise.

(14) Giving to gain fame – There are people who would give, hoping for recognition and fast promotions to top positions. This kind of motivation is contaminated. It is a shame for meritorious opportunities of giving to be tarnished by such wrong intentions.

(15) Offering with adverse intention – Certain people give in hope to fulfill their improper vows.

For example, some people may make offerings and request Venerables to bless their children to gain admission to prestigious universities.

(16) Offering to deter bad luck – Some people would offer and wish for a smooth sailing life. This is similar to the common practice of praying to Deity Tai Sui. This form of giving defeats the true purpose of giving.

(17) Giving with the intention to gain influence – Giving in the hope to gain support is especially prevalent during elections where numerous receptions are set up to attract crowds to create a sense of grandiosity.

(18) Contempt giving – This refers to those who look down on the less privileged when giving. They often display poor attitudes and speak condescendingly to the less privileged.

A common authentic example could be found in a Chinese tradition. There is this unique gesture to express generosity by offering visitors gifts such as fruits or other perishables before they take leave. Guests would normally reject politely but the host would persistently urge them to accept the gifts by quoting that they have too much stock and hope the visitors could help to clear some.

Now, this might be said unintentionally but it is an inconsiderate remark which could easily hurt one's pride. It is an undesirable practice that ought to be discontinued. We should practice giving with sincerity. Only then will great wealth and merits be reaped.

These are the eighteen types of undesirable giving, which a practitioner should observe and be mindful of when practicing offering.

© The field of merits

A recipient who is impure is not considered a field of merits.

The Agama Sutra mentions that an impure person is someone who holds onto erroneous views. Giving to people with erroneous views does not bring about any merits.

Erroneous views are namely:

- (1) The Theory of Fate,
- (2) The Theory of Divine Blessing, and
- (3) The Theory of No Cause and No Condition.

A person with such views is tainted with greed, anger, and ignorance and does not have the Right View on the law of cause and effect. He thinks that all the good things he experiences in life is due to the protection and blessings from deities or god, and believes that everything in life is fated and cannot be changed. Even if he commits unwholesome deeds, it does not matter as he believes that he will still take rebirth as a human upon his death.

Such person is not a field of merits. Thus, giving to this person would not generate any merits.

© The gift

What types of gifts do not generate merits of giving?

In ancient India, there were five types of gifts that do not bring about merits in return:

- (1) **Knife** – A person may use the knife we give to kill or harm other sentient beings or commit bad deeds. How could this possibly generate any merit?
- (2) **Promiscuous woman** – Giving a promiscuous woman to another creates issues of sexual misconduct. Therefore, no merits will be produced.

Some businessmen or politicians would invite others to drinking clubs or even brothels to advance their business or political careers. This form of offering is unmeritorious and will only lead to unwholesome retributions in the future because the "gifts" cause people to transgress precepts.

Some even request for indecent performances during banquet feasts. Paying for such activities will not generate any merits.

- (3) **Wild cattle** – The cow is considered as a sacred animal in India. In ancient India, some people would offer undomesticated cows. As these undomesticated cows were untamed, they might injure or kill people. Thus, to offer wild cattle would not generate any merits.
- (4) **Poison** – Giving poison to others would cause illness or even death. Since both the donor's intention and the gift are impure, no merits would be generated.
- (5) **Deities** – Offering altars for people to worship deities promotes erroneous views and wrong understanding. This will also not generate any merits.

Drug usage is a common issue in our present society. Providing drugs to a drug addict who is suffering from withdrawal symptoms is not a practice of giving. Giving him drugs out of sympathy only cause more harm to him.

After understanding what constitutes impure giving, we now know what we should or should not give, and what intention we should have when giving, including the kinds of people we should practice giving to. It is hoped that everyone would know the right way to practice giving.

What is pure giving?

Pure giving is giving solely for the sake of liberation, attaining Nirvana, and Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.

With this goal, we would not give to gain fame or wealth, or for a better life. We must remember to dedicate merits towards attaining Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi whenever we offer or perform any good deeds.

Example 1

Once, a believer dedicated merits of his offering, "May all sentient beings abandon suffering and attain joy." But he added further, "May I have good health."

What does this represent? It was actually a wish to absolve bad luck and seek auspiciousness. As a result, a pure giving was now tainted. We must always remember to refrain from making such dedications.

Example 2

There was another person who wished to take rebirth in the heavenly realm or to become a king in the human realm after

giving. As he made the dedication, an Arahant said to him, "The three lower realms are filled with forms, sounds, and flavors."

Why did the Arahant say that to him? It is because the man gave in the hope for wealth. He was fearful of the suffering in the human realm but did not know to seek liberation. He did not give for the sake of liberation or for attaining Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.

If we are offering for the sake of attaining Buddhahood or Nirvana, then we have given with pure motivations. As we do not want to be burdened by any future life, we do not seek the happiness of taking rebirth in the heavenly or human realm, but seek Nirvana instead.

We practice giving with a respectful and compassionate mind and this is pure giving. Offering in this way will lead us to realize Nirvana and eventually Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.

Giving with pure motivations is akin to planting a seed and watching it grow into a Bodhi seedling. Even though the seedling has yet to grow into a big tree, it can already shelter others.

It is a waste if we only wish for the seed to grow into a shrub or a flower as either withers away very quickly. So, the merits cannot last very long if we give only for a better future life.

But if the planted seed can grow into a Bodhi tree, it can provide broad foliage as shelter for all, and the merits will be very great. Although it has yet to bear any fruits, the foliage nonetheless provides shelter for many sentient beings to cultivate and practice. This is known as giving for the sake of attaining Buddhahood or for the sake of Nirvana.

The Buddha told us that in this mundane world, there are two extremely rare kinds of people.

The first kind is the laity who can give with a pure mind. A layperson often faces many challenging cause and conditions. Sometimes a layperson gives for the sake of his family, children, career, or even for his health. As such, it is indeed rare if a layperson can give purely for the sake of attaining Nirvana or Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.

The second kind is monastics who remain unflinching in their practice to attain liberation, regardless of how trying the cause and conditions may be, including times of illness and suffering.

President Jiang Jing Guo once shared this phrase:

"Sacrifice the enjoyment and enjoy the sacrifices."

~ DANA – THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (6) ~

If we are able to sacrifice the enjoyment of our merits and offer this enjoyment and happiness to others, we will experience inner joy and peace. Thus, we are actually enjoying the happiness of the act of sacrificing.

Therefore, let us put this teaching into practice and learn to give with a pure mind that generates true inner happiness and joy.



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 Arahātship 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 Arahātship.

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.

Bhutatathata: 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.

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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 Arahāt.

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 Arahatsip. 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 Arahatsip.

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.

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

Western Pure World: Also known as Sukhavatī 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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