

Generosity: The Primary Buddhist Virtue

Quotes to be used for Dharma Reflection

Generosity = *cāga* (but also means relinquishment or letting go)

Giving = *dāna* (also refers the thing given)

The Ten Wholesome Actions: **Giving**, virtue, mental cultivation, humility, service, sharing merit, rejoicing in the merit of others, listening to the Dharma, teaching the Dharma, straightening out one's views. D.A. III.999

The Four bases of social harmony: **Giving**, kind speech, service, being equitable. D.N III.152; A.N. II.32

Ten Virtues of a ruler: **Giving**, virtue, altruism, honesty, kindness, self-control, non-anger, non-violence, patience, uprightness.

Four Virtues of a householder: honesty, self-discipline, forbearance, **giving**.

The Ten Perfections: **Giving**, Virtue, Renunciation, Discernment, Effort, Patience, Truth, Resolve, Loving Kindness, Equanimity.

Traditional Description of the Perfection of Generosity

Giving is stated at the beginning [of the paramis]: (a) because it is common to all beings, since even ordinary people practice giving; (b) because it is the least fruitful; and (c) because it is the easiest to practice.

Giving has the characteristic of relinquishing; its function is to dispel greed for things that can be given away; its manifestation is non-attachment, or the achievement of prosperity and a favorable state of existence. ...

Further, when a suppliant asks for something, a bodhisattava should reflect: "He or she is my intimate friend, for he or she divulges his own secret to me. He is my teacher, for he or she teaches me: 'When you go you have to abandon all. Going to the world beyond, you cannot take your own possessions!'"

A Treatise on the Paramis by Acariya Dhammapala

Quotes on Generosity from the Buddha

- 1) “Giving, a Dharma life, caring for relatives, and blameless deeds: this is the greatest fortune.”
Sutta Nipata 263
- 2) “The gift of Dharma surpasses all gifts.”
Dhammapada 354
- 5) “Having overcome stinginess, the conqueror of this stain should give a gift.”
Samyutta Nikaya I.32
- 8) “Some provide from the little they have,
Others who are affluent don’t like to give.
An offering given from what little one has
Is worth a thousand times its value.”
Samyutta Nikaya I.18
- 9) “Even if one throws away the rinsing from a pot or a cup into the village pool or pond, wishing that the living beings there may feed on them – even this would be a source of merit, not to speak of giving a gift to human beings.”
Anguttara Nikaya III.57
- 11) “By giving one unites friends.”
Samyutta Nikaya I.215
- 13) “Monks, if people knew, as I know, the fruits of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess the heart. Even if it were their last bit, their last morsel of food, they would not enjoy its use without sharing it if there was someone else to share it with.”
Itivuttaka 18
- 14) “If beings knew, as the Great Sage has said, how the results of sharing has such great fruit, then subduing the stain of selfishness with brightened awareness, they’d give in season to the noble one, where a gift bears great fruit.”
Itivuttaka 26
- 15) “A lay follower is accomplished in generosity by dwelling at home with a mind devoid of stinginess, and by being freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing.
Samyutta Nikaya V.395
- 16) “How does a true person give gifts? Here a true person gives a gift carefully, gives it with his own hand, gives it showing respect, gives a valuable gift, gives it with the view that something will come of it. That is how a true person gives gifts.
MN 110.23
- 18) King Pasenadi asked, “Where should a gift be given?”
The Buddha replied, “Wherever one’s mind has confidence.”
Samyutta Nikaya I.99
- 19) “A good person gives in five ways: out of faith, with respect, at the right time, generously, with without denigrating the other.”
Anguttara Nikaya V.14