

The Discourse giving the Analysis of Offerings

(Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasuttam, MN 142)

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The Setting

Thus I heard:

at one time the Gracious One was dwelling amongst the Sakyas, near to Kapilavatthu, in Nigrodha's Monastery. Then Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, having taken a new pair of robes approached the Gracious One, and after approaching and worshipping the Gracious One, she sat down on one side. While sitting on one side Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said this to the Gracious One: "This new pair of robes, reverend Sir, is for the Gracious One, I have cut them myself, I have sewn them myself. Please accept this from me, reverend Sir, Gracious One, taking compassion (on me)."

After that was said, the Gracious One said this to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī: "Give them to the Community, Gotamī, when you have given them to the Community, you will have offered them to me and the Community."

For a second time Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said this to the Gracious One: "This new pair of robes, reverend Sir, is for the Gracious One, I have cut them myself, I have sewn them myself. Please accept this from me, reverend Sir, Gracious One, taking compassion (on me)."

For a second time the Gracious One said this to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī: "Give them to the Community, Gotamī, when you have given them to the Community, you will have offered them to me and the Community."

For a third time Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī said this to the Gracious One: "This new pair of robes, reverend Sir, is for the Gracious One, I have cut them myself, I have sewn them myself. Please accept this from me, reverend Sir, Gracious One, taking compassion (on me)."

For a third time the Gracious One said this to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī: "Give them to the Community, Gotamī, when you have given them to the Community, you will have offered them to me and the Community."

Ānanda's Intercession

After this was said, venerable Ānanda said this to the Gracious One: "Please accept, reverend Sir, Gracious One, the new pair of robes from Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, reverend Sir, has been a big help to the Gracious One, as Mother's Sister, foster-mother, step-mother, wet-nurse. When your Mother passed away she suckled the Gracious One with mother's milk. Also the Gracious One, reverend Sir, has been a big help to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.

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Because of the Gracious One, reverend Sir, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has gone for refuge to the Buddha, has gone for refuge to the Dhamma, has gone for refuge to the Community.

Because of the Gracious One, reverend Sir, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī refrains from killing living creatures, refrains from taking what has not been given, refrains from sexual misconduct, refrains from false speech, refrains from liquors, wines, or intoxicants which cause heedlessness.

Because of the Gracious One, reverend Sir, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is endowed with perfect confidence in the Buddha, is endowed with perfect confidence in the Dhamma, is endowed with perfect confidence in the Community, is endowed with the virtue that is agreeable to the Ariyas.

Because of the Gracious One, reverend Sir, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī has no doubt about suffering, has no doubt about the arising of suffering, has no doubt about the cessation of suffering, has no doubt about the practice leading to the end of suffering. The Gracious One, reverend Sir, has been a big help to Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.”

The Buddha’s Reply

“Just so, Ānanda, just so, Ānanda. For the person, Ānanda, who because of another person has gone for refuge to the Buddha, has gone for refuge to the Dhamma, has gone for refuge to the Community, Ānanda, it is not easy for that person to be repaid by the (other) person, I say, that is to say: with worship, rising from one’s seat, reverential salutation, homage, gifts of robes, alms-food, dwellings, and requisites of medicine for support when sick.

For the person, Ānanda, who because of another person has refrained from killing living creatures, has refrained from taking what has not been given, has refrained from sexual misconduct, has refrained from false speech, has refrained from liquors, wines, or intoxicants which cause heedlessness, Ānanda, it is not easy for that person to be repaid by the (other) person, I say, that is to say: with worship, rising from one’s seat, reverential salutation, homage, gifts of robes, alms-food, dwellings, and requisites of medicine for support when sick.

For the person, Ānanda, who because of another person is endowed with perfect confidence in the Buddha, is endowed with perfect confidence in the Dhamma, is endowed with perfect confidence in the Community, is endowed with the virtue that is agreeable to the Ariyas, Ānanda, it is not easy for that person to be repaid by the (other) person, I say, that is to say: with worship, rising from one’s seat, reverential salutation, homage, gifts of robes, alms-food, dwellings, and requisites of medicine for support when sick.

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For the person, Ānanda, who because of another person has no doubt about suffering, has no doubt about the arising of suffering, has no doubt about the cessation of suffering, has no doubt about the practice leading to the end of suffering, Ānanda, it is not easy for that person to be repaid by the (other) person, I say, that is to say: with worship, rising from one's seat, reverential salutation, homage, gifts of robes, alms-food, dwellings, and requisites of medicine for support when sick.

The Fourteen Kinds of Offerings to an Individual

There are these fourteen offerings to an individual. What fourteen?

A gift one gives to a Realised One, a Worthy One, a Perfect Sambuddha, this is the first offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to an Independent Sambuddha, this is the second offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to a Realised One's disciple who is a Worthy One, this is the third offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to one who has entered upon the way to experiencing the fruit of Worthiness, this is the fourth offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to a Non-Returner, this is the fifth offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to one who has entered upon the way to experiencing the fruit of Non-Returning, this is the sixth offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to a Once-Returner, this is the seventh offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to one who has entered upon the way to experiencing the fruit of Once-Returning, this is the eighth offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to a Stream-Enterer, this is the ninth offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to one who has entered upon the way to experiencing the fruit of Stream-Entry, this is the tenth offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to an outsider who is without passion for sensual desires, this is the eleventh offering to an individual.

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A gift one gives to a virtuous ordinary person, this is the twelfth offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to an unvirtuous ordinary person, this is the thirteenth offering to an individual.

A gift one gives to an animal, this is the fourteenth offering to an individual.

Here, Ānanda, having given a gift to an animal a hundred-fold offering is to be expected (in return), having given a gift to an unvirtuous ordinary person a thousand-fold offering is to be expected (in return), having given a gift to a virtuous ordinary person a hundred-thousand-fold offering is to be expected (in return), having given a gift to an outsider who is without passion for sensual desires a hundred-thousand times a hundred-thousand-fold offering is to be expected (in return), having given a gift to one who has entered upon the way to experiencing the fruit of Stream-Entry an immeasurable, unlimited offering is to be expected (in return).

What to say about a Stream-Enterer? What to say about one who has entered upon the way to experiencing the fruit of Once-Returning? What to say about a Once-Returner? What to say about one who has entered upon the way to experiencing the fruit of Non-Returning? What to say about a Non-Returner? What to say about one who has entered upon the way to experiencing the fruit of Worthiness? What to say about a Worthy One? What to say about an Independent Sambuddha? What to say about a Realised One, a Worthy One, a Perfect Sambuddha?

The Seven Kinds of Offerings to a Community

There are these seven offerings to a Community. What seven?

A gift one gives to both Communities, with the Buddha at their head, this is the first offering to a Community.

A gift one gives to both Communities, after the Realised One has attained Emancipation, this is the second offering to a Community.

A gift one gives to the monks' Community, this is the third offering to a Community.

A gift one gives to the nuns' Community, this is the fourth offering to a Community.

A gift one gives after saying 'this many monks and nuns have been nominated from the monks' and nuns' Community', this is the fifth offering to a Community.

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A gift one gives after saying ‘this many monks have been nominated from the monks’ Community’, this is the sixth offering to a Community.

A gift one gives after saying ‘this many nuns have been nominated from the nuns’ Community’, this is the seventh offering to a Community.

There will be in the future, Ānanda, clansmen with an ochre robe around their necks who are unvirtuous and bad-natured. But even a gift that is given to those unvirtuous ones because of the Community at that time, Ānanda, will be an immeasurable, unlimited offering to the Community, I say. I certainly in no way, Ānanda, say that a gift to an individual can have greater fruit than an offering to a Community.

The Purification of Offerings

There are, Ānanda, these four purifications of offerings. Which four?

There is an offering that is purified by the giver, not by the receiver,
there is an offering that is purified by the receiver, not by the giver,
there is an offering that is neither purified by the giver nor by the receiver,
there is an offering that is purified by the giver and by the receiver,

What, Ānanda, is an offering that is purified by the giver not by the receiver? Here, Ānanda, the giver is virtuous and good-natured, and the receivers are unvirtuous and bad-natured, in this way, Ānanda, the offering is purified by the giver not by the receiver.

What, Ānanda, is an offering that is purified by the receiver not by the giver? Here, Ānanda, the giver is unvirtuous and bad-natured, and the receivers are virtuous and good-natured, in this way, Ānanda, the offering is purified by the receiver not by the giver.

What, Ānanda, is an offering that is neither purified by the giver nor by the receiver? Here, Ānanda, the giver is unvirtuous and bad-natured, and the receivers are unvirtuous and bad-natured, in this way, Ānanda, the offering is purified neither by the giver nor by the receiver.

What, Ānanda, is an offering that is purified by the giver and by the receiver? Here, Ānanda, the giver is virtuous and good-natured, and the receivers are virtuous and good-natured, in this way, Ānanda, the offering is purified by the giver and by the receiver.

These, Ānanda, are these four purifications of offerings.

Summary Verse

The Gracious One said this, and after saying this, the Fortunate One, the Teacher, said something more:

“That virtuous person who, with a mind full of confidence,
gives a gift that has been righteously obtained to unvirtuous people,
who has great faith in actions and their results,
that gift will be purified by the giver.

That unvirtuous person who, with a mind lacking in confidence,
gives a gift that has been unrighteously obtained to virtuous people,
who does not have great faith in actions and their results,
that gift will be purified by the receiver.

That unvirtuous person who, with a mind lacking in confidence,
gives a gift that has been unrighteously obtained to unvirtuous people,
who does not have great faith in actions and their results,
that gift will not bring an extensive reward I say.

That virtuous person who, with a mind full of confidence,
gives a gift that has been righteously obtained to virtuous people,
who has great faith in actions and their results,
that gift will bring an extensive reward I say.

That passionless person who, with a mind full of confidence,
gives a gift that has been righteously obtained to passionless people,
who has great faith in actions and their results,
that gift is the highest of worldly gifts.”

The Discourse giving the Analysis of Offerings is Finished