

Yet Another Guide on Giving

Bhikkhu Mahinda

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INTRODUCTION

There are many guides out there, elaborate and articulate, scholarly and lucid, on the virtues of giving. So, why do we need Yet Another Guide on Giving (YAGG)? Because, in this guide, we will just do a reading of the relevant suttā instead of adding any external “wisdom” or our explanations to it. While in some cases, commentary and explanations are needed to explain difficult concepts, giving is not one of those concepts. Everything that Lord Buddha has explained is clear-cut and to the point, with examples and similes. So, without further ado, here we go with reading relevant suttā. The only liberty I have taken is to rearrange the suttā under different headings. Some suttā are repeated under multiple headings and hopefully, such repetition brings home the point of giving.

A note to the reader: I have reproduced entire suttā herein so context is not missing and reader can see the entire discourse and other themes mentioned therein (with a few exceptions where the suttā are very large). Also, I have replaced the elided texts with full texts, since this is a stand-alone guide.²

² All translations, verses, and other source materials in this article are used with thanks from the following sources:

- CDB** Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi; The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya (Teachings of the Buddha), Wisdom Publications. 2000 Kindle Edition.
- CST** Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā Tipiṭaka 4.0.0.15 Electronic Edition copyright © 1995 Vipassana Research Institute.
- ITI** Bhikkhu, Mahinda; Itivuttakapāli – Book of This was Said: A Contemporary Translation, Second Edition, Dhamma Publishers. 2022 Kindle Edition. Available online at <https://learnbuddhism.org>.
- LDB** Walshe, Maurice; The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya (Teachings of the Buddha), Wisdom Publications. 1987, 1995 Kindle Edition.
- MLDB** Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi; The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya (Teachings of the Buddha), Wisdom Publications. 2005 Kindle Edition.
- NDB** Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi; The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya (Teachings of the Buddha), Wisdom Publications. 2012 Kindle Edition.
- SBE17** Rhys Davids, T. W. and Oldenberg, Hermann; Sacred Books of the East: Volume 17, Vinaya Texts: Mahāvagga & Cūlavagga, Clarendon Press Oxford. 1882 Edition.

WHY GIVE?

ITI 60 Bases of Meritorious Action Sutta

This was said by the Blessed one, said by the Arahant thus I heard –

“Bhikkhus, these are the three bases of meritorious action. Which three? Donation is the base of meritorious action, virtue is the base of meritorious action, development is the base of meritorious action – indeed bhikkhus, these are the three bases of meritorious action”
(*emphasis* added).

For this meaning Blessed One spoke. There this is what was said –

“Train in [making] merits, for bringing about future happiness;
Donating and virtuous conduct, and develop mind of loving-friendliness too.

“Having developed these three qualities, happiness will arise;
In the happy world without ill-will, the wise one will arise”.

This too is the meaning of what was said by the Blessed one, thus I heard.³

NDB 8.36 Activity

“Bhikkhus, there are these three bases of meritorious activity. What three? The basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving; the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior; and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development.

(1) “Here, bhikkhus, someone has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a limited extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a limited extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn among humans in an unfavorable condition.

(2) “Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a middling extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a middling extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn among humans in a favorable condition.

(3) “Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the devas [ruled by] the four great kings. There the four great kings, who had practiced superlatively the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior surpass the devas [ruled by] the four great kings in ten respects: in celestial life span, celestial beauty, celestial happiness, celestial glory, and celestial authority; and in celestial forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile objects.

(4) “Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in

³ The three bases of meritorious actions are also listed in NDB 8.36 and LDB 33-1.10 (38) Sangīti Sutta. Here development means meditation, especially development of the loving-friendliness; see ITI 27 Mettābhāvanā (Developing Loving-Friendliness) Sutta.

meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the Tāvatiṃsa devas. There Sakka, ruler of the devas, who had practiced superlatively the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the Tāvatiṃsa devas in ten respects: in celestial life span ... and tactile objects.

(5) “Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the Yāma devas. There the young deva Suyāma, who had practiced superlatively the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the Yāma devas in ten respects: in celestial life span ... and tactile objects.

(6) “Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the Tusita devas. There the young deva Santusita, who had practiced superlatively the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the Tusita devas in ten respects: in celestial life span ... and tactile objects.

(7) “Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the devas who delight in creation. There the young deva Sunimmita, who had practiced superlatively the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the devas who delight in creation in ten respects: in celestial life span ... and tactile objects.

(8) “Someone else has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving to a superior extent; he has practiced the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior to a superior extent; but he has not undertaken the basis of meritorious activity consisting in meditative development. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the devas who control what is created by others. There the young deva Vasavattī, who had practiced superlatively the basis of meritorious activity consisting in giving and the basis of meritorious activity consisting in virtuous behavior, surpasses the devas who control what is created by others in ten respects: in celestial life span, celestial beauty, celestial happiness, celestial glory, and celestial authority; and in celestial forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile objects.

“These, bhikkhus, are the three bases of meritorious activity.”

ITI 26 Donating Sutta

This was said by the Blessed one, said by the Arahant thus I heard –

“Bhikkhus, if beings knew the result of donating and sharing as I do, [they] would not eat without having given, nor would they stand with their mind possessed by miserliness. Even if it were their last mouthful, their last lump, they will not eat without sharing, if there were

recipients of alms. Indeed bhikkhus, because beings do not know the result of donating and sharing as I do, therefore [they] eat without having given, they stand with their mind possessed by miserliness” (emphasis added).

For this meaning Blessed One spoke. There this is what was said –

“[Only] If beings knew, said the great sage;

[That] The result of sharing, is of great fruit.

“Expelling a mind of miserliness, with a very happy mind;

Giving to nobles at right time, giving thus is of great fruit.

“Having given food to many, offerings to worthy of offerings too;

Having passed-away from humans, givers go to heaven.

“Having gone to heaven, rejoice in sensual pleasures the desirous ones;

The result of sharing, experience the un-miserly ones”.

This too is the meaning of what was said by the Blessed one, thus I heard.

NDB 3.45 The Wise

“Bhikkhus, there are these three things prescribed by the wise, prescribed by good people. What three? (1) Giving is prescribed by the wise, prescribed by good people. (2) The going forth is prescribed by the wise, prescribed by good people. (3) Attending upon one’s mother and father is prescribed by the wise, prescribed by good people. These three things are prescribed by the wise, prescribed by good people” (emphasis added).

Good people prescribe giving,
harmlessness, self-control, and self-taming,
service to one’s mother and father
and to the peaceful followers of the spiritual life.

These are the deeds of the good
which the wise person should pursue.

The noble one possessed of vision
goes to an auspicious world.

CDB 1.33 Good

At Sāvattihī. Then, when the night had advanced, a number of devatā belonging to the Satullapa host, of stunning beauty, illuminating the entire Jeta’s Grove, approached the Blessed One. Having approached, they paid homage to the Blessed One and stood to one side.

Then one devatā, standing to one side, uttered this inspired utterance in the presence of the Blessed One:

“Good is giving, dear sir!

95 “Through stinginess and negligence

A gift is not given.

One who knows, desiring merit,

Should surely give a gift.”

Then another devatā uttered this inspired utterance in the presence of the Blessed One:

“Good is giving, dear sir!

And further:

Even when there’s little, giving is good.

96 “Some provide from what 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.”

Then another devatā uttered this inspired utterance in the presence of the Blessed One:

“Good is giving, dear sir!
Even when there’s little, giving is good.
And further:
When done with faith too, giving is good.

97 “Giving and warfare are similar, they say:
A few good ones conquer many.
If one with faith gives even a little,
He thereby becomes happy in the other world.”

Then another devatā uttered this inspired utterance in the presence of the Blessed One:

“Good is giving, dear sir!
Even when there’s little, giving is good.
When done with faith too, giving is good.
And further:
The gift of a righteous gain is also good.

98 “When he gives a gift of a righteous gain
Obtained by exertion and energy,
Having passed over Yama’s Vetaraṇī River,
That mortal arrives at celestial states.”

Then another devatā uttered this inspired utterance in the presence of the Blessed One:

“Good is giving, dear sir!
Even when there’s little, giving is good.
When done with faith too, giving is good;
The gift of a righteous gain is also good.
And further:
Giving discriminately too is good.

99 “Giving discriminately is praised by the Fortunate One –
To those worthy of offerings
Here in the world of the living.
What is given to them bears great fruit
Like seeds sown in a fertile field.”

Then another devatā uttered this inspired utterance in the presence of the Blessed One:

“Good is giving, dear sir!
Even when there’s little, giving is good.
When done with faith too, giving is good;
The gift of a righteous gain is also good.
Giving with discretion too is good.

And further:
Restraint towards living beings is also good.

100 “One who fares harming no living beings

Does no evil from fear of others' censure.
In that they praise the timid, not the brave,
For out of fear the good do no evil."

Then another devatā said to the Blessed One: "Which one, Blessed One, has spoken well?"

"You have all spoken well in a way. But listen to me too:

101 "Surely giving is praised in many ways,
But the path of Dhamma surpasses giving.
For in the past and even long ago,
The good and wise ones attained Nibbāna."

CDB 1.41 Ablaze

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. Then, when the night had advanced, a certain devatā of stunning beauty, illuminating the entire Jeta's Grove, approached the Blessed One. Having approached, he paid homage to the Blessed One, stood to one side, and recited these verses in the presence of the Blessed One:

136 "When one's house is ablaze
The vessel taken out
Is the one that is useful,
Not the one left burnt inside.

137 "So when the world is ablaze
With [the fires of] aging and death,
One should take out [one's wealth] by giving:
What is given is well salvaged.

139 "What is given yields pleasant fruit,
But not so what is not given.
Thieves take it away, or kings,
It gets burnt by fire or is lost.

140 "Then in the end one leaves the body
Along with one's possessions.
Having understood this, the wise person
Should enjoy himself but also give.
Having given and enjoyed as fits his means,
Blameless he goes to the heavenly state."

NDB 5.35 The Benefits of Giving

"Bhikkhus, there are these five benefits of giving. What five? (1) One is dear and agreeable to many people. (2) Good persons resort to one. (3) One acquires a good reputation. (4) One is not deficient in the layperson's duties. (5) With the breakup of the body, after death, one is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world. These are the five benefits in giving" (*emphasis* added).

By giving, one becomes dear,
one follows the duty of the good;
the good self-controlled monks
always resort to one.

They teach one the Dhamma
that dispels all suffering,
having understood which
the taintless one here attains nibbāna.

NDB 7.62 Do Not Be Afraid of Merits

“Bhikkhus, do not be afraid of merit. This is a designation for happiness, that is, merit (emphasis added).

“I recall that for a long time I experienced the desirable, lovely, agreeable result of merit that had been made over a long time. For seven years I developed a mind of loving-kindness. As a consequence, for seven eons of world-dissolution and evolution I did not come back to this world. When the world was dissolving I fared on to the [realm of] streaming radiance. When the world was evolving, I was reborn in an empty mansion of Brahmā. There I was Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the vanquisher, the unvanquished, the universal seer, the wielder of mastery. I was Sakka, ruler of the devas, thirty-six times. Many hundreds of times I was a wheel-turning monarch, a righteous king who ruled by the Dhamma, a conqueror whose rule extended to the four boundaries, one who had attained stability in his country, who possessed the seven gems. I had these seven gems, that is: the wheel-gem, the elephant-gem, the horse-gem, the jewel-gem, the woman-gem, the treasurer-gem, and the adviser-gem as the seventh. I had over a thousand sons who were heroes, vigorous, able to crush the armies of their enemies. I reigned after conquering this earth as far as its ocean boundaries, not by force and weapons but by the Dhamma.

“If one seeks happiness, look to the result
of merit, [the result of] wholesome deeds.
For seven years, I developed a loving mind,
O bhikkhus, and for seven eons
of dissolution and evolution,
I did not come back again to this world.

“When the world was dissolving,
I fared on to [the realm of] streaming radiance.
When the world was evolving,
I fared on to an empty Brahmā [mansion].

“Seven times I was Great Brahmā,
the wielder of mastery;
thirty-six times I was ruler of the devas,
exercising rulership over the devas.

“I was a wheel-turning monarch,
the lord of Jambudīpa,
a head-anointed khattiya,
the sovereign among human beings.

“Without force, without weapons,
I conquered this earth.
I ruled it by righteousness,
without violence, by Dhamma,
exercising rulership by Dhamma
over this sphere of the earth.

“I was born into a rich family,
with abundant wealth and property,
[a family] endowed with all sense pleasures,
and possessing the seven gems.
This is well-taught by the Buddhas,
the benefactors of the world:
this is the cause of greatness by which
one is called a lord of the earth.

“I was a king bright with splendor,
one with abundant wealth and commodities.
I was a lord of Jambudīpa,
powerful and glorious.
Who, even though of a low birth,
would not place trust on hearing this?

“Therefore one desiring the good,
aspiring for greatness,
should deeply revere the good Dhamma,
recollecting the Buddhas’ teaching.”

NDB 4.79 Business

Then the Venerable Sāriputta approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said: “Bhante, (1) why is it that for one person here, the business he undertakes ends in failure? (2) Why is it that for another the same kind of business does not fulfill his expectations? (3) Why is it that for still another the same kind of business fulfills his expectations? (4) And why is it that for still another the same kind of business surpasses his expectations?”

1. “Here, Sāriputta, someone approaches an ascetic or a brahmin and invites him to ask for what he needs, but does not give him what was requested. When he passes away from there, if he comes back to this world, whatever business he undertakes ends in failure.
2. “Someone else approaches an ascetic or a brahmin and invites him to ask for what he needs. He gives it to him but does not fulfill his expectations. When he passes away from there, if he comes back to this world, whatever business he undertakes does not fulfill his expectations.
3. “Someone else approaches an ascetic or a brahmin and invites him to ask for what he needs. He gives it to him and fulfills his expectations. When he passes away from there, if he comes back to this world, whatever business he undertakes fulfills his expectations.
4. “Someone else approaches an ascetic or a brahmin and invites him to ask for what he needs. He gives it to him and surpasses his expectations. When he passes away from there, if he comes back to this world, whatever business he undertakes surpasses his expectations.

“This, Sāriputta, is the reason why for one person here the business he undertakes ends in failure, for another the same kind of business does not fulfill his expectations, for still another the same kind of business fulfills his expectations, and for still another the same kind of business surpasses his expectations.”

NDB 4.57 Suppavāsā

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Koliyans near the Koliyan town named Sajjana. Then, in the morning, the Blessed One dressed, took his bowl and robe, and went to the residence of the Koliyan daughter Suppavāsā, where he sat down in the prepared seat. Then the Koliyan daughter Suppavāsā, with her own hand, served and satisfied the Blessed One with various kinds of delicious food. When the Blessed One had finished eating and had put away his bowl, the Koliyan daughter Suppavāsā sat down to one side. The Blessed One then said to her:

“Suppavāsā, a female noble disciple who gives food gives the recipients four things. What four? She gives life, beauty, happiness, and strength. (1) Having given life, she partakes of life, whether celestial or human. (2) Having given beauty, she partakes of beauty, whether celestial or human. (3) Having given happiness, she partakes of happiness, whether celestial or human. (4) Having given strength, she partakes of strength, whether celestial or human. Suppavāsā, a female noble disciple who gives food gives the recipients these four things” (emphasis added).

When one gives well-prepared food,
pure, delicious, and flavorful,
to the upright ones who are
exalted and of excellent conduct,
that offering, which links merit with merit,
is praised as very fruitful
by the world-knowers.

Those recollecting such generosity
dwell in the world inspired by joy.
Having removed the stain of miserliness and its root,
blameless, they go to the heavenly abode.”

NDB 5.31 Sumanā

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park. Then Princess Sumanā, accompanied by five hundred chariots and five hundred court girls, approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, and sat down to one side. Princess Sumanā then said to the Blessed One:

“Here, Bhante, there might be two disciples of the Blessed One equal in faith, virtuous behavior, and wisdom, but one is generous while the other is not. With the breakup of the body, after death, they would both be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world. When they have become devas, would there be any distinction or difference between them?”

“There would be, Sumanā,” the Blessed One said. “The generous one, having become a deva, would surpass the other in five ways: in celestial life span, celestial beauty, celestial happiness, celestial glory, and celestial authority. The generous one, having become a deva, would surpass the other in these five ways.”

“But, Bhante, if these two pass away from there and again become human beings, would there still be some distinction or difference between them?”

“There would be, Sumanā,” the Blessed One said. “When they again become human beings, the generous one would surpass the other in five ways: in human life span, human beauty, human happiness, human fame, and human authority. When they again become human beings, the generous one would surpass the other in these five ways.”

“But, Bhante, if these two should go forth from the household life into homelessness, would there still be some distinction or difference between them?”

“There would be, Sumanā,” the Blessed One said. “The generous one, having gone forth, would surpass the other in five ways. (1) He would usually use a robe that has been specifically offered to him, seldom one that had not been specifically offered to him. (2) He would usually eat almsfood that has been specifically offered to him, seldom almsfood that had not been specifically offered to him. (3) He would usually use a lodging that had been specifically offered to him, seldom one that had not been specifically offered to him. (4) He would usually use medicines and provisions for the sick that had been specifically offered to him, seldom those that had not been specifically offered to him. (5) His fellow monastics, those with whom he dwells, would usually behave toward him in agreeable ways by bodily, verbal, and mental action, seldom in disagreeable ways. They would usually present him what is agreeable, seldom what is disagreeable. The generous one, having gone forth, would surpass the other in these five ways.”

“But, Bhante, if both attain arahantship, would there still be some distinction or difference between them after they have attained arahantship?”

“In this case, Sumanā, I declare, there would be no difference between the liberation [of one] and the liberation [of the other].”

“It’s astounding and amazing, Bhante! Truly, one has good reason to give alms and do meritorious deeds, since they will be helpful if one becomes a deva, [again] becomes a human being, or goes forth.”

“So it is, Sumanā! So it is, Sumanā! Truly, one has good reason to give alms and do meritorious deeds, since they will be helpful if one becomes a deva, [again] becomes a human being, or goes forth” (emphasis added).

This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Fortunate One, the Teacher, further said this:

“As the stainless moon
moving through the sphere of space
outshines with its radiance
all the stars in the world,
so one accomplished in virtuous behavior,
a person endowed with faith,
outshines by generosity
all the misers in the world.

“As the hundred-peaked rain cloud,
thundering, wreathed in lightning,
pours down rain upon the earth,
inundating the plains and lowlands,
so the Perfectly Enlightened One’s disciple,
the wise one accomplished in vision,
surpasses the miserly person
in five specific respects:
life span and glory,
beauty and happiness.
Possessed of wealth, after death

he rejoices in heaven.”

CDB 42.9 Families

On one occasion the Blessed One, while wandering on tour among the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of bhikkhus, arrived at Nālandā. He stayed there at Nālandā in Pāvārika’s Mango Grove. Now on that occasion Nālandā was in the grip of famine, a time of scarcity, with crops blighted and turned to straw. On that occasion Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta was residing at Nālandā together with a large retinue of Nigaṇṭhas. Then Asibandhakaputta the headman, a lay disciple of the Nigaṇṭhas, approached Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, paid homage to him, and sat down to one side. Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta then said to him: “Come, headman, refute the doctrine of the ascetic Gotama. Then a good report concerning you will be spread about thus: ‘Asibandhakaputta the headman has refuted the doctrine of the ascetic Gotama, who is so powerful and mighty.’”

“But how, venerable sir, shall I refute the doctrine of the ascetic Gotama, who is so powerful and mighty?”

“Go, headman, approach the ascetic Gotama and ask him: ‘Venerable sir, doesn’t the Blessed One in many ways praise sympathy towards families, the protection of families, compassion towards families?’ If, when he is questioned by you thus, the ascetic Gotama answers, ‘Yes, headman, the Tathāgata in many ways praises sympathy for families, the protection of families, compassion for families,’ then you should say to him: ‘Then why, venerable sir, is the Blessed One wandering on tour with a large Saṅgha of bhikkhus at a time of famine, a time of scarcity, when crops are blighted and have turned to straw? The Blessed One is practicing for the annihilation of families, for the calamity of families, for the destruction of families.’ When the ascetic Gotama is posed this dilemma by you, he will neither be able to throw it up nor to gulp it down.”

“Yes, venerable sir,” Asibandhakaputta the headman replied. Then he rose from his seat and, after paying homage to Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, keeping him on his right, he departed and went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to the Blessed One, he sat down to one side and said to him: “Venerable sir, doesn’t the Blessed One in many ways praise sympathy for families, the protection of families, compassion for families?”

“Yes, headman, the Tathāgata in many ways praises sympathy for families, the protection of families, compassion for families.”

“Then why, venerable sir, is the Blessed One wandering on tour with a large Saṅgha of bhikkhus at a time of famine, a time of scarcity, when crops are blighted and have turned to straw? The Blessed One is practicing for the annihilation of families, for the calamity of families, for the destruction of families.”

“I recollect ninety-one aeons back, headman, but I do not recall any family that has ever been destroyed merely by offering cooked almsfood. Rather, whatever families there are that are rich, with much wealth and property, with abundant gold and silver, with abundant possessions and means of subsistence, with abundant wealth and grain, they have all become so from giving, from truthfulness, and from self-control (emphasis added).

“There are, headman, eight causes and conditions for the destruction of families. Families come to destruction on account of the king, or on account of thieves, or on account of fire, or on account of water; or they do not find what they have put away; or mismanaged undertakings fail; or there arises within a family a wastrel who squanders, dissipates, and fritters away its wealth; and impermanence is the eighth. These are the eight causes and conditions for the

destruction of families. But while these eight causes and conditions for the destruction of families exist, if anyone speaks thus of me: 'The Blessed One is practicing for the annihilation of families, for the calamity of families, for the destruction of families,' if he does not abandon that assertion and that state of mind, and if he does not relinquish that view, then according to his deserts he will be, as it were, dropped off in hell."

When this was said, Asibandhakaputta the headman said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, venerable sir! Magnificent, venerable sir! The Dhamma has been made clear in many ways by the Blessed One, as though he were turning upright what had been turned upside down, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. I go for refuge to the Blessed One, and to the Dhamma, and to the Bhikkhu Saṅgha. From today let the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

ITI 75 Rainless Sutta

This was said by the Blessed one, said by the Arahant thus I heard –

"Bhikkhus, these three persons are seen in the world. Which three? Rainless, partly raining, fully raining everywhere.

"And how, bhikkhus, is a person rainless? Here, bhikkhus, some person is not a giver of food-drink-cloth-vehicle-garlands-scents-creams-bedding-lodging-lamps to any renunciate-brāhmaṇa-miserable-tramp-travelling salesman-beggar. Thus indeed, bhikkhus, is a person rainless.

"And how, bhikkhus, is a person partly raining? Here, bhikkhus, some person is a giver of food-drink-cloth-vehicle-garlands-scents-creams-bedding-lodging-lamps to some renunciate-brāhmaṇa-miserable-tramp-travelling salesman-beggar, but not to others. Thus indeed, bhikkhus, is a person partly raining.

"And how, bhikkhus, is a person fully raining everywhere? Here, bhikkhus, some person is a giver of food-drink-cloth-vehicle-garlands-scents-creams-bedding-lodging-lamps to all renunciate-brāhmaṇa-miserable-tramp-travelling salesman-beggar. Thus indeed, bhikkhus, is a person fully raining everywhere. Indeed bhikkhus, these three persons are seen in the world".

For this meaning Blessed One spoke. There this is what was said –

"Not with renunciate nor with brāhmaṇa,
nor with miserable-tramp-travelling salesman;
Shares the gains, food drink eatables;
They are rainless, the lowest men.

 "Doesn't give to some, will give to some;
 They are called partly raining, by the intelligent ones.

"Man with all requisites and responsive, compassionate for all beings;
Rejoicingly gives, saying 'Give, give'.

 "Like rain, thundering-roaring, pours down;
 Filling low-lying land, flowing with water.

"Just so here some, person is like such;
Having rightly collected, energetically earned wealth;
Satisfies with food-drinks, fully filling bowl of those in need".

This too is the meaning of what was said by the Blessed one, thus I heard.

WHOM TO GIVE

MLDB 142 Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅga Sutta

1. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Sakyan country at Kapilavatthu in Nigrodha's Park.

2. Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī took a new pair of clothes and went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to him, she sat down at one side and said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, this new pair of cloths has been spun by me, woven by me, especially for the Blessed One. Venerable sir, let the Blessed One accept it from me out of compassion."

When this was said, the Blessed One told her: "Give it to the Sangha, Gotamī. When you give it to the Sangha, both I and the Sangha will be honored."

A second time and a third time she said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir,... accept it from me out of compassion."

A second time and a third time the Blessed One told her: "Give it to the Sangha, Gotamī. When you give it to the Sangha, both I and the Sangha will be honored."

3. Then the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, let the Blessed One accept the new pair of cloths from Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has been very helpful to the Blessed One, venerable sir. As his mother's sister, she was his nurse, his foster mother, the one who gave him milk. She suckled the Blessed One when his own mother died. The Blessed One too has been very helpful to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, venerable sir. It is owing to the Blessed One that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. It is owing to the Blessed One that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī abstains from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, and from wine, liquor, and intoxicants, which are the basis of negligence. It is owing to the Blessed One that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī possesses unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and that she possesses the virtues loved by noble ones. It is owing to the Blessed One that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is free from doubt about suffering, about the origin of suffering, about the cessation of suffering, and about the way leading to the cessation of suffering. The Blessed One has been very helpful to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī."

4. "That is so, Ānanda, that is so! When one person, owing to another, has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal requisites.

"When one person, owing to another, has come to abstain from killing living beings, from taking what is not given, from misconduct in sensual pleasures, from false speech, and from wine, liquor, and intoxicants, which are the basis of negligence, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal requisites.

"When one person, owing to another, has come to possess unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and to possess the virtues loved by noble ones, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by paying homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal requisites.

“When one person, owing to another, has become free from doubt about suffering, about the origin of suffering, about the cessation of suffering, and about the way leading to the cessation of suffering, I say that it is not easy for the former to repay the latter by homage to him, rising up for him, according him reverential salutation and polite services, and by providing robes, almsfood, resting places, and medicinal requisites.

5. “There are fourteen kinds of personal offerings, Ānanda. One gives a gift to the Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened; this is the first kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a paccekabuddha; this is the second kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to an arahant disciple of the Tathāgata; this is the third kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of arahantship; this is the fourth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a non-returner; this is the fifth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of non-return; this is the sixth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a once-returner; this is the seventh kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of once-return; this is the eighth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a stream-enterer; this is the ninth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of stream-entry; this is the tenth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to one outside [the Dispensation] who is free from lust for sensual pleasures; this is the eleventh kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to a virtuous ordinary person; this is the twelfth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to an immoral ordinary person; this is the thirteenth kind of personal offering. One gives a gift to an animal; this is the fourteenth kind of personal offering.

6. “Herein, Ānanda, by giving a gift to an animal, the offering may be expected to repay a hundredfold. By giving a gift to an immoral ordinary person, the offering may be expected to repay a thousandfold. By giving a gift to a virtuous ordinary person, the offering may be expected to repay a hundred-thousandfold. By giving a gift to one outside [the Dispensation] who is free from lust for sensual pleasures, the offering may be expected to repay a hundred-thousand times a hundred-thousandfold.

“By giving a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of stream-entry, the offering may be expected to repay incalculably, immeasurably. What, then, should be said about giving a gift to a stream-enterer? What should be said about giving a gift to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of once-return... to a once-returner... to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of non-return... to a non-returner... to one who has entered upon the way to the realization of the fruit of arahantship... to an arahant... to a paccekabuddha? What should be said about giving a gift to a Tathāgata, accomplished and fully enlightened? (emphasis added).

7. “There are seven kinds of offerings made to the Sangha, Ānanda. One gives a gift to a Sangha of both [bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs] headed by the Buddha; this is the first kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift to a Sangha of both [bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs] after the Tathāgata has attained final Nibbāna; this is the second kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift to a Sangha of bhikkhus; this is the third kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift to a Sangha of bhikkhunīs; this is the fourth kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift, saying: ‘Appoint so many bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs for me from the Sangha’; this is the fifth kind of offering made to the Sangha. One gives a gift, saying: ‘Appoint so many bhikkhus for me from the Sangha’; this is the sixth kind of offering made to

the Sangha. One gives a gift, saying: 'Appoint so many bhikkhunīs for me from the Sangha'; this is the seventh kind of offering made to the Sangha.

8. "In future times, Ānanda, there will be members of the clan who are 'yellow-necks,' immoral, of evil character. People will give gifts to those immoral persons for the sake of the Sangha. *Even then, I say, an offering made to the Sangha is incalculable, immeasurable. And I say that in no way is a gift to a person individually ever more fruitful than an offering made to the Sangha (emphasis added).*

9. "There are, Ānanda, four kinds of purification of offering. What four? There is the offering that is purified by the giver, not by the receiver. There is the offering that is purified by the receiver, not by the giver. There is the offering that is purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver. There is the offering that is purified both by the giver and by the receiver.

10. "And how is the offering purified by the giver, not by the receiver? Here the giver is virtuous, of good character, and the receiver is immoral, of evil character. Thus the offering is purified by the giver, not by the receiver.

11. "And how is the offering purified by the receiver, not by the giver? Here the giver is immoral, of evil character, and the receiver is virtuous, of good character. Thus the offering is purified by the receiver, not by the giver.

12. "And how is the offering purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver? Here the giver is immoral, of evil character, and the receiver is immoral, of evil character. Thus the offering is purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver.

13. "And how is the offering purified both by the giver and by the receiver? Here the giver is virtuous, of good character, and the receiver is virtuous, of good character. Thus the offering is purified both by the giver and by the receiver. These are the four kinds of purification of offering."

14. That is what the Blessed One said. When the Sublime One had said that, the Teacher said further:

"When a virtuous person to an immoral person gives
With trusting heart a gift righteously obtained,
Placing faith that the fruit of action is great,
The giver's virtue purifies the offering.

When an immoral person to a virtuous person gives
With untrusting heart a gift unrighteously obtained,
Nor places faith that the fruit of action is great,
The receiver's virtue purifies the offering.

When an immoral person to an immoral person gives
With untrusting heart a gift unrighteously obtained,
Nor places faith that the fruit of action is great,
Neither's virtue purifies the offering.

When a virtuous person to a virtuous person gives
With trusting heart a gift righteously obtained,
Placing faith that the fruit of action is great,
That gift, I say, will come to full fruition.

When a passionless person to a passionless person gives
With trusting heart a gift righteously obtained,
Placing faith that the fruit of action is great,
That gift, I say, is the best of worldly gifts."

NDB 6.59 Dārūkammika

... "Come now, householder, give gifts to the Saṅgha. When you give gifts to the Saṅgha, your mind will be confident. When your mind is confident, with the breakup of the body, after death, you will be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world" ... (*emphasis* added).

CDB 3.24 Archery Sutta

At Sāvattṭhī. Sitting to one side, King Pasenadi of Kosala said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, where should a gift be given?"

"Wherever one's mind has confidence, great king" (*emphasis* added).

"But, venerable sir, where does what is given become of great fruit?"

"This is one question, great king, 'Where should a gift be given?' and this another, 'Where does what is given become of great fruit?' What is given to one who is virtuous, great king, is of great fruit, not so what is given to an immoral person (*emphasis* added). Now then, great king, I will question you about this same point. Answer as you see fit. What do you think, great king? Suppose you are at war and a battle is about to take place. Then a khattiya youth would arrive, one who is untrained, unskillful, unpracticed, inexperienced, timid, petrified, frightened, quick to flee. Would you employ that man, and would you have any use for such a man?"

"Surely not, venerable sir."

"Then a brahmin youth would arrive ... a vessa youth ... a sudda youth ... who is untrained ... quick to flee. Would you employ that man, and would you have any use for such a man?"

"Surely not, venerable sir."

"What do you think, great king? Suppose you are at war and a battle is about to take place. Then a khattiya youth would arrive, one who is trained, skillful, practiced, experienced, brave, courageous, bold, ready to stand his place. Would you employ that man, and would you have any use for such a man?"

"Surely I would, venerable sir."

"Then a brahmin youth would arrive ... a vessa youth ... a sudda youth ... who is trained ... ready to stand his place. Would you employ that man, and would you have any use for such a man?"

"Surely I would, venerable sir."

"So too, great king, when a person has gone forth from the household life into homelessness, no matter from what clan, if he has abandoned five factors and possesses five factors, then what is given to him is of great fruit. What five factors have been abandoned? Sensual desire has been abandoned; ill will has been abandoned; sloth and torpor have been abandoned; restlessness and remorse have been abandoned; doubt has been abandoned. What five factors does he possess? He possesses the aggregate of virtue of one beyond training, the aggregate of concentration of one beyond training, the aggregate of wisdom of one beyond training, the aggregate of liberation of one beyond training, the aggregate of the knowledge and vision of liberation of one beyond training. He possesses these five factors. Thus what is given to one who has abandoned five factors and who possesses five factors is of great fruit.

434 "As a king intent on waging war
Would employ a youth skilled with the bow,
One endowed with strength and vigor,
But not the coward on account of his birth-

435 So even though he be of low birth,
One should honor the person of noble conduct,
The sagely man in whom are established
The virtues of patience and gentleness.

436 "One should build delightful hermitages
And invite the learned to dwell in them;
One should build water tanks in the forest
And causeways over rough terrain.

437 "With a confident heart one should give
To those of upright character:
Give food and drink and things to eat,
Clothing to wear and beds and seats.

438 "For as the rain-cloud, thundering,
Wreathed in lightning, with a hundred crests,
Pours down its rain upon the earth,
Flooding both the plain and valley-

439 So the wise man, faithful, learned,
Having had a meal prepared,
Satisfies with food and drink
The mendicants who live on alms.
Rejoicing, he distributes gifts,
And proclaims, 'Give, give.'

440 "For that is his thundering
Like the sky when it rains.
That shower of merit, so vast,
Will pour down on the giver."

NDB 3.57 Vaccha

Then the wanderer Vacchagotta approached the Blessed One the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When they had concluded their greetings and cordial talk, he sat down to one side and said to him:

"Master Gotama, I have heard: 'The ascetic Gotama says: "Alms should be given only to me, not to others; alms should be given only to my disciples, not to the disciples of others. Only what is given to me is very fruitful, not what is given to others; only what is given to my disciples is very fruitful, not what is given to the disciples of others.'" Do those who speak thus state what has been said by Master Gotama and not misrepresent him with what is contrary to fact? Do they explain in accordance with the Dhamma so that they would not incur any reasonable criticism or ground for censure? For we do not want to misrepresent Master Gotama."

"Those, Vaccha, who say: 'The ascetic Gotama says: "Alms should be given only to me, not to others; alms should be given only to my disciples, not to the disciples of others. Only what is given to me is very fruitful, not what is given to others; only what is given to my disciples is

very fruitful, not what is given to the disciples of others," do not state what has been said by me but misrepresent me with what is untrue and contrary to fact. One who prevents another from giving alms creates an obstruction and stumbling block for three people. What three? He creates an obstruction to the donor's acquiring merit, to the recipients' gaining a gift, and already he has maimed and injured himself. One who prevents another from giving alms creates an obstruction and stumbling block for these three people.

"But, Vaccha, I say that one acquires merit even if one throws away dishwashing water in a refuse dump or cesspit with the thought: 'May the living beings here sustain themselves with this!' How much more, then, [does one acquire merit] when one gives to human beings! However, I say that what is given to one of virtuous behavior is more fruitful than [what is given] to an immoral person. And [the most worthy recipient] is one who has abandoned five factors and possesses five factors (emphasis added).

"What five factors has he abandoned? Sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are the five factors that he has abandoned. "And what five factors does he possess? The virtuous behavior, concentration, wisdom, liberation, and knowledge and vision of liberation of one beyond training. These are the five factors that he possesses.

"It is in such a way, I say, that what is given to one who has abandoned five factors and possesses five factors is very fruitful."

Among cattle of any sort,
whether black, white, red, or golden,
mottled, uniform, or pigeon-colored,
the tamed bull is born,
the one that can bear the load,
possessing strength, advancing with good speed.
They yoke the burden just to him;
they are not concerned about his color.

So too, among human beings
it is in any kind of birth –
among khattiyas, brahmins, vessas,
suddas, caṇḍālas, or scavengers –
among people of any sort
that the tamed person of good manners is born:
one firm in Dhamma, virtuous in conduct,
truthful in speech, endowed with moral shame;
one who has abandoned birth and death,
consummate in the spiritual life,
with the burden dropped, detached,
who has done his task, free of taints;
who has gone beyond all things [of the world]
and by non-clinging has reached nibbāna:
an offering is truly vast
when planted in that spotless field.

Fools devoid of understanding,
dull-witted, unlearned,
do not attend on the holy ones
but give their gifts to those outside.
Those, however, who attend on the holy ones,
on the wise ones esteemed as sagely,
and those whose faith in the Fortunate One
is deeply rooted and well established,
go to the world of the devas
or are born here in a good family.
Advancing in successive steps,
those wise ones attain nibbāna.

HOW TO GIVE

NDB 5.148 A Good Person

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

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

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

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

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

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

NDB 8.37 The Good Person’s Gifts

“Bhikkhus, there are these eight gifts of a good person. What eight? (1) He gives what is pure; (2) he gives what is excellent; (3) he gives a timely gift; (4) he gives what is allowable; (5) he gives after investigation; (6) he gives often; (7) while giving he settles his mind in confidence; and (8) having given, he is elated. These are the eight gifts of a good person” (emphasis added).

He gives what is pure and excellent,
allowable drinks and food at the proper time;
he gives gifts often to fertile fields of merit,
to those who lead the spiritual life.

He does not feel regret,
having given away many material things.
Those with deep insight praise
the gifts given in this way.

Having thus practiced charity
with a mind freely generous,
one intelligent and wise, rich in faith,
is reborn in a pleasant, unafflicted world.

NDB 7.52 Giving

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Campā on a bank of the Gaggārā Lotus Pond. Then a number of lay followers from Campā approached the Venerable Sāriputta, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“Bhante Sāriputta, it has been a long time since we heard a Dhamma talk from the Blessed One. It would be good, Bhante, if we could get to hear a Dhamma talk from him.”

“In that case, friends, you should come on the uposatha day. Perhaps then you might get to hear a Dhamma talk from the Blessed One.”

“Yes, Bhante,” those lay followers replied. Then, having risen from their seats, they paid homage to the Venerable Sāriputta, circumambulated him keeping their right sides toward him, and departed.

Then, on the uposatha day, those lay followers from Campā approached the Venerable Sāriputta, paid homage to him, and stood to one side. Then the Venerable Sāriputta, along with those lay followers, went to the Blessed One. They paid homage to the Blessed One, sat down to one side, and the Venerable Sāriputta said to him:

“Could it be the case, Bhante, that a gift given by someone here is not of great fruit and benefit? And could it be the case that a gift given by someone here is of great fruit and benefit?”

“It could be the case, Sāriputta, that a gift given by someone here is not of great fruit and benefit. And it could be the case that a gift given by someone here is of great fruit and benefit.”

“Bhante, why is it that one gift is not of great fruit and benefit while the other is?”

“Here, Sāriputta, someone gives a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this.’ He gives that gift to an ascetic or a brahmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and unguents; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. What do you think, Sāriputta? Might someone give such a gift?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“In that case, Sāriputta, he gives a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this.’ Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the devas [ruled by] the four great kings. Having exhausted that kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he comes back and returns to this state of being.

“But, Sāriputta, someone does not give a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this.’ Rather, he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good.’...

“He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before by my father and forefathers; I should not abandon this ancient family custom.’...

“He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before ... I should not abandon this ancient family custom,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook; these people do not cook. It isn’t right that I who cook should not give to those who do not cook.’...

“He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook ... to those who do not cook,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘Just as the seers of old – that is, Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāsetṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu – held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift.’...

“He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Just as the seers of old ... held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘When I am giving a gift my mind becomes placid, and elation and joy arise.’...

“He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘When I am giving a gift my mind becomes placid, and elation and joy arise,’ but rather he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘It’s an ornament of the mind, an accessory of the mind. He gives that gift to an ascetic or a brahmin: food and drink; clothing and vehicles; garlands, scents, and unguents; bedding, dwellings, and lighting. What do you think, Sāriputta? Might someone give such a gift?’”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“In that case, Sāriputta, he does not give a gift with expectations, with a bound mind, looking for rewards; he does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Having passed away, I will make use of this.’ He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving is good.’ He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Giving was practiced before by my father and forefathers; I should not abandon this ancient family custom.’ He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘I cook; these people do not cook. It isn’t right that I who cook should not give to those who do not cook.’ He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘Just as the seers of old ... held those great sacrifices, so I will share a gift.’ He does not give a gift, [thinking]: ‘When I am giving a gift my mind becomes placid, and elation and joy arise.’ But rather, *he gives a gift, [thinking]: ‘It’s an ornament of the mind, an accessory of the mind’* (*emphasis added*). Having given such a gift, with the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the devas of Brahmā’s company. Having exhausted that kamma, psychic potency, glory, and authority, he does not come back and return to this state of being.

“This, Sāriputta, is the reason why a gift given by someone here is not of great fruit and benefit. And this is the reason why a gift given by someone here is of great fruit and benefit.”

NDB 8.22 Uggā [Eight Astounding Qualities]

... (6) “It isn’t unusual that when the Saṅgha has been invited by me [for a meal], deities come and report to me: ‘That bhikkhu, householder, is liberated in both respects. That one is liberated by wisdom. That one is a body witness. That one is attained to view. That one is liberated by faith. That one is a Dhamma follower. That one is a faith follower. That one is virtuous, of good character. That one is immoral, of bad character.’ *Still, when I am serving the Saṅgha, I do not recall thinking: ‘Let me give this one little, let me give that one a lot.’ Rather, I give with an equal mind. This is the sixth astounding and amazing quality found in me” ...* (*emphasis added*).

LDB 23 Pāyāsi Sutta

30. ... And, Reverend Kassapa, I want to make a great sacrifice. Instruct me, Reverend Kassapa, how this may be to my lasting benefit and happiness.’

31. ‘Prince, when a sacrifice is made at which oxen are slain, or goats, fowl or pigs, or various creatures are slaughtered, and the participants have wrong view, wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness and wrong concentration, then that sacrifice is of no great fruit or profit, it is not very brilliant and has no great radiance. Suppose, Prince, a farmer went into the forest with plough and seed, and there, in an untilled place with poor soil from which the stumps had not been uprooted, were to sow seeds that were broken, rotting, ruined by wind and heat, stale, and not properly embedded in the soil, and the rain-god did not send proper showers at the right time – would those seeds germinate, develop and increase, and would the farmer get an abundant crop?’ ‘No, Reverend Kassapa.’

‘Well then, Prince, it is the same with a sacrifice at which oxen are slain, or goats, fowl or pigs, or various creatures are slaughtered, and the participants have wrong view, wrong thought,

wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness and wrong concentration. But when none of these creatures are put to death, and the participants have right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, then that sacrifice is of great fruit and profit, it is brilliant and of great radiance. Suppose, Prince, a farmer went into the forest with plough and seed, and there, in a well-tilled place with good soil from which the stumps had been uprooted, were to sow seeds that were not broken, rotting, ruined by wind and heat, or stale, and were firmly embedded in the soil, and the rain-god were to send proper showers at the right time – would those seeds germinate, develop and increase, and would the farmer get an abundant crop?’ ‘He would, Reverend Kassapa.’

‘In the same way, Prince, at a sacrifice at which no oxen are slain, or goats, fowl or pigs, or various creatures are slaughtered, and the participants have right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration, then that sacrifice is of great fruit and profit, it is brilliant and of great radiance.’

32. Then Prince Pāyāsi established a charity for ascetics and Brahmins, wayfarers, beggars and the needy. And there such food was given out as broken rice with sour gruel, and also rough clothing with ball-fringes. And a young Brahmin called Uttara was put in charge of the distribution. Referring to it, he said: ‘Through this charity I have been associated with Prince Pāyāsi in this world, but not in the next.’

And Prince Pāyāsi heard of his words, so he sent for him and asked him if he had said that. ‘Yes, Lord.’ ‘But why did you say such a thing? Friend Uttara, don’t we who wish to gain merit expect a reward for our charity?’

‘But, Lord, the food you give – broken rice with sour gruel – you would not care to touch it with your foot, much less eat it! And the rough clothes with ball-fringes – you would not care to set foot on them, much less wear them! Lord, you are kind and gentle to us, so how can we reconcile such kindness and gentleness with unkindness and roughness?’ ‘Well then, Uttara, you arrange to supply food as I eat and clothes such as I wear.’ ‘Very good, Lord’, said Uttara, and he did so.

And Prince Pāyāsi, because he had established his charity grudgingly, not with his own hands, and without proper concern, like something casually tossed aside, was reborn after his death, at the breaking-up of the body, in the company of the Four Great Kings, in the empty Serīsaka mansion. But Uttara, who had given the charity ungrudgingly, with his own hands and with proper concern, not as something tossed aside, was reborn after death, at the breaking-up of the body, in a good place, a heavenly realm, in the company of the Thirty-Three Gods.

33. Now at that time the Venerable Gavampati was accustomed to go to the empty Serīsaka mansion for his midday rest. And Pāyāsi of the devas went to the Venerable Gavampati, saluted him, and stood to one side. And the venerable Gavampati said to him, as he stood there: ‘Who are you, friend?’ ‘Lord, I am Prince Pāyāsi.’ ‘Friend, are you not the one who used to say: “There is no other world, there are no spontaneously born beings, there is no fruit or result of good or evil deeds”?’ ‘Yes, Lord, I am the one who used to say that, but I was converted from that evil view by the Noble Kumāra-Kassapa.’ ‘And where has the young Brahmin Uttara, who was in charge of the distribution of your charity, been reborn?’

‘Lord, he who gave the charity ungrudgingly with his own hands and with proper concern, not as something tossed aside, was reborn after death, at the breaking-up of the body, in a good place, a heavenly realm, in the company of the Thirty-Three Gods, but I, who gave grudgingly,

not with my own hands, and without proper concern, like something casually tossed aside, am reborn after death, at the breaking-up of the body, in the company of the Four Great Kings, here in the empty Serīsaka mansion. Lord, please, when you return to earth, tell people to give ungrudgingly with their own hands and with proper concern, not as something tossed aside, and inform them of the way in which Prince Pāyāsi and the young Brahmin Uttara have been reborn.'

34. And so the Venerable Gavampati, on his return to earth, declared: 'You should give ungrudgingly, with your own hands, with proper concern, not carelessly. Prince Pāyāsi did not do this, and at death, at the breaking-up of the body, he was reborn in the company of the Four Great Kings in the empty Serīsaka mansion, whereas the administrator of his charity, the young Brahmin Uttara, who gave ungrudgingly, with his own hands, with proper concern and not carelessly, was reborn in the company of the Thirty-Three Gods' ... (emphasis added).

WHAT TO GIVE

NDB 4.57 Suppavāsā

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Koliyans near the Koliyan town named Sajjana. Then, in the morning, the Blessed One dressed, took his bowl and robe, and went to the residence of the Koliyan daughter Suppavāsā, where he sat down in the prepared seat. Then the Koliyan daughter Suppavāsā, with her own hand, served and satisfied the Blessed One with various kinds of delicious food. When the Blessed One had finished eating and had put away his bowl, the Koliyan daughter Suppavāsā sat down to one side. The Blessed One then said to her:

“Suppavāsā, a female noble disciple who gives food gives the recipients four things. What four? She gives life, beauty, happiness, and strength. (1) Having given life, she partakes of life, whether celestial or human. (2) Having given beauty, she partakes of beauty, whether celestial or human. (3) Having given happiness, she partakes of happiness, whether celestial or human. (4) Having given strength, she partakes of strength, whether celestial or human. Suppavāsā, a female noble disciple who gives food gives the recipients these four things” (*emphasis* added).

When one gives well-prepared food,
pure, delicious, and flavorful,
to the upright ones who are
exalted and of excellent conduct,
that offering, which links merit with merit,
is praised as very fruitful
by the world-knowers.

Those recollecting such generosity
dwell in the world inspired by joy.
Having removed the stain of miserliness and its root,
blameless, they go to the heavenly abode.

CST Vinaya-Mahāvaggapāli-VI Bhesajakkhandhako-170 Yāgumadhugolākānujānā #282

*[Summary by Bhikkhu Mahinda] Once upon a time when Lord Buddha was on a walking tour with 1250 Bhikkhus, many lay people followed the Saṅgha, taking along carts loaded with provisions, hoping to give donations and make merits. However, even after following like this for two months, one of the brāhmaṇa didn't get a chance to offer anything so he thought: let me check the pantry and whatever isn't there, I will offer to the Saṅgha. He checked the pantry and noticed that there was no rice-milk [rice-gruel] and no sweet balls [laddus]. He then went and told Venerable Ānanda his thoughts. Venerable Ānanda asked Lord Buddha and the brāhmaṇa was allowed to present rice-milk [rice-gruel] and sweet balls [laddus] to the Saṅgha. After having served the Saṅgha headed by Lord Buddha with abundant rice-milk [rice-gruel] and sweet balls [laddus] with his own hands and after Lord Buddha had eaten and washed his bowl, brāhmaṇa sat down near Lord Buddha. When he was seated near him, the Blessed One said to that brāhmaṇa:*⁴

⁴ This is my summary and the following translation is from SBE17 pages 87-89.

*“Tenfold, O Brāhmaṇa, is the merit attached to rice-milk. In what way is it tenfold? He who gives rice-milk, gives life; he gives color; he gives joy; he gives strength; he gives readiness of mind; rice-milk when it is drunk removes hunger; dispels thirst; sets right the humors of the body; purifies the bladder; and promotes the digestion. This tenfold merit, O Brāhmaṇa, is attached to rice-milk (emphasis added).”*⁵

“He who attentively at the right time gives rice-milk to the self-possessed,
Who live on what others give to them;
Will benefit them in ten ways:
Life and color, joy and strength (he gives to them).

“Readiness of mind arises from it,
It dispels hunger and thirst, and sets the humors right;
It purifies the bladder, and brings the food to digestion,
As medicine the Perfect One has praised it.

“Therefore should rice-milk be continually given,
By a man who is longing for joy;
Who is desirous of heavenly joy,
Or who aspires to human prosperity”.

CDB 1.42 Giving What?

[A devatā:]

141 “Giving what does one give strength?
Giving what does one give beauty?
Giving what does one give ease?
Giving what does one give sight?
Who is the giver of all?
Being asked, please explain to me.”

[The Blessed One:]

142 “Giving food, one gives strength;
Giving clothes, one gives beauty;
Giving a vehicle, one gives ease;
Giving a lamp, one gives sight.

143 “The one who gives a residence
Is the giver of all.
But the one who teaches the Dhamma
Is the giver of the Deathless.”

ITI 98 Donation Sutta

This was said by the Blessed one, said by the Arahant thus I heard –

⁵ This Vinaya list is a composite made up of NDB 5.37 and NDB 5.207. CST doesn't mention that the first five benefits are at CST AN 5.37 while neither NDB 5.37 nor NDB 5.207 mention that they are subsets of the CST Vinaya-Mahāvaggapāḷi-VI Bhesajjakkhanda-170 Yāgumadhugoḷakānujānā #282.

*“Bhikkhus, these are the two donations – donating material things and donating Dhamma. Bhikkhus, this is the foremost among these two donations, namely – donating Dhamma.”*⁶

“Bhikkhus, these are the two sharings – sharing material things and sharing Dhamma. Bhikkhus, this is the foremost among these two sharings, namely – sharing Dhamma.”

“Bhikkhus, these are the two assistances – assisting with material things and assisting with Dhamma. Bhikkhus, this is the foremost among these two assistances, namely – assisting with Dhamma” (*emphasis added*).

For this meaning Blessed One spoke. There this is what was said –

“Highest and unsurpassed donation, sharing, Blessed One described;
One glad with the foremost field [of merits], who wouldn’t offer to the wise generation at [right] time?

“Both those who speak and listen, glad-minded in the well-gone’s teaching;
They fully cleanse the highest goal, those heedful in the well-gone’s teaching”.

This too is the meaning of what was said by the Blessed one, thus I heard.

NDB 5.44 The Giver of the Agreeable

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Vesālī in the hall with the peaked roof in the Great Wood. Then, in the morning, the Blessed One dressed, took his bowl and robe, and went to the residence of the householder Ugga of Vesālī, where he sat down in the appointed seat. Then the householder Ugga of Vesālī approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, in the presence of the Blessed One I heard and learned this: ‘The giver of what is agreeable gains what is agreeable’ (*emphasis added*). Bhante, my sal flower porridge is agreeable. Let the Blessed One accept it from me, out of compassion.” The Blessed One accepted, out of compassion.

“Bhante, in the presence of the Blessed One I heard and learned this: ‘The giver of what is agreeable gains what is agreeable.’ Bhante, my pork embellished with jujubes is agreeable. Let the Blessed One accept it from me, out of compassion.” The Blessed One accepted, out of compassion.

“Bhante, in the presence of the Blessed One I heard and learned this: ‘The giver of what is agreeable gains what is agreeable.’ Bhante, my fried vegetable stalks are agreeable. Let the Blessed One accept them from me, out of compassion.” The Blessed One accepted, out of compassion.

“Bhante, in the presence of the Blessed One I heard and learned this: ‘The giver of what is agreeable gains what is agreeable.’ Bhante, my boiled hill rice cleared of dark grains, accompanied by various sauces and condiments, is agreeable. Let the Blessed One accept it from me, out of compassion.” The Blessed One accepted, out of compassion.

“Bhante, in the presence of the Blessed One I heard and learned this: ‘The giver of what is agreeable gains what is agreeable.’ Bhante, my cloths from Kāsi are agreeable. Let the Blessed One accept them from me, out of compassion.” The Blessed One accepted, out of compassion.

⁶ This and the following two paragraphs – listing donations, sharings, and assistances – are same as NDB 2.141, 2.147, and 2.149, respectively. This sutta is a subset of ITI 100.

“Bhante, in the presence of the Blessed One I heard and learned this: ‘The giver of what is agreeable gains what is agreeable.’ Bhante, my couch spread with rugs, blankets, and covers, with an excellent covering of antelope hide, with a canopy above and red bolsters at both ends, is agreeable. Although I know this is not allowable for the Blessed One, this sandalwood plank of mine is worth over a thousand. Let the Blessed One accept it from me, out of compassion.” The Blessed One accepted, out of compassion.

Then the Blessed One expressed his appreciation to the householder Ugga of Vesālī thus:

“The giver of the agreeable gains the agreeable,
when he gives willingly to the upright ones
clothing, bedding, food, and drink,
and various kinds of requisites.

“Having known the arahants to be like a field
for what is relinquished and offered, not held back,
the good person gives what is hard to give:
the giver of agreeable things gains what is agreeable.”

Then, after expressing his appreciation to the householder Ugga of Vesālī, the Blessed One rose from his seat and left. Then, sometime later, the householder Ugga of Vesālī passed away. After his death, the householder Ugga of Vesālī was reborn among a certain group of mind-made [deities]. On that occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattḥī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s Park. Then, when the night had advanced, the young deva Ugga, of stunning beauty, illuminating the entire Jeta’s Grove, approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, and stood to one side. The Blessed One then said to him: “I hope, Ugga, that it is as you would have wished.”

“Surely, Bhante, it is as I had wished.”

Then the Blessed One addressed the young deva Ugga with verses:

“The giver of the agreeable gains the agreeable;
the giver of the foremost again gains the foremost;
the giver of the excellent gains the excellent;
the giver of the best reaches the best state.

“The person who gives the best,
the giver of the foremost,
the giver of the excellent,
is long-lived and famous
wherever he is reborn.”

WHEN TO GIVE

NDB 5.148 A Good Person

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

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

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

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

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

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

NDB 5.36 Timely

“Bhikkhus, there are these five timely gifts. What five? (1) One gives a gift to a visitor. (2) One gives a gift to one setting out on a journey. (3) One gives a gift to a patient. (4) One gives a gift during a famine. (5) One first presents the newly harvested crops and fruits to the virtuous ones. These are the five timely gifts” (*emphasis* added).

At the proper time, those wise,
charitable, and generous folk
give a timely gift to the noble ones,
who are stable and upright;
given with a clear mind,
one’s offering is vast.

Those who rejoice in such deeds
or who provide [other] service
do not miss out on the offering;
they too partake of the merit.

Therefore, with a non-regressing mind,
one should give a gift where it yields great fruit.
Merits are the support of living beings
[when they arise] in the other world.

GIVING AND STREAM-ENTRY

CDB 55.31 Streams of Merit (1)

At Sāvattthī. “Bhikkhus, there are these four streams of merit, streams of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness. What four?”

“Here, bhikkhus, a noble disciple possesses confirmed confidence in the Buddha thus: ‘The Blessed One is an arahant, perfectly enlightened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, fortunate, knower of the world, unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.’ This is the first stream of merit, stream of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness.

“Again, bhikkhus, a noble disciple possesses confirmed confidence in the Dhamma thus: ‘The Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One, directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise.’ This is the second stream of merit, stream of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness.

“Again, bhikkhus, a noble disciple possesses confirmed confidence in the Saṅgha thus: ‘The Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples is practicing the good way, practicing the straight way, practicing the true way, practicing the proper way; that is, the four pairs of persons, the eight types of individuals – this Saṅgha of the Blessed One’s disciples is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, the unsurpassed field of merit for the world.’ This is the third stream of merit, stream of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness.

“Again, bhikkhus, the instructed noble disciple possesses the virtues dear to the noble ones, ones – unbroken, untorn, unblemished, unmottled, freeing, praised by the wise, ungrasped, leading to concentration. This is the fourth stream of merit, stream of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness.

“These are the four streams of merit, streams of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness.”

CDB 55.32 Streams of Merit (2)

(As CDB 55.31 above for the first three factors, the fourth factor as follows:)

“Again, bhikkhus, a noble disciple dwells at home with a mind devoid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing. This is the fourth stream of merit, stream of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness.

CDB 55.33 Streams of Merit (3)

(As CDB 55.31 above for the first three factors, the fourth factor as follows:)

“Again, bhikkhus, a noble disciple is wise, he possesses wisdom directed to arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering. This is the fourth stream of merit, stream of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness.

Thus, we end up with a composite list of Confidence, Virtue, Giving, and Wisdom as the four Factors of Stream-entry.

While usually Generosity will precede Stream-entry, it’s not always so. Sometimes, after the Stream-entry, the person will become exceptionally generous and open-handed. This is one of the tell-tale signs of stream-entry, contrary to popular wisdom.

NDB 5.255 Abandoning Miserliness

“Bhikkhus, the spiritual life is lived for the abandoning and eradication of five kinds of miserliness. What five? Miserliness with regard to dwellings, miserliness with regard to families, miserliness with regard to gains, miserliness with regard to praise, and miserliness with regard to the Dhamma. The spiritual life is lived for the abandoning and eradication of these five kinds of miserliness” (*emphasis* added).

NDB 5.268-271 Realizing stream-entry, once-returning, non-returning, arahantship

“Bhikkhus, without having abandoned these five things one is incapable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry ... the fruit of once-returning ... the fruit of non-returning ... the fruit of arahantship. What five? Miserliness with regard to dwellings, miserliness with regard to families, miserliness with regard to gains, miserliness with regard to praise, and ingratitude or unthankfulness. Without having abandoned these five things, one is incapable of realizing the fruit of arahantship (*emphasis* added).

“Bhikkhus, having abandoned these five things, one is capable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry ... the fruit of once-returning ... the fruit of non-returning ... the fruit of arahantship. What five? Miserliness with regard to dwellings, miserliness with regard to families, miserliness with regard to gains, miserliness with regard to praise, and ingratitude or unthankfulness. Having abandoned these five things, one is capable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry ... the fruit of once-returning ... the fruit of non-returning ... the fruit of arahantship” (*emphasis* added).

NDB 6.10 Mahānāma

... (5) “Again, Mahānāma, a noble disciple recollects his own generosity thus: ‘It is truly my good fortune and gain that in a population obsessed by the stain of miserliness, I dwell at home with a mind devoid of the stain of miserliness, freely generous, openhanded, delighting in relinquishment, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing’ (*emphasis* added). When a noble disciple recollects his generosity, on that occasion his mind is not obsessed by lust, hatred, or delusion; on that occasion his mind is simply straight, based on generosity. A noble disciple whose mind is straight gains inspiration in the meaning, gains inspiration in the Dhamma, gains joy connected with the Dhamma. When he is joyful, rapture arises. For one with a rapturous mind, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body feels pleasure. For one feeling pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. This is called a noble disciple who dwells in balance amid an unbalanced population, who dwells unafflicted amid an afflicted population. As one who has entered the stream of the Dhamma, he develops recollection of generosity. ...

CDB 55.21 Mahānāma

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu in Nigrodha’s Park. Then Mahānāma the Sakyan approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Venerable sir, this Kapilavatthu is rich and prosperous, populous, crowded, with congested thoroughfares. In the evening, when I am entering Kapilavatthu after visiting the Blessed One or the bhikkhus worthy of esteem, I come across a stray elephant, a stray horse, a stray chariot, a stray cart, a stray man.

On that occasion, venerable sir, my mindfulness regarding the Blessed One becomes muddled, my mindfulness regarding the Dhamma becomes muddled, my mindfulness regarding the

Saṅgha becomes muddled. The thought then occurs to me: ‘If at this moment I should die, what would be my destination, what would be my future bourn?’”

“Don’t be afraid, Mahānāma! Don’t be afraid, Mahānāma! Your death will not be a bad one, your demise will not be a bad one. When a person’s mind has been fortified over a long time by faith, virtue, learning, generosity, and wisdom, right here crows, vultures, hawks, dogs, jackals, or various creatures eat his body, consisting of form, composed of the four great elements, originating from mother and father, built up out of rice and gruel, subject to impermanence, to being worn and rubbed away, to breaking apart and dispersal. But his mind, which has been fortified over a long time by faith, virtue, learning, generosity, and wisdom – that goes upwards, goes to distinction (emphasis added).

“Suppose, Mahānāma, a man submerges a pot of ghee or a pot of oil in a deep pool of water and breaks it. All of its shards and fragments would sink downwards, but the ghee or oil there would rise upwards. So too, Mahānāma, when a person’s mind has been fortified over a long time by faith, virtue, learning, generosity, and wisdom, right here crows, vultures, hawks, dogs, jackals, or various creatures eat his body, consisting of form, composed of the four great elements, originating from mother and father, built up out of rice and gruel, subject to impermanence, to being worn and rubbed away, to breaking apart and dispersal. But his mind, which has been fortified over a long time by faith, virtue, learning, generosity, and wisdom – that goes upwards, goes to distinction.

“Don’t be afraid, Mahānāma! Don’t be afraid, Mahānāma! Your death will not be a bad one, your demise will not be a bad one.”