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NAYAKA THERA'S MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF KATHINA CEREMONY

Dear Dhamma Friends,

Today, we all have gathered in our temple to celebrate this year *Kathina Puja* - Robe Offering Ceremony. It is one of the most important celebrations for the Theravada Buddhist monastics (*Sangha*) around the world. It has been a tradition from the time of the Blessed One to the present day to celebrate this robe-offering ceremony with profound respect and devotion to the sangha, who have spent three months in the monastery observing the *Vassa*. The Blessed One has emphasized the significance of this ceremony. So, it is very essential to have an understanding about this ceremony when we participate in such event in order for us to benefit from it. Let us understand the meaning of *Kathina* and why is it an important occasion to acquire merit for oneself and others.

In its simplest definition, *Kathina* means unshakable, strong, hard, solid or durable. It is not the robe that one offers that is durable or solid but the result or merit that one receives from this meritorious deed that is solid and durable. This day is also considered a "*Sangha Day*" because it is a day of offering, not only the special robe but all the requisites to the sangha. This way the whole community is able to benefit from this very meritorious acts because it involves everyone to practice this noble act, so it is important to understand that it is a community event.

Kathina is a significant event because it is celebrated only one time a year in a particular temple and it brings much merit to both the sangha as well as the devotees.

Few conditions should be fulfilled to make this event meritorious. First the devotees need to invite the sangha to observe the three months rains retreat from July full moon to October Full moon. This year on behalf of the whole Buddhist community, Devinidi and her family did the invitation. Then for the benefit of many devotees and dhamma practitioners they pledged to support the sangha in the four requisites. Then the sangha needs to complete the

three months retreat paying more attention to their practice. This gives an opportunity to build mutual relationship between the *sangha* and the lay devotees. While the *sangha* dedicated their time to practice, the devotees and dhamma practitioners too were given the opportunity to dedicate their time to the practice. This was done by having weekly meditation and sutta discussion session, monthly day long retreats, monthly poya observance and weekly Atavisi Buddha Puja to develop inner peace, joy and happiness.

Thank you for your support and dedication to make this event a successful one. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the supporters, contributors and volunteers for renovating the other property of the temple.

May the blessing of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha be with you always. May you all have good health, peace and happiness.

With metta,

Venerable Witiyala Seewalie Nayaka Thera
Abbot / President,
Minnesota Buddhist Vihara



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GENEROSITY - DANA - GIVING

By Bhikkhuni Satima

“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)

Dana is the first teachings in the Blessed Ones system of gradual training – Dana, sila and bhavana - and the first of the ten paramis.

The Blessed One in His teachings first taught dana - the act of giving - to the lay people. Dana means the practice and cultivation of generosity. Generosity is the perfection of giving. It is unattached, unconditional giving and letting go. It is the wanting, the desire to give, without expecting anything in return – not even a thank you. The practice of dana or generosity will result in rebirth in happy states and also in material wealth here and now. In the teachings it is stated that the more we give, without seeking anything in return the wealthier we will become. By giving we reduce the unwholesome defilements of greed, anger and delusion that are the causes of all suffering. When we are well grounded in generosity, our hearts are happy and joyous and we achieve much happiness here and now and also have a happy after life.

In Buddhism there are many words to describe generosity. Two of these words are dana and caga. Dana is giving - offering of gifts and Caga is the heart bent on giving or renunciation - the letting go. Dana, or giving, is very closely connected to kamma, or cause and effect. Caga describes the state of mind of the generous giver, or the desire to give. It is caga that is important for our meditation.

The Blessed One spoke of three types of generous

giving:

1. The miserly giving. This is when we give away things we no longer want.
2. The kindly giving. With kindly giving we give away what we would like to receive. Here we give with thoughtfulness and friendliness.
3. The highest form of giving is kingly giving. In kingly giving we give the very best of what we have at that time, material goods, love, kindness and compassion, body parts and even our lives.

When we give something, it does not matter how big or how small, what mostly matters is our state of mind. Since dana is mostly about nonattachment and loving-kindness, when we cultivate dana, our mind becomes lighter and more available to insight. It is through giving with a kind, loving heart that we develop our capacity to let go. As we let go we become freer, lighter, and happier. So always be kind, be gentle and make peace with yourself and everything around you.

In living our daily life in a wholesome way it is necessary to understand and know what dana means. It helps us to be kind and loving and caring to everyone that is around us and share what we have with them. Why we practice dana is to get rid of our attachment, our greed and our selfishness. Even though we practice dana as an act of liberation for ourselves yet it is not self-centered. True dana is the intention,



the wanting to give- the state of the mind before, during and after the act of giving.

What we give or how we give is up to us, as it can only come from our values and what we have to offer. What is most important is our genuine intention, even if that is simply a sincere wish that in time we will become more spontaneously generous.

Dana is not just giving money or sharing material possessions it is also practicing generous behavior in all aspects of our life, We can help others in other ways too whether it is shelter, food, clothes,

or medicine. Or with less immediate life needs, such as education, safety, or earning a living. Or the dana may be the gift of our time. But the highest gift of all is the Dhamma Dana. In daily life dana also means receiving each arising moment with a generous attitude and meeting it with patience that is based in spiritual practice, by being kind, gentle and making peace with whatever arises in that moment. When interacting with friends or strangers, we can give them our full attention as we listen to their words, and interpret their actions with sympathy.

The commemoration of Vesak - Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Passing away - was held in May 2013. It was a day for many devotees and Dhamma practitioners to participate in observing sila, especially Eight precepts, listening to noble dhamma and practicing meditation whole day at temple. Our guest monk, Venerable Maitipe Wimalasara was very kind to give a sermon on this occasion and conduct meditation sessions to enlighten us with insights.

PHOTOS FROM VESAK CELEBRATION 2013



In the Anguttara Nikaya the Blessed One gives the five rewards of giving:

One is dear and appealing to people at large, one is admired by good people, one's good name is spread about, one does not stray from the rightful duties of the householder, and with the break-up of the body at death, one reappears in a good destination, in the heavenly worlds.

Dana is the willingness to share what we have with others. It is a way to weaken greed and a way of helping others. The Blessed One has a great deal to say about giving and sharing. Dana is not only making offerings to monks and nuns, the Blessed One said we could give to guests, to those setting out on a journey, to the sick, the hungry, the poor and to monks, nuns or spiritual teachers. The Jataka says: 'From little give a little, from middling give middling and from much give much. There is no excuse for giving nothing.' (Ja.V,387). It's said that if one rinses one's food leftover in the lake and wishes "Let the fish eat this leftover", he/she has practiced dana [AN 3.57]. Whatever we give we need to give with respect, thoughtfully, with our own hands if possible, give things that will be of benefit to the recipient and after having considered how our gift might benefit them (A.III,172).

When we offer food as dana we are actually giving nourishment, beauty, happiness, strength and wisdom and in giving these five things we also receive them both now and later.

Practicing dana, whether it is giving material

goods, energy, emotional, or wisdom will only make our life better. We need to start practicing in small ways then gradually spread our generosity so that we can do it all the time. At first our dana comes from our desire to help others, then it evolves into a more heartfelt experience.

There is a reverse side to dana that is often neglected—the practice of receiving generosity. Many people are better at giving than receiving it. It is a difficult practice for some to receive as that calls upon one to be both vulnerable and humble.

The cultivation of Dana is the beginning of spiritual life. It has a lot of power as it arises from an inner quality of letting go. Being able to let go, to give up, to renounce, and to give generously all come from the same source. Letting go gives us freedom and many loving ways to express that freedom. Dana is the beginning of the path. When the Blessed One taught, he always began with dana, then sila and bhavana. It was only after their minds were receptive and mature that He spoke of the Four Noble Truths.

A true spiritual life is not possible without the practice of Dana. The path begins with Dana because of the joy that arises from being generous. With the practice of dana joy and happiness fills the heart. We experience joy in forming the intention to give, in the actual act of giving, and in recollecting the fact that we've given. Practicing joyful giving, we experience confidence. We grow in self-esteem, self-respect and well-being. This happiness, self-respect and spaciousness are of help to us in our practice of meditation.



The only wealth that is left with us when we leave this world is the joyful giving that we did, not the material wealth.

‘So when the world is on fire
with aging and death,
one should salvage [one’s wealth] by giving:
what’s given is well salvaged.

What’s given bears fruit as pleasure.

What isn’t given does not:

thieves take it away, or kings;
it gets burnt by fire or lost.’

— SN 1.41

May you all learn to give with a heart full of love and compassion according to what we have. Little or much does not matter, the giving with a pure heart with love and compassion without any attachment is all that matters.

May all beings be well and happy! May you all be well and happy!

Sadhu! Sadhu!! Sadhu!!!

VAS ARADHANA 2013

On behalf of all devotees, this year, Devindi and her family respectfully invited venerable monks to observe Rains Retreat at Minnesota Buddhist Vihara. During these three months retreat, many devotees and practitioners got an opportunity to acquire lots of merit by participating in weekly Atavisi Buddha puja, monthly one-day meditation retreat, monthly full moon observance, weekly meditation and sutta discussions. Thank you for your support and dedication.



MNBV EVENTS JOURNAL

—MAY TO OCT. 2013—

<i>June 23</i>	Students from St. Paul	meditation at BRC, SD	with students at St. Paul
Students from Metro	College to discuss Bud-	<i>September 30</i>	College
State University to dis-	dham	Dhamma talk and medi-	<i>October 25</i>
uss Buddhism	<i>September 23</i>	tation at SDSP, SD	Maha Pirith Chanting
<i>July 7</i>	Online discussion on	<i>October 11</i>	at Minnesota Buddhist
Students from MCTC	Buddhism with stu-	Discussion on Bud-	Vihara
to discuss Buddhism	dents at Northwestern	dham with students at	<i>October 26</i>
<i>August 3</i>	College, Iowa City	Wellstone High School	Kathina Ceremony at
Students from Metro	<i>September 28</i>	<i>October 13</i>	Minnesota Buddhist
State University to dis-	Students from Crown	Students from MCTC to	Vihara
uss Buddhism	College to discuss Bud-	discuss Buddhism	<i>October 27</i>
<i>August 11</i>	dham	<i>October 20</i>	Dhamma talk and medi-
Dhamma talk and	<i>September 29</i>	Students from Metro	tation at BRC, SD
Meditation at BRC, SD	Students from St. Paul	State University and	<i>October 28</i>
<i>August 12</i>	College to discuss Bud-	MCTC to discuss Bud-	Dhamma talk and medi-
Dhamma talk and	dham	dham	tation at SDSP, SD
meditation at SDSP, SD	<i>September 29</i>	<i>October 22</i>	
<i>September 8</i>	Dhamma talk and	Dhamma Discussion	

PHOTOS FROM OTHER EVENTS



Dhamma School



Dhamma School



Full Moon Day Retreat



Weekly Sutta Discussion



Sanchi Thorana



Renovation of temple



Renovation of temple

DHAMMIKA SUTTA: DHAMMIKA

Translated by John D. Ireland

Thus have I heard. At one time the Lord was staying near Savatthi in the Jeta Grove at Anathapindika's monastery. Now the lay-follower Dhammika with five hundred other lay-followers approached the Lord. Having drawn near and having saluted the Lord respectfully he sat down at one side. Sitting there the lay-follower Dhammika addressed the Lord as follows:

"I ask Gotama of extensive wisdom this: How acting is a disciple virtuous — both the disciple who has gone from home to the homeless state and the followers who are householders? For you clearly understand the behavior of the world with the devas and the final release. There is none equal to you who are skilled in seeing what is profound. You are an illustrious Awakened One (Buddha). Having investigated all knowledge and being compassionate towards beings you have announced the Dhamma, a revealer of what is hidden, of comprehensive vision, stainless, you illuminate all the worlds.

"This Dhamma, subtle and pleasing and taught so clearly by you, Lord, it is this we all wish to hear. Having been questioned, foremost Awakened One, tell us (the answer). All these bhikkhus and also the layfollowers who have come to hear the truth, let them listen to the Dhamma awakened to (anubuddham) by the Stainless One as the devas listen to the well-spoken words of Vasava."

(The Lord:) "Listen to me, bhikkhus, I will teach you the ascetic practice (dhamma dhamma), the mode of living suitable for those who have gone forth. Do you all bear it in mind. One who is intent upon what is good and who is thoughtful should practice it.

"A bhikkhu should not wander about at the wrong time but should walk the village for food at the right time, as one who goes about at the wrong time is (liable to be) obsessed by attachment, therefore Awakened Ones do not walk (for alms) at the wrong time. Sights, sounds, tastes, scents and bodily contacts overwhelm (the minds of) beings. Being rid of desire for these sense objects, at the right time, one may enter (the village) for the morning meal. Having duly obtained food, going back alone and sitting down in a secluded place, being inwardly thoughtful and not letting the mind go out to external objects, a bhikkhu should develop self-control.

"If he should speak with a lay-disciple, with someone else or with another bhikkhu, he should speak on the subtle Dhamma, not slandering others nor gossiping. Some set themselves up as disputants in opposition to others; those of little wisdom we do not praise; attachments bind them and they are carried away by their emotions.

"Having heard the Dhamma taught by the Sugata and considered it, a disciple of Him of excellent wisdom should wisely make use of food, a dwelling, a bed, a seat and water for washing the robe. But a bhikkhu should not be soiled by (clinging to) these things, as a lotus is not wetted by a drop of water.

"Now I will tell you the layman's duty. Following it a lay-disciple

would be virtuous; for it is not possible for one occupied with the household life to realize the complete bhikkhu practice (dhamma).

"He should not kill a living being, nor cause it to be killed, nor should he incite another to kill. Do not injure any being, either strong or weak, in the world.

"A disciple should avoid taking anything from anywhere knowing it (to belong to another). He should not steal nor incite another to steal. He should completely avoid theft.

"A wise man should avoid unchastity as (he would avoid falling into) a pit of glowing charcoal. If unable to lead a celibate life, he should not go to another's wife.

"Having entered a royal court or a company of people he should not speak lies. He should not speak lies (himself) nor incite others to do so. He should completely avoid falsehood.

"A layman who has chosen to practice this Dhamma should not indulge in the drinking of intoxicants. He should not drink them nor encourage others to do so; realizing that it leads to madness. Through intoxication foolish people perform evil deeds and cause other heedless people to do likewise. He should avoid intoxication, this occasion for demerit, which stupefies the mind, and is the pleasure of foolish people.

Do not kill a living being;
do not take what is not given;
do not speak a lie;
do not drink intoxicants;
abstain from sexual intercourse;
do not eat food at night, at the wrong time;
do not wear flower-garlands nor use perfumes;
use the ground as a bed or sleep on a mat.
"This is called the eight-factored observance made known by the Awakened One who has reached the end of suffering.

"With a gladdened mind observe the observance day (uposatha), complete with its eight factors, on the fourteenth, fifteenth and eighth days of the (lunar) fortnight and also the special holiday of the half month. In the morning, with a pure heart and a joyful mind, a wise man, after observing the uposatha, should distribute suitable food and drink to the community of bhikkhus. He should support his mother and father as his duty and engage in lawful trading. A layman who carries this out diligently goes to the devas called "Self-radiant."

"Dhammika Sutta: Dhammika" (Sn 2.14), translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland. Access to Insight, 30 August 2012, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.2.14.irel.html> . Retrieved on 23 October 2013.

BHOOMI PUJA PROJECT

We initiated the “Bhoomi Puja Project” in 2010 to pay off the principle of temple mortgage and continue to the present day. We would like to convey our thanks to all those who have supported and continuously supporting whenever possible. We also encourage others to be part of this project to fulfill our dream in near future.

For more information, please visit our website: www.mnbv.org
or contact us by email: mnbuddhist@gmail.com
or by phone @ 612-522-1811

The objective of MN Buddhist Vihara is to provide Spiritual, Cultural, Scientific, and Educational activities to the Community.

The Minnesota Buddhist Vihara is a 501 C (3) charity registered with the State of Minnesota since March 30, 2004.

Development of the Vihara and its activities depend solely on your support. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

All your donations are Federal and State tax deductible. The MN Buddhist Vihara will issue receipts for all your donations at the end of year.



Just as a tree cut at the top
will shoot up
when its roots remain unharmed,
even so will suffering
crop up again and again
when the latent dispositions of
craving are not up-rooted.

Dhammapada 338

You are most welcome to join our:

Dhamma School • Weekly Meditation Group • Sutta Discussion Class
Meditation Retreats • Monthly Sil Observance • Volunteer Activities