

The Practice of Generosity (Dana)

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The Buddha's Gradual Path

1

- Dana (Generosity)
- Sila (Morality)

2

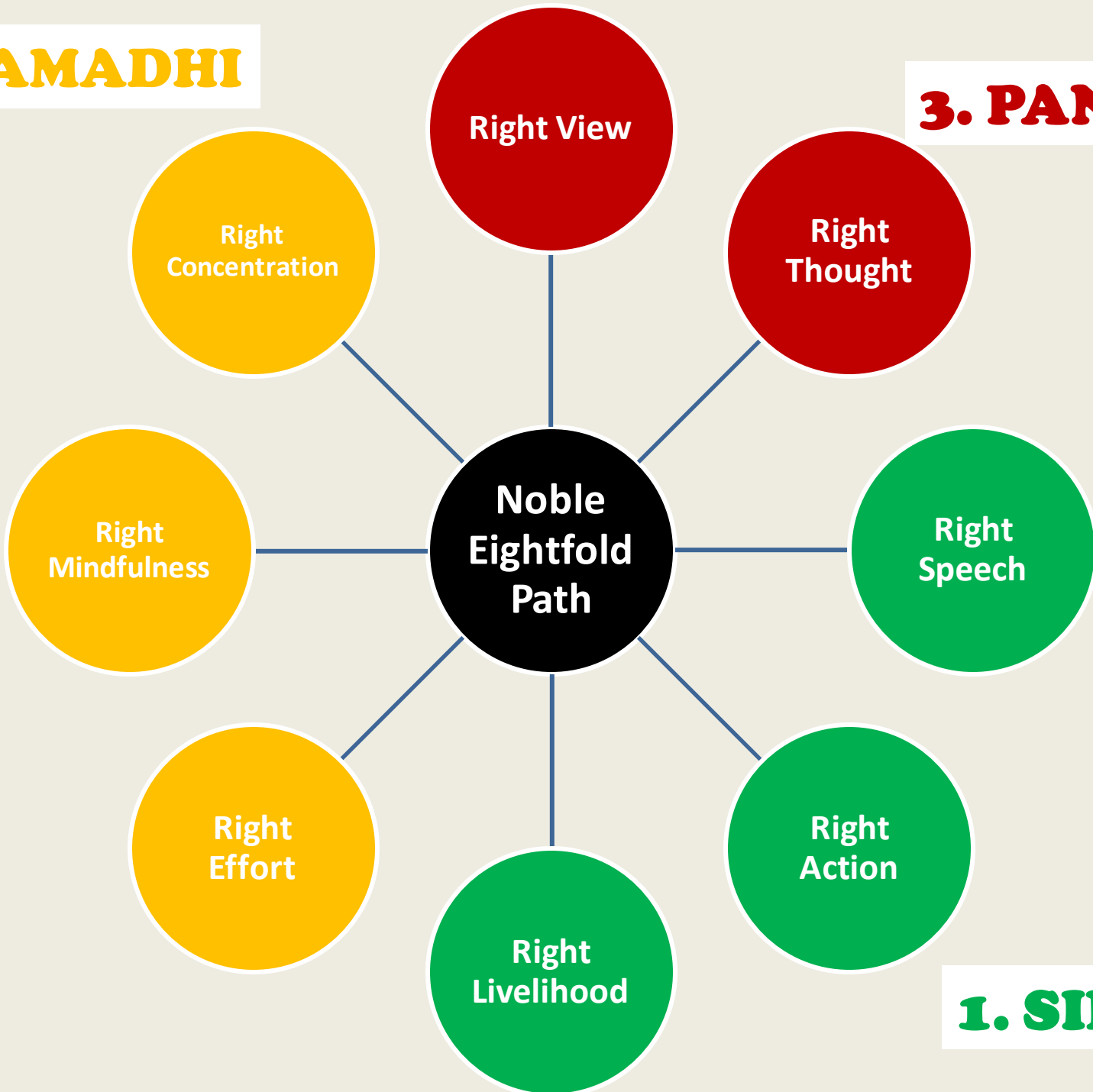
- Kamma & Rebirth
- The Cycles of Sufferings (Samsara)

3

- The Benefits of Renunciation
- The 4 Noble Truths & Eightfold Path

2. SAMADHI

3. PANNA



1. SILA

Importance of Dana & Sila

Punnakiriyavatthu	Sappurisa	Paramis (Perfections)
<p>The three bases of meritorious deeds (Punna)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dana2. Sila3. Bhavana	<p>The five qualities of a “superior person”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Faith2. Generosity (Dana)3. Morality (Sila)4. Learning5. Wisdom (Panna)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Generosity2. Morality3. Renunciation4. Wisdom5. Energy6. Patience7. Truthfulness8. Resolve9. Loving-Kindness10. Equanimity

Dana & Sila for Laypeople

- Practice leads to more blessings (merits) for a good and fortunate life
- Minimal practice for lay Buddhists
- Also found in other religions
- Little Dana & Sila >> human rebirth, less fortunate life
- Moderate Dana & Sila >> human rebirth, fortunate life
- Lots of Dana & Sila >> heavenly rebirth, very fortunate life

What is Dana?

- **Dana**
 - The act of giving
 - Object need not be physical
 - Can be time, skills, services
 - An act of generosity towards others
 - Develops qualities of generosity, kindness and relinquishment/letting go → conducive for spiritual practice of sila, bhavana, panna

Types of Dana

1. Amisa-dana

- The giving of material things

2. Abhaya-dana

- The giving of fearlessness

3. Dhamma-dana

- The giving of dhamma; *sabbadanam dhammadanam jinati* [Dhp 354]

Dana through...

1. Actions

- Sangha : food, clothes, lodging, medicine
- Others : abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconducts (most basic)

2. Speech

- Truthful, kind (gentle), inclusive, beneficial

3. Thoughts

- Non-attached, non-ill will, non-delusion
- Love, compassion, joy, peace

Dana is a Practice

- Practice implies
 - Repetitive actions, doing it again and again until we are good at it
 - Difficult to do, not familiar, not habituated

Dana and 2nd Precept

- **Second Precept**

- Do not take what is not given
- Develops from self-centred greed to selfless generosity
- Cultivate a **wholesome habitual tendency**
- Brings joy on reflections
- Combined with mindfulness, it brings increased awareness for opportunities to be generous

Why Dana?

1. Worldly benefits

- Whatever you give, you receive
 - Ayu (life), Vanno (beauty), Sukham (Joy), Balam (strength)

2. Spiritual benefits

- Cultivation of supportive spiritual qualities
 - Loving-kindness, compassion, inter-connectedness of beings, non-attachment

Rewards of Giving

- “The donor does not go without reward” – [AN 10.177]
- “What isn’t given is lost” – [SN 1.41]
- Benefits are seen in this life and future lives
- **Siha Sutta [AN 5.34]**
 1. A generous person is charming and pleasing to people at large
 2. A generous person is respected by people of integrity
 3. A generous person gains a good reputation
 4. A generous person is confident in assembly of men
 5. A generous person has a good rebirth

Giving one's last meal

"If beings knew, as I know, the results of giving & sharing, they would not eat without having given, nor would the stain of miserliness overcome their minds. Even if it were their last bite, their last mouthful, they would not eat without having shared, if there were someone to receive their gift. But because beings do not know, as I know, the results of giving & sharing, they eat without having given. The stain of miserliness overcomes their minds." [Iti 26]

How to Give

- 1. The Giver**
- 2. The Gift**
- 3. The Recipient**

The Giver

- The giver decides who to give, what to give, when to give, where to give, how to give.
- **Quality of the giver**
 - Good moral conduct vs bad moral conduct
- **State of Mind of the giver**
 - A noble giver is one who is happy before, during and after giving (A.iii,336)
- **Motivation of the giver**
 - Negative motives versus positive motives
 - The truly valid motive for giving should be the motive of cultivating the mind, to rid the mind of the habit of greed and selfishness.

The Giver – How to give

- **Velama Sutta [AN9.20]**
 - Householder, regardless of whether a gift is coarse or refined, if it is given:
 - attentively,
 - respectfully,
 - with one's own hand,
 - not as if throwing it away,
 - with the view that something (good) will come of it...

How a person of integrity gives

- **Sappurisdana Sutta [AN5.148]**
 - A person of integrity gives a gift:
 - with a sense of **conviction**
 - **Attentively**
 - in **season**
 - with an **empathetic heart**
 - **without adversely** affecting himself or others
- **Dakkhina Vibhanga Sutta [MN 142]**
 - An offering is purified:
 - on account of the **giver** when the giver is virtuous
 - on account of the **recipient** when the recipient is virtuous
 - on account of **both** the giver and the recipient if both are virtuous
 - by none if both happen to be impious

The Gift

- The gift is yours to give away
- Gift should be appropriate (beneficial) to person and occasion
- Value of gift & quantity of gift
- **Vaccha Sutta [AN3.57]**
 - Even if a person throws the rinsing of a bowl or a cup into a village pool or pond, thinking, 'May whatever animals live here feed on this,' that would be a source of merit.
 - Never underestimate the power of small gifts

The Gift of Dhamma

- **Dhamma**
 - The gift of dhamma excels all gifts
- **The 5 Precepts**
 - Gives fearlessness, trust, love and benevolence to all beings

The Recipient

- Who to give to?
 - Those in needs
 - Those who are worthy (Vaccha Sutta , AN 3.57)

Abandoned 5 factors	Endowed with 5 factors
Sensual desires	Perfect Sila (morality)
Ill will	Perfect Samadhi (concentration)
Sloth & Torpor	Perfect Panna (wisdom)
Restlessness & Worries	Perfect Release
Doubt	Perfect Knowledge & Vision

Velama Sutta [AN 9.20]

Giving versus Cultivating

1. Velama's gifts – 84,000 trays of gold... elephants... cloths...
2. A person consummate in view (sotapana)
3. A once-returner (sakkadagami)
4. A non-returner (anagami)
5. An arahant
6. A pacekka buddha
7. A sammāsambuddha
8. A sangha headed by a buddha
9. A monastery for the sangha
- 10. Taking refuge in the Triple Gems**
- 11. The 5 Precepts**
- 12. A whiff of Metta**
- 13. A finger-snap perception of impermanence**

Spiritual Benefits of Dana

Macchariya Sutta (AN 5.254 – 271)

- Without abandoning stinginess as to one's lodging, family, gains and status, and without abandoning an ungrateful attitude, one cannot enter and remain in any of the first, second, third or fourth jhanas, and cannot realise the fruit of stream-entry, once-returner, non-returner and arahantship

Spiritual Benefits of Dana

Visakha [Vin.i,293-94]

Reflecting on giving

→ great delight (*pamuja*)

→ joy (*piti*)

→ body relaxes (*kayo passambhissati*)

→ ease , happiness (*sukha*)

→ concentrated mind (*cittam samadhiyissati*)

→ helps develop spiritual faculties, spiritual powers, factors of enlightenment

Science of Generosity

- Generosity benefits the giver
 - Strengthened immune system
 - Increase lifespan
 - Reduce heart attack risks
 - Greater self worth, sense of purpose
 - Happier people, less prone to depression
 - More resilient, creative and productive
- Generosity benefits the recipients
 - Get what they needed materially
 - Sense of gratitude
- Generosity benefits the society
 - Promote similar acts of kindness
 - Increase joy, trust and faith in humanity

Generosity in Marriage

- Uni. Of Virginia (National Marriage Project)
 - Higher generosity index → happier with marriage
 - Generosity in thoughts, words & actions
 - Children grow up with similar traits & attitudes

Generosity at Work

- Jodi Glickman (**Great on the Job** book)
 - Generous people share info, credits, time and expertise
 - Strong work ethics, good communicator, collaborate well
 - Gain trust, respect, good will from colleagues