

Dāna Mahāpphala Sutta
“Giving a Great Fruitful Gift”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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At one time, The Blessed One was living on the bank of the Gaggarā Lotus Pond, at Campā.

Then a great number of lay disciples from Campā approached the Venerable Sāriputta, paid their respects, and then sat to one side and said:

“Bhante, it has been too long since we heard a discourse on the Dhamma from The Blessed One Himself. It would indeed be wonderful for us to listen to yet another discourse on the Dhamma from The Blessed One.”

“In that case friends, come on the next Full Moon’s Uposatha Day, and you will undoubtedly hear another discourse on the Dhamma from The Blessed One Himself.”

Becoming delighted with this news, those lay disciples arose from their seats, and after paying their respects to the Venerable Sāriputta, circumambulated while keeping him to their right, and went away.

On the next Full Moon’s Uposatha Day, those lay disciples again approached the Venerable Sāriputta, and after paying homage to him, kept standing as they waited for him. Then the Venerable Sāriputta, together with those lay disciples went to The Blessed One, and after paying their respects, they all sat to one side, and then, the Venerable Sāriputta said to The Blessed One:

“Bhante, could there be a situation in which a gift, that when offered by someone, would turn out to be without much benefit at all, proving itself fruitless, whereas when a gift of a similar value is offered by someone else, it could in fact result in the highest benefits by becoming a great fruitful gift?”

“Sāriputta, there could indeed be a situation in which a gift, that when offered by someone, would turn out to be without much benefit at all, proving itself fruitless, whereas when a gift of a similar value is offered by someone else, it could in fact result in the highest benefits by becoming a great fruitful gift indeed.”

“And what, Bhante, could be the reason for this? What are the causes and conditions for a gift offered by someone, that would make it turn out to be without much benefit at all, proving itself

fruitless, whereas when a gift of similar value is offered by someone else, it could in fact result in the highest benefits by becoming a great fruitful gift?”

1. “Here, Sāriputta, consider someone who makes offerings but does so, much like an investment, expecting rewards and a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future. Being deeply stingy and attached to whatever he considers to be his, who decides to make offerings while reasoning to himself: *‘Once I am no more in this body, all this I am offering now will come back to me!’*

In this way, he makes offerings of food and drinks to recluses and religious practitioners, in addition to providing them with clothing, carriages, flower garlands, incense, ointments, beds, lodgings, and oil lamps, but while his heart is bound up with expectations of accumulating their rewards.

“Now, Sāriputta, do you know of situations where people make such offerings?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Now, Sāriputta, someone who makes offerings but, does so by treating it as some kind of an investment, expecting rewards and a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future. Being deeply stingy and attached to whatever he considers to be his, who decides to make offerings while reasoning to himself: *‘Once I am no more in this body, all this I am offering now will come back to me!’* Then, at the breakup of the body, after death they are reborn in the company of the heavenly realm of the Four Guardian Kings. But, at the expiration of the merits of the kamma of those gifts, when the power, fame, and sovereignty of those actions are exhausted, they come back to this realm.

2. “Further, Sāriputta, consider someone else who makes offerings but does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘Once I am no more in this body, all this I am offering now will come back to me!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking that *‘giving in itself is a wonderful thing!’*

In this way, he makes offerings of food and drinks to recluses and religious practitioners, in addition to providing them with clothing, carriages, flower garlands, incense, ointments, beds, lodgings, and oil lamps, but without his heart being bound up with any expectations of accumulating any rewards.

“Now, Sāriputta, do you know of situations where people make such offerings?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Now, Sāriputta, someone who makes offerings but, does so by not treating it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘Once I am no more in this body, all this I am offering now will come back to me!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking that *‘giving in itself is a wonderful thing!’*

Then, at the breakup of the body, after death they are reborn in the various Deva realms. But, at the expiration of the merits of the kamma of those gifts, when the power, fame, and sovereignty of those actions are exhausted, they come back to this realm.

3. “Further, Sāriputta, consider someone else who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘Giving in itself is a wonderful thing!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘Giving and generosity was something practiced by my parents and forefathers, therefore, I should not abandon this old family tradition!’*

In this way, he makes offerings of food and drinks to recluses and religious practitioners, in addition to providing them with clothing, carriages, flower garlands, incense, ointments, beds, lodgings, and oil lamps, but without his heart being bound up with any expectations of accumulating any rewards.

“Now, Sāriputta, do you know of situations where people make such offerings?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Now, Sāriputta, someone who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘Giving in itself is a wonderful thing!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘Giving and generosity was something practiced by my parents and forefathers, therefore, I should not abandon this old family tradition!’*

Then, at the breakup of the body, after death they are reborn in the various Deva realms. But, at the expiration of the merits of the kamma of those gifts, when the power, fame, and sovereignty of those actions are exhausted, they come back to this realm.

4. “Further, Sāriputta, consider someone else who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘Giving and generosity was something practiced by my parents and forefathers, therefore, I should not abandon this old family tradition!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘I can buy, cook and prepare food, whereas these people are unable to. Therefore, it would not be right for me, who is able to do these things to not give and offer food to them!’*

In this way, he makes offerings of food and drinks to recluses and religious practitioners, in addition to providing them with clothing, carriages, flower garlands, incense, ointments, beds, lodgings, and oil lamps, but without his heart being bound up with any expectations of accumulating any rewards.

“Now, Sāriputta, do you know of situations where people make such offerings?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Now, Sāriputta, someone who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to

enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘Giving and generosity was something practiced by my parents and forefathers, therefore, I should not abandon this old family tradition!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘I can buy, cook and prepare food, whereas these people are unable to. Therefore, it would not be right for me, who is able to do these things to not give and offer food to them!’*

Then, at the breakup of the body, after death they are reborn in the various Deva realms. But, at the expiration of the merits of the kamma of those gifts, when the power, fame, and sovereignty of those actions are exhausted, they come back to this realm.

5. “Further, Sāriputta, consider someone else who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘I can buy, cook and prepare food, whereas these people are unable to. Therefore, it would not be right for me, who is able to do these things to not give and offer food to them!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘Just like great sacrifices and offerings were made to ancient sages, such as Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu, in the same manner, I too now am making offerings and sharing what I have!’*

In this way, he makes offerings of food and drinks to recluses and religious practitioners, in addition to providing them with clothing, carriages, flower garlands, incense, ointments, beds, lodgings, and oil lamps, but without his heart being bound up with any expectations of accumulating any rewards.

“Now, Sāriputta, do you know of situations where people make such offerings?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Now, Sāriputta, someone who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘I can buy, cook and prepare food, whereas these people are unable to. Therefore, it would not be right for me, who is able to do these things to not give and offer food to them!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘Just great sacrifices and offerings were made to ancient sages, such as Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu, in the same manner, I too now am making offerings and sharing what I have!’*

Then, at the breakup of the body, after death they are reborn in the various Deva realms. But, at the expiration of the merits of the kamma of those gifts, when the power, fame, and sovereignty of those actions are exhausted, they come back to this realm.

6. “Further, Sāriputta, consider someone else who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘Just like great sacrifices and offerings were made to ancient sages, such as Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu, in the same manner, I too now am making offerings and sharing what I have!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘By giving this gift, may my heart become tranquil and calm, as I experience much happiness and joy!’*

In this way, he makes offerings of food and drinks to recluses and religious practitioners, in addition to providing them with clothing, carriages, flower garlands, incents, ointments, beds, lodgings, and oil lamps, but without his heart being bound up with any expectations of accumulating any rewards.

“Now, Sāriputta, do you know of situations where people make such offerings?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Now, Sāriputta, someone who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘Just like great sacrifices and offerings were made to ancient sages, such as Atthaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu, in the same manner, I too now am making offerings and sharing what I have!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘By giving this gift, may my heart become tranquil and calm, as I experience much happiness and joy!’*

“Then, at the breakup of the body, after death they are reborn in the various Deva realms. But, at the expiration of the merits of the kamma of those gifts, when the power, fame, and sovereignty of those actions are exhausted, they come back to this realm.

7. “Further, Sāriputta, consider someone else who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘By giving this gift, may my heart become tranquil and calm, as I experience much happiness and joy!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘Giving itself is a wonderful adornment of the heart; a lovely way to embellish and beautify the heart!’*

In this way, he makes offerings of food and drinks to recluses and religious practitioners, in addition to providing them with clothing, carriages, flower garlands, incents, ointments, beds, lodgings, and oil lamps, but without his heart being bound up with any expectations of accumulating any rewards.

“Now, Sāriputta, do you know of situations where people make such offerings?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Now, Sāriputta, someone who makes offerings but, he too does not treat it as some kind of an investment, neither expecting rewards or a hefty return for the gifts he has made, for him to enjoy in the future, nor does he reason to himself: *‘By giving this gift, may my heart become tranquil and calm, as I experience much happiness and joy!’* Instead, he makes offerings while thinking: *‘Giving itself is a wonderful adornment of the heart; a lovely way to embellish and beautify the heart!’*

Then, at the breakup of the body, after death they are reborn in the company of the Brahmā Gods, in the heavenly realms. But, at the expiration of the merits of the kamma of those gifts, when the power, fame, and sovereignty of those actions are exhausted, they become non-returners, never to return back to this realm, ever again.

“Therefore, Sāriputta, these are the reasons; the causes and conditions where a gift offered by someone, would turn make it out to be without much benefit at all, proving itself fruitless, whereas when a gift of a similar value is offered by someone else, results in the highest benefits, becoming a great fruitful gift indeed.”

Sādhu Sādhu Sādhu