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“ALMS GIVING”

Janita

Ph-D. Scholar, Department of Buddhist Studies,
Acharya Nagarjuna University Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT :

In Buddhist countries, laypeople are typically instructed to practice giving "Dana" in accordance with their faith, try to uphold the precepts of "Sila" as much as their circumstances permit, and cultivate their mind in meditation "Bhavana" to the extent that they are able. The majority of Buddhists who practice almsgiving are extremely joyful because they think that doing so will enable them to reach Nibbana.



KEY WORDS: Buddhist, Circumstances permit, Buddhist Countries.

INTRODUCTION:

Various countries have various customs and practices when it comes to almsgiving, or dana. According to Jataka legends, even the Buddha himself had accomplished 10 Parami, or perfections, in his previous life. The foundation of the Buddha's teachings is dāna. When a family was planning a dana giving ceremony at their house, they first went to the temple to extend an invitation to Bhikkhu and their neighbors to come inside. Especially, when they give dana ceremony at that day all people are wearing white dress to participate this. Normally, every Buddhist country such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, so on.... They regard that is the very important thing for day to day life. In Myanmar as Buddhist monks every day they should go to Pindapata or all-around village or town.

CHARITY (DĀNA)

Giving away as a gift or donation is dāna. If one gives with a firm belief in Kamma and its results, and if one does so with keenness and a feeling of joy at the time of giving and also before and after, that gift is indeed a great gift. Charity is like a love philter and brings all kinds of benefit.

Sappurisa dāna

1. Saddhadāna. Charity based on the belief in kamma and its results.
2. Sakkaccadāna. Charity given with respect and reverence.
3. Kāladāna. Charity performed at an appropriate time.
4. Anggahitadāna. Charity devoid of clinging and attachment.
5. Anupahaccadāna. Charity that does not harm oneself nor anyone else.

Clinging Upādāna

The four kinds of clinging are:

1. Clinging to sense-desire;
2. Clinging to wrong view;
3. Clinging to wrong view of the practice of morality; and
4. Clinging to the view that there is *atta*, self, soul, or ego.

Dāna Pāramī

Striving to fulfill perfection in giving, a future Buddha aspiring to attain enlightenment would give away all his possessions, even his wife and children, his body organs and his life.

While Sumedha was engaged in investigation of the Buddha making factors, he discovered first the perfection of Alms-giving which former Bodhisattas had always followed a practiced and which was like a highway to the state of Buddhahood. Then he admonished himself thus: "Sumedha, if you are desirous of attaining the knowledge of the path and fruition, and omniscience, you should constantly establish first, the perfection of alms-giving and make efforts to become accomplished in fulfilling this perfection." He continued to admonish himself thus: "when a jar, full of liquid, is overturned, it pours out all its contents. Likewise, Sumedha, you should give alms to all, be they low, middling or high, leaving nothing with you."

Of the ten perfections, the perfection of charity is the one to be fulfilled first. Charity makes the heart soft and gentle. The one who performs the act of charity can readily keep the moral precepts and undertake tranquility meditation as well as insight meditation. Without charity it will be hard to attain happy existences in the round of rebirths. Even if one attains a happy existence, it will be hard to be blessed with material wealth. Without material wealth, it will be hard to give away money and things in charity towards others.

Ordinary people differentiate their donees as inferior, ordinary and superior, and when they perform the act of charity, they make a wish: "May this act of charity help me to be reborn as human beings or celestial beings and to enjoy human luxury and celestial luxury." This kind of charity is known as *vattanissitadāna*, meaning the charity that causes rebirth repeatedly in the round of rebirth.

On the other hand, the Bodhisattas do not differentiate their donees, and when they perform the act of charity they only wish for the attainment of Omnisciences, i.e. *sabbaññutañāna*.

As the Bodhisatta Sumedha had made the solemn resolution to fulfill the perfection of charity, he gave away in charity not only inanimate possessions and royal luxuries but also animate possessions such as his wives, sons, daughters, physical organs and even his own life in his countless existence in the long period of four *asankhyeyyas* and one lakh world cycles.

With regard to the perfection of generosity, it is clearly stated in the Pāli Canon concerning the chronicle of buddhas that the Bodhisatta Sumedha admonished himself to start forth with the practice of perfection of generosity since the Bodhisattas of the past had done so. It is clearly seen, therefore, that amongst the ten perfections, perfection of giving of offering of generosity demands the highest priority for fulfillment.

But, in the Sangāthā Vagga of the Samyutta Nikāya, we find the verse, "Sīle pattitthāyanaro sapañño...." In which the Buddha explains that when a person of mature wisdom, born with three root-conditions, well established in morality, ardently develops concentration and insight wisdom, he can unravel the tangled network of craving. Here, the Buddha mentions only the three trainings, morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and insight wisdom (*paññā*); there is not even a hint about the practice of generosity. Furthermore, as the Visuddhi-magga (the path of purification) commentary which is the expository treatise on the single verse of sagatha vagga samyutta quoted above does not touch upon the subject of generosity and as the noble path of eight constituents which leads to Nibbāna includes the paths concerning morality, concentration and wisdom only, and there is no path including generosity, some people misconstrue that generosity is not regarded by the buddha as essential, that it is not conducive to attainment of Nibbana, that it generates more rebirths in the cycle of existence and as such generosity should not be cultivated.

Well-known minister of king Mindon, there are many Buddhists who are offended by such observation as 'generosity should not be cultivated' and who are indignant at Yaw minister's writing that 'the buddha taught generosity only for the sake of very ordinary people. But mere dislike of such views and indignation with them serves no purposes. What is more important and helpful to oneself is to understand correctly what the buddha means by his teaching.

Concerning the afore said verse of the Sagāthā Vagga Samyutta, what one should understand as the true meaning of the Buddha's discourse is as follows: This discourse was taught by the Buddha for the benefit of those superior persons who are capable of striving hard for complete eradication of defilements, for the attainment of arahatship in the present life, with no more rebirth. If such a superior person actually strives hard for the attainment of arahatship in this very life and it, as a consequence of his strenuous efforts, he becomes an arahat, there is no need for him to set up a new life. Generosity is an act which generates new life, new pleasures; for the person who will break the circle of the existence in this very life, there will be no more rebirths. Since there will be no new life for him to reap the benefits of generosity, acts of giving by him are unnecessary. That is why the Buddha, for the benefit of superior persons, actually strives hard for the attainment of arahatship in this very life and if, as a consequence of his strenuous efforts, he becomes an arahat, there is no need for him to set up a new life. Generosity is an act which generates new life, there will be no more rebirths. Since there will be no new life for him to reap the benefits of generosity, acts of giving by him are unnecessary. That is why the Buddha, for the benefit of superior persons, dwells in this discourse of the Samyutta mainly on morality, concentration and insight wisdom which are more important than generosity for the purpose of eradication of the defilements. The Buddha does not say at all that generosity should not be cultivated.

Generosity has the quality of making the mind and heart pliable. When someone makes a generous offer of some gift, the very act of giving serves as a decisive support to make the mind more pliable and ready for observance of precepts, for cultivation of concentration and for development of insight wisdom through practice of vipassanā meditation. It is within the experience of very Buddhist, that a feeling of awkwardness and embarrassment arises in him whenever he visits, without to Dhamma talks or for the practice of meditation. Therefore, it was customary for the noble disciples like Visākhā to bring an offering, such as rice, sweets or fruits in the morning and beverages and medicinal preparations in the evening, whenever she visited the Buddha.

Everyone, who does not become an arahat in this life, will go through more rounds in the cycle of existence. In doing so, it will be difficult for them to attain favorable states of existence without practicing generosity in the present life. Even if they happen to gain a good rebirth, they will find themselves lacking in material possessions, without which they cannot do meritorious deeds. Therefore, this is most important for those who still have to go on this long journey of samsara, to cultivate generosity. Among the travelers in the round of this cycle of samsara, Bodhisattas are the greatest individuals. Among receiving a definite prophecy from a Buddha of his gaining Buddhahood, a Bodhisatta continues to fulfill the perfections for the attainment of omniscience (sabbaññuta-ñña) for four incalculable world cycles plus a hundred thousand aeons.

In the Dakkināvibhanga sutta of the Uparipannāsa, Majjhima Nikaya, the buddha taught seven kinds of gifts to be made to Sangha, the community of Bhikkhus, and fourteen kinds of gift to be made to individual recipients it is pointed out with regard to fourteen kinds of gifts made to individual recipients, the merit gained increases according to the recipient going up from the lowliest animals to the highest beings; the most meritorious gift is, of course, that made to the community of Bhikkhus.

Then again in the Ankura Peta story of Peta Vatthu, said when the Buddha taught the Abhidhamma in the deva on the throne, two devas, *Indaka and Ankura*, went to listen to the discourse. Whenever powerful devas arrived, Ankura had to make way for them and move back until he was ten *yojanas* away from the Buddha. But Indaka remained in his seat; he did not have to move. The reason is as follows: at the time when the life span was ten thousand years, Ankura was a human being and was very rich. Throughout that life he made offerings of meals to large numbers of ordinary people, cooking the meals on fireplaces which stretched for twelve *yojanas*. Because of the merit gained, he had taken

rebirth as a deva. Indaka, however became a deva because he had offered a spoonful of rice to Arahāt Anuruddha.

Although the offering Indaka had made was just a spoonful of rice, the recipient was an arahāt and the merit he thus acquired was great and noble. Thus, as an equal of the powerful deva, he did not have to make way for them. On the other hand, although Ankura had made large amounts of gifts over a very long period of time, the recipients were worldings and consequently the beneficial result that accrued was not a high order. And he had to move back every time a powerful deva arrived. There, we find in the Pali text the exhortation: 'Vieya danam databbam yatha dinnam mahapphaam' which chosen as the recipient.

On this sutta are meant for ordinary people or devas, whereas the discussions in the Chronicle of Buddha are directed exclusively to the Boddhisattas whose goal is attainment of omniscience (sabbaññāta -ñāna). Therefore, giving of alms to whoever comes along to receive them without any discrimination is the habitual practice of Boddhisatta who are bent on attainment of sabbaññāta nñāna. On the other hand, the aim of ordinary wordings, devas or human, in practicing generosity is to gain worldly comforts of their liking, and as such, it is natural that they would choose

The great alms-giving

After contemplating thus on renunciation in the light of these similes, once again it occurred to Sumedha the wise: "having amassed this much of wealth, my father, grandfather and other kinsmen of mine of seven generations were unable to take even a single coin with them when they passed away. But I should find some means of taking this wealth with me up to Nibbāna." Then he went to the king and said, "your majesty, since my mind is obsessed with a great dread of the dangers and suffering springing from such things as birth, old age, etc., I am going to leave the household life and become a recluse. I have wealth worth several crores. Please take possession of it."

"I do not desire your wealth. You may dispose of it in any way you wish," replied the king. "very well, your majesty," said Sumedha the wise and, with the beating of the mighty drum, he had it proclaimed all over the city of Amaravati: "let those who want my riches come and take them." And he gave away his wealth, in a great alms-giving, to all without distinction of status and whether they be destitute or otherwise.

Offering of Alms-meal to the Buddha by wanderer Saccaka

When Buddha had thus explained the exalted state of the fruit of Arahatta, Saccaka addressed him:

"Oh venerable Gotama....we have, indeed, offended you and were impudent to think that we could dispute your views and refute them. We have tried to disparage you with harsh and discourteous words. Oh venerable Gotama... for example, a person might find safety after attacking an elephant in a must. But there could be no safety for a man attacking the honourable Gotama. Oh, venerable Gotama.... A man who attacks a blazing mass of fire might find safety but there could be no safety for a man attacking the honourable Gotama. Oh, venerable Gotama... a man who attacks a dreadful and poisonous snake might find safety, but there could be no safety for a man attacking the honourable Gotama. Oh, venerable Gotama... we have, indeed, offended you and were impudent to think that we could dispute your views and refute them. We have tried to disparage you with harsh and discourteous words."

Saccaka said "there could be no safety for a man attacking the honourable Gotama." This meant that anyone, who chanced to pass strictures on the venerable Gotama in a debate on views, cannot escape from being destroyed and had to depart with his views completely demolished. It should be noted that the Buddha had not caused harm to the life of anyone, like a big elephant, a great bon-fire or a venomous snake.

Saccaka had made such a statement, with three similes, not intending to praise the Buddha, but to blow his own trumpet. For example, a king, who had caused the death of an enemy might speak highly of the defeated by remarks, such as: "that man is such a brave and courageous one", just to glorify his feat of arms.

Saccaka had, in like manner, praised the Buddha, who was difficult to be approached by an ordinary being, by the similes of a big elephant, a great bon-fire and a venomous snake, just to show that he was the only wise man with great courage to have challenged the Buddha to a debate on views.

When saccaka had thus indirectly praised himself, he turned to the Buddha and presented an invitation: "Venerable Gotama.. may the honourable Gotama be pleased to accept my offering of alms-meal, together with the community of bhikkhus at my place tomorrow". The Buddha accepted his invitation by keeping silent. Saccaka then turned to the Licchavi princes and said: "Let Licchavi princes listen to me. The Venerable Gotama has accepted my invitation to the food offering ceremony at my place tomorrow. You might bring me whatever you think is suitable for them." When the night passed, they all brought five hundred pots of cooked food to him. Then saccaka, having made ready sumptuous food, hard and soft at his place, sent a messenger to inform the Buddha: "Oh venerable, it is time for meal; the alms-food is ready."

Then in the morning, the Buddha, having rearranged his robes and taking his alms-bowl and robe, went to the place of saccaka and took the seat prepared for him, together with the community of bhikkhus. Saccaka served, with his own hand, sumptuous food, both hard and soft, to the bhikkhus headed by the Buddha, till they were completely satisfied and could not take any more. When saccaka knew that the Buddha had finished taking the meal, he sat down in a suitable place and addressed him:

"Oh Gotama may the main beneficial result accruing from this dāna and the subsidiary consequences of this great offering be for the wellbeing of the donors (i.e. the Licchavis)."

Saccaka had made such wish under the impression that only licchavi prince were entitled to enjoy the fruits of the act of merit, which was performed with the food donated by them. But it was saccaka himself who should enjoy the reward because he had actually made the offering to the Buddha and the sangha with what he had received from the Licchavi princes. The Buddha therefore removed his wrong impression by saying:

"Wanderer saccaka, the merit goes to the Licchavi princes for gifts offered to a recipient like you, who is not free from raga, dosa and moha. Saccaka, the merit goes to you for gifts offered to a recipient like me, who is free from raga, dosa and moha." Thus the Buddha impressed upon his mind the idea of consequences of deed of merit.

Verañjā's Great Alms-giving

After the departure of the Buddha, the Brahmin *Veranja* summoned all his family members and other inmates of the house to a meeting, at which he said: "dear ones, I have offered not a single day's meal to the Buddha though I invited him to stay here for the three months of *vassa*. Let us now offer alms meant for the three months *vassa* period in a day tomorrow." Having given instructions thus, the Brahmin had excellent food cooked, and next morning he had his place decorated and seats worthy of Noble ones prepared. After setting up exquisite offering of perfumes and flowers, he sent for the Buddha with the word: "It is meal time now, ven. gotama, the food is ready".

Accompanied by his hundred monks, the Buddha arrived at veranja's house and sat together with them on the seats prepared. Veranja personally served the order of monks, headed by the Buddha, with delicious meals until they were satisfied and refused to take more. As the Buddha removed his hand from the alms-bowl after finishing the meal, veranja offered him a set of three robes which worth three thousand. To each monk too, he offered a set of two pieces of cloth to make robes. As he was not satisfied with this much of his offering, the Brahmin veranja offered again a large number of rugs, bolts of cloth made in Puttunna country, each costing seven or eight thousand, so that they might be cut and made into garments of double layers, shoulder coverings, waistbands, water strainers, etc.

He also gave each monk, jugs and bottles filled with medicinal ointment heated a hundred or thousand times and worth one thousand. There was nothing left out from the four requisites he presented for their use. He gave away in charity all the necessaries to the monks. Having done such a great alms-giving, the Brahmin sat down together with his wife and children, respectfully doing obeisance to the Buddha. Owing to Māra's magic, he had lost the opportunity of enjoying the taste of immortality in the form of a discourse throughout the *vassa*. In order to make up the brahmin's loss and

to fulfill his wish, Buddha let the rain of immortality fall heavily in a single day. He preached the double advantage for the present life and the next and established him in meritorious deeds. Finally, the Buddha made veranja zealous and delighted in good deeds, and left the place.

Together with his wife, veranja respectfully raised his hands in adoration towards the Buddha and his assembly of monks and followed them to see them off, requesting: "Exalted Buddha, kindly do another favour by visiting us once again." Then the Brahmin returned with tears trickling from his eyes. After staying in veranja for as long as he wished, the Buddha left the city. Being desirous of reducing the great circular journey, he led the monks, who had been so tired and fatigued because of the scarcity of food during the whole vassa, along the direct route, by passing Sorreyya, Sankassa, and Kannakujja cities. On arrival at Vesāli the Buddha so journeyed at Kutigara in the forest of Mahāvana.

Matchless offering organized by Mallikā

Queen Mallikā shall try to organize her charity. Having encouraged the king thus, the queen gave her advice as she was desirous of taking the management of the Matchless alms-giving (asadisa-dana) in the following manner:

"Have a pavilion, great king, built with fragrant planks of sāla-kalyānī trees for the five hundred monks in the precincts of the golden palace. The people will stay outside the precincts.

"Have five hundred white umbrellas made; each of five hundred elephants will take hold of one umbrella with its trunk, and stand, sheltering each monk with it.

"Have eight boats made of nīphalam gold. These boats are to be filled with perfumes in the middle of pavilion.

"Between each couple of monks will sit a princess grinding scented wood for perfumes. Another princess will hold a round fan and flap it for each couple of monks. Other princesses will convey ground perfumes and put them in the boats.

"Among these princesses, some will carry branches of blue lotus flowers and stir the perfumes in the boats so that they will be pervaded with the fragrance from the perfumes.

"Certainly, the people have no princesses, no white umbrellas, no elephants. For these reasons the citizens will be defeated.

"Do, great king, as I now have told you."

Replying: "very well, my dear, you have given me good advice," the king had everything done according to the queen's instructions. While everything was being done accordingly, a tame elephant was yet required for a monk. Then the king asked: "A tamed elephant is wanted, dear queen. What shall we do? 'have you no 500 elephants?'" "Yes, I have dear. But the rest are all untamed. Like the verambha wind they might turn very wild on seeing monks." "I have got an idea, great king, as to where should a young wild elephant be placed to make him hold and umbrella with his trunk." "Where is the place?" "It is close the ven. Angulimāla," answered the queen.

The king had all this done as advised by the queen. The young wild elephant stood there quietly with his tail tucked between its thighs, its ears put down, and eyes closed. The people were amazed to watch the elephant, saying to themselves: "Even such as wild elephant has now become such a docile and quiet animal"

Having treated the sangha headed by the Buddha to alms-food, the king showed his respect to him and said:

"In this pavilion of alms-giving, Exalted Buddha, I offer to you things suitable for monks as well as things unsuitable for them. Things offered in this matchless dāna in a single day cost fourteen crores. Priceless were the four things offered to the Buddha, namely,

1. The white umbrella,
2. The throne for seat
3. The stand to place the bowl on and
4. The wooden board to stand on after washing his feet.

It was impossible to repeat such a grand offering to the Buddha. Therefore the alm-giving performed by king Kosala became famous in the religion as asadisa-dana, the "matchless gift." Indeed,

such an Asadisa Dana should take place but once to every Buddha. And that asadisa dana which happened just once to each Buddha was organized by a wise woman.

Dāna-kathā

Dāna-kathā, the Dhamma concerning charity: a good deed of dāna is the cause of happiness in the present existence, in the next existence and of the bliss of Nibbāna. It is the primary cause of all kinds of pleasures of devas and humans. It is also the source of material sense objects (ārammana-vatthus) and the wellbeing resulting from the use of these objects. For beings endangered by misfortune, it is also a good guardian, a place of safety, a resort and refuge. In the present existence, as well as in the next, there is nothing like dana to learn on, to stand on, to cling to as a good guardian, a place of safety, a resort, and refuge.

Truly, this deed of dana is like the gem-studded lion throne, for it is to lean on; like the great earth, for it is to stand on; like the rope for the blind to hold on as a support, for it is to cling to. To continue; this meritorious act of dana is like the ship for crossing over the misery of suffering (*apāyabhūmi-duggati*). It is also like an army commander of valour in the battle-field since it can ward off or give relief from the danger of the enemies such as *lobha and macchariya*, etc. it is also like a well-guarded city since it can give protection from the danger of poverty. It is also like a lotus-flower since it is not smeared with the dirt of unwholesomeness such as jealousy and stinginess. It is also like fire since it can burn the rubbish of *akusala* such as *issa* and *macchariya*. It is also like a poisonous snake since it is of difficult access to the unwholesome enemies. It is also like a lion king since it can free one from fear. Being of enormous strength, it is like a large elephant. It is like a bull (*usabha*) of pure white colour since it is considered by learned persons as a sign of auspiciousness auguring extreme and particular prosperity both here and hereafter, it is also like a king of aerial horses (*valahaka sindhava*) since it can transport one from the evil ground of four misfortunes (*vipattis*) to the danger-free good ground of four fortunes (*sampattis*).

"This deed of dāna is also the good and true path which, I, the Buddha, have walked on. It is also the one, with which, I, the Buddha, have been related to. I have performed great acts of charity, such as those of *velama*, those of *Mahagovindo*, those of *Mahasuda ssana*, and those of *vessantara*, when I was practicing and fulfilling the perfections (*pāramīs*). In my existence as the virtuous hare, a *Bodhisatta*, I had completely won the hearts of the doness by giving away in charity my own body in the blazing heap of fire." (Here, *Sakka*, the deva king, in the guise of a begging Brahmin, had his mind fixed continually on the courage shown by the wise hare, the *Bodhisatta*, in his performance of generous act without any distraction. Hence the Buddha's words, "I had completely won the hearts of the doness" is a rhetorical way of indirect saying (*vankavutti*) that politely implies *sakka's* contemplation of the *Bodhisatta's* boldness in dāna. Here, by means of the words: "by giving away in charity my own body, "the Buddha gave the advice thus: "the *Bodhisattas*, knowing too well about the merit of dāna, even gave away their lives in charity. In view of this, should the wise have attachment to an external object, *bāhira-vatthu*? Certainly they should not.")

"Furthermore, the merit of dāna is capable of bringing the luxury of a *sakka*, the luxury of a *Māra*, the luxury of a *brahmā* and the luxury of a universal monarch (*cakkavutti*) in the mundane world. It is also capable of bringing the enlightened knowledge (*Bodhi-ñāna*) of a *sāvaka*, of a *paccekabuddha* and of the supreme Buddha in a supramundane world." In this manner, the Buddha taught the rich merchant's son, *Yassa*, the dhamma concerning dāna.

The value of Generosity (Dāna)

Concerning the value of giving or generosity, the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (A.IV.79) presents a number of different worldly benefits of giving. It explains that a generous person gets so many worldly remunerations including friendship and sympathies. For instance, if one donates almsgiving to a community of *bhikkhus*, he is bound to gain sympathies and blessings. It is even believed that his name will reach higher heights and go far beyond valleys and mountains. Such a person is also believed to be reborn in happiness after death. On the same subject, another sutta (A. III, 41) adds that such a person

wins popularity. People of higher dignity easily associate with him. It is agreed that such a person confers to others life, happiness strength and intelligence and therefore, he becomes a beneficiary of himself on them. In other words, both the donor and recipient are beneficiaries.

The Buddhist canonic Pali literature asserts that it is not possible to estimate the amount of merit one acquires when he offers with the six particular characteristics (A. III, 336). Of these characteristics, three of them go to the donor and the other three belong to the recipient. Moreover, it is paramount to note herein that the donor should be happy prior to giving. And when an offering is made with a thought of happiness, one gains a thought of nobility without a sense of greed either before, during or after making an offering. This doesn't only bring happiness, but also makes the gift truly majestic. On the other hand, the recipient is also expected to be free from hatred, lust and delusion, in other words, a recipient ought to have qualities like those of the giver. The results that each one of them cultivates are believed to be colossal.

The attainment of happiness and freeing oneself from attachments motivated men in the ancient India during the times of the Buddha to give charity to recluses and Brahamins which are mentioned in the suttas of Digha Nikāya and Aṅguttara Nikāya (D.III, P.258-259, and A.IV, P.239). There are eight reasons explained. A Brahamin or Khattiya wealthy man was seen by an ordinary man living in comfort and luxury, and he too, wished to live in such fortune in his next life, and he gave alms to Brahamins and recluses. And when another man heard about the happiness of Cātummahārājika gods, he wished for such prosperity in the next life, and he gave selflessly to recluses and Brahamins. Another one heard of the happiness of the heavenly gods of thirty three (Tāvatiṃsa) and wishing he had such happiness and comforts, he is motivated to give abundantly to recluses and Brahamins. In another way, another man heard about the happiness of the gods of Yāma heaven, the other that of the Tusita heaven, another one, that of the Nimmanarati heaven, another one, that of the Paranimitavasavatti gods, the other, that of the Brahmakāyika gods, all wishing for such happiness and prosperity in the next life, and they donated to Brahamins and recluses with genuine compassion. However, the Buddha cautioned that such wishes are attained only when people practice virtuousness and alongside generosity. For the above reasons therefore, there is no doubt as to why generosity is so much valued in Buddhism. In Buddhism, generosity is mostly linked with virtue. It is understood that giving helps one get exonerated of selfishness which makes one resentful and unacceptable to most people in society. It is said that if one gives, he makes friends (dadaṃ mātṭini ganthati, Suttanipata V.187). Therefore, generosity helps one to overcome selfishness and makes one accepted to many people in society.

Generosity therefore, is given much more value Buddhism with two major aims. Firstly, it is believed that when one practices giving he will no longer have attachments like craving for possession and will be in a position to give away anything with love and compassion. Such a person completely puts an end to suffering in Saṃsāra by becoming an arahant. Secondly, it is held that such a person who gives freely with love and compassion contributes to maintaining a healthy relationship in the society. This is because; the happiness and progress of a society rely on the attitude of its members towards one another. Buddhists are so conscious that a society in which its members live in misery, absence of mutual understanding or cooperation, and without sympathies towards one another can never witness happiness and success in their respective society. Henceforth, it is substantial that Buddhists value and emphasize the practice of generosity due to the fact that it links the gap amongst people, builds a healthy society by instigating mutual cooperation and understanding.

Five kinds of alms giving

There are 5 benefits, or blessings, from the practice of generosity

1. Everybody will like you.
2. All your friends will be good people.
3. You will have a good reputation.
4. You will have lots of self-confidence.
5. You will have a heavenly rebirth. (Anguttara V. 34)

Five kind of benefit of alms giving

1. beauty
2. long life
3. happy
4. power or authority
5. wisdom

CONCLUSION

In Buddhism alms giving is very popular and important for their life because they belief that is the basis of the teaching of the Buddha. However, to liberate from suffering to get happiness only three way;

1. Dana = giving
2. Sila = morality
3. Bhavana = meditation

Those are the main things to observe for everyone so that to get Nibbana. Even the Buddha himself, he had been giving for alms several lives in Jataka stories as we understand. In Buddhism, generosity is mostly linked with virtue. It is understood that giving helps one get exonerated of selfishness which makes one resentful and unacceptable to most people in society. It is said that if one gives, he makes friends (*dadaṃ māttini ganthati*, Suttanipata V.187). Therefore, generosity helps one to overcome selfishness and makes one accepted to many people in society. The more you give dana, the more you will get happiness the present life. Whether the social and coutlual concomitants are systematically tied to Buddhism belief and knowledge, or whether the social structure and Buddhist belief grew up together in the particular ecological and historical setting of Sri Lanka, Myanmar is a question to be resolved only through comparative study with the local traditions of Buddhism as they are found in the Theravada countries of southeast Asia. The set of formal features selected here to define the religious system and the posited connections between religion and society will provide either a foundation for future construction, or a scaffold to be dismantled. Understanding the benefits of dana, one should always strive to be kind and generous. Even the smallest kindness can yield abundant fruit one day. The Buddha said that even throwing away some food with the idea of allowing small creatures to feed on it is a noble gesture that can yield some remarkable kammic result one-day. Emphasizing on the merits of giving, the Buddha said: "Monks, if beings knew, as I know, the ripening of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess their heart and stay there. Even if it were the last bit, they last morsel of food, they would not enjoy its use without sharing it, if there were anyone to receive it. But in as much, monks, as beings do not know, as I know, the ripening of sharing gifts, therefore they enjoy their use without sharing them, and the taint of stinginess obsesses their heart and stays there." If we are unable to give now, it may be because in our past lives we have been obsessed by the taint of stinginess. So if we don't want to have the same habit again in the future we should start to cultivate the habit of giving now. The Buddha praised one who is accomplished in generosity (*caga-sampada*). Such a person, the Buddha said, "dwells with heart free from the stain of avarice, devoted to charity, open-handed, delighting in generosity, attending to the needy, delighting in the distribution of alms." So let us share, each according to our ability. Let us cultivate the spirit and joy of giving, bringing happiness and cheer into the lives of our fellowmen.

"Miser do not go to heaven; Fools indeed do not praise liberality But the wise rejoice in giving and thereby gain happiness thereafter" Dhammapada 177

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