

## SD 2.9

**Kim,dada Sutta**

The Discourse on “Giving What?” | S 1.42/1:32

Chinese Āgama SĀ 998 = T 2.261b17-261c4; SĀ 2 135 = T 2.426b27-426c13

Theme: On the best gifts

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003; rev 2010

- [A deity:]
- 141 *Kim,dado bala,do hoti*  
*kim,dado hoti vaṇṇa,do*  
*kim,dado sukha,do hoti*  
*kim,dado hoti cakkhu,do*  
*ko ca sabba,do hoti*  
*taṃ me akkhahi pucchito*
- Giving what, does one give strength?  
 Giving what, does one give beauty?  
 Giving what, does one give comfort?<sup>1</sup>  
 Giving what, does one give sight?  
 But who is the giver of everything?  
 Please answer what has been asked by me.
- [The Blessed One:]
- 142 *Anna,do bala,do hoti*  
*vattha,do hoti vaṇṇa,do*  
*yāna,do sukha,do hoti*  
*dīpa,do hoti cakkhu,do*
- Giving food, one gives strength;  
 Giving clothes, one gives beauty;  
 Giving transport,<sup>2</sup> one gives comfort;  
 Giving lights, one gives sight;
- 143 *so ca sabba,dado hoti*  
*yo dadāti upassayaṃ*  
*amataṃ dado ca so hoti*  
*yo dhammaṃ anusāsati ti*
- and the giver of everything  
 is he who gives shelter;  
 but the giver of the death-free<sup>3</sup>  
 is he who teaches the Dharma.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>1</sup> “Comfort,” *sukha*, also “happiness”.<sup>2</sup> “Transport,” *yāna*, lit “vehicle” but here taken in the physical sense of “vehicle” as well as *the act* of providing transport to someone to get to their destination.<sup>3</sup> “Death-free,” *amata*, often rendered as “deathless,” or worse “undying, immortal,” all of which suggest an abiding state (as if we live forever there). The point is that nirvana is neither impermanent nor permanent, with neither birth nor death, and beyond positive predication. No one is born in nirvana, and no one dies there. One way of talking about it is through negative language, such as “death-free.” See K R Norman, 1991c:3-9, 1997:13. The final choice of translation is your karmic choice, whatever it might be, as long as you define your terms, and that it should be as easy to understand as possible.