

Asadisa,dāna Vatthu

The Incomparable Giving

[The joy of giving]

(DhA 13.10/3:182-192)

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1 Dhammapada Story: The incomparable gift

While **the Āditta Jātaka** (J 424) tells the story of the past regarding the incomparable giving (*asadisa,dāna*),¹ the Dhammapada Commentary on **Dh 177** (DhA 13.10) has the story of the present—**the Asadisa,dāna Vatthu**—regarding the same incomparable giving made by the rajah Pasenadi to the Buddha himself. The Āditta Jātaka commentary refers to **the Mahā Govinda Sutta (D 19) commentary** for the full story (DA 2:652-655).

2

The Incomparable Giving

(DhA 13.10/3:182-192)

“**The miserly certainly do not...**” (*na ve kadariyā*). This Dharma teaching was given by the Teacher while he was staying in the Jeta,vana, with reference to the incomparable giving (*asadisa,dāna*). [183]

2.1 PASENADI AND CITIZENS OFFER ALMS. At one time, the Teacher, with a retinue of 500 monks, having wandered about, entered Jeta,vana. The king went to the monastery, invited the Teacher, and on the following day, had an incidental alms-giving [alms-giving for guests] (*āgantuka,dāna*) prepared, and announced to the city, “Come and see my giving!”

On the next day, the citizens came, saw the king’s alms-giving, and then invited the Buddha for an alms-giving on the following day, and sent word to the king, “Your majesty, please come and see our giving.”

The king saw their alms-giving and thought, “They have made a greater giving than mine. Tomorrow I will make another alms-giving!” And he prepared for the alms-giving. And when the citizens saw that, they too prepared a giving for the following day. As such, neither the king could outdo the citizens, [184] nor the citizens the king. Six times the citizens had increased the giving a hundredfold and a thousand fold, such that one is unable to say if anything is lacking at all.

The king then thought, “If I am unable to offer a great giving than these, what is the use of my living?” And he lay down, thinking of a strategy.

2.2 MALLIKĀ PROPOSES THE INCOMPARABLE GIVING. Now, as he lay there, queen Mallikā approached him and asked, “Maharajah, why are you lying thus. What has made you faculties so weary?”

The king said, “Don’t you know it, my queen?”

“I know not, maharajah.”

The king then related the matter to her.

Then Mallikā said this to him: “Do not worry, your majesty! Have you ever seen or heard before where the lord of the land is defeated by the citizens? I will manage your giving!” The queen had said this out of desire to make the incomparable giving.

¹ J 424/3:469-474 = SD 22.10a.

Then she said to the king, “Maharajah, let a circular pavilion of choice sal wood² be built so that 500 monks can sit enclosed within, while the rest sit outside. Let 500 white parasols be made, and let 500 elephants hold his parasols in their trunks and standing, hold them over the heads of the 500 monks. Have eight or ten boats of ruddy gold built, and place them at the centre of the pavilion. Between every two monks, a young kshatriya girl will sit, crushing fragrance. Let a young kshatriya girl with a fan stand between two monks, fanning them. Let two other young kshatriya girls bring the crushed fragrance in their hands and toss them into the golden boats. [185] Let some of the young kshatriya girls bring clusters of blue lotus, and toss them into the golden boats, letting them mingle with the fragrance, and let the perfumed fragrance waft. So, the citizens will have neither young kshatriya girls, nor white parasols, nor elephants. Thus the citizens will be defeated. Do thus, maharajah!”

“Excellent, my queen, you have done well!” and he ordered that everything should be done in that manner.

2.3 ONE ELEPHANT SHORT. However, it occurred that one of the monks lacked an elephant. Then the king said to Mallikā, “Good lady, there is an elephant lacking for a monk. What shall we do?”

“What do you mean, your majesty, are there not 500 elephants?”

“There are, my queen, but the remainder are rogue elephants. When they see the monks, they would be fierce like the monsoon winds.”

“Your majesty, I know a certain young rogue elephant that might stand holding a parasol in its trunk.”

“Where shall we let him stand?”

“Beside the noble Aṅguli,māla!” The king did so.

Thereupon, the young elephant, thrusting its tail between its legs, dropped both its ears, closed its eyes, and stood motionless! The multitude, looking at the elephant, thought, “So this is how a fierce elephant behaves!”

The king, having waited on the order of monks headed by the Buddha, saluted the Teacher, saying, “Bhante, whatever there is in this almshouse, both allowable and unallowable, all of them I give to you all.”

2.4 THE FOUR PRICELESS OBJECTS. Now, for this giving, fourteen crores of treasure³ were given away in a single day. Four priceless objects—a white parasol [a parasol on a jewelled stand], a couch [an inclined rest-board], a stool, and a footstool⁴—were given to the Teacher. Once such a giving has been made to the Buddha, no one would ever again be able to do it; hence, it is declared to be “the incomparable giving” (*asadisa,dāna*). It is said that this occurs only once to all the Buddhas, and that it is a woman who always manages it.

2.5 KĀLA AND JUṆHA. Now, the king had two ministers (*amacca*), Kāla and Juṇha. **Kāla** thought, “O, how the royal family is destroyed! Within a single day, fourteen crores of treasure is gone! And after taking this alms-offering, they will go away, lie down, and sleep! O, the royal family is lost (*naṭṭha*)!”

Juṇha thought, “O, how well given in the king’s giving! No one who now attains kingship would be able to offer such a giving! There is no more making over of merit accrued to all beings!⁵ As for me, I rejoice in this giving.”

² “Choice sal wood” (*sāla,kalyāṇī,padarehi*, DA 2:653 = DhA 3:184)

³ “Fourteen crores of treasure,” *cuddasa,koṭi,dhanam*. A *koṭi* = 10 million; so 14 crores = 14 × 10 million = 140 million! Apparently, here small gold coins are meant.

⁴ *Seta-c,chattam nisidana,pallaṅko adhārako pāda,pīṭhikā ti cattāri anagghān’eva* (DhA 3:186); Dīgha Comy: *pāda,kathalikā ādhārako apassena,phalakam chatta,pāda,maṇi ti imāni cattāri anagghāni ahesum* (DA 2:653). While DhA has *nisidana,pallaṅka* (couch), DA gives *apassena,phalaka* (inclined rest-board); and while DhA has *seta-c,chatta* (white parasol), DA has *chatta,pāda,maṇi* (parasol on a jewelled stand). The couch seems luxurious and the white parasol is a royal emblem, so both are unlikely gifts, but the inclined rest-board is a more allowable gift, although the parasol on a jewelled stand seems somewhat luxurious. Nevertheless, it appears that DA is probably an older story.

⁵ *Sabba,sattānam pattim adento nāma n’atthi*. We see here a hint of the notion of “transferring” merit to others, an idea that would be fully developed in Mahayana Buddhism. Such an idea is absent from early Buddhism.

2.6 HEAD-SPLITTING PREVENTED. When the Teacher had finished his meal, the king took his bowl for the purpose of thanksgiving. The Teacher thought, “The king has made a great giving like one setting in motion a great flood! Will the hearts of the multitude be filled with faith or not?”

Knowing the thoughts (*cittācāra*) of the ministers, he thought, “If I were to give a thanksgiving appropriate to the king’s giving, Kāḷa’s head will split sevenfold, and Junḥa will be established in the fruit of streamwinning.” So, out of compassion for Kāḷa, he recited only a single verse of the four, as the king stood before him after making the almsgiving. Then he rose and returned to the monastery.

2.7 AṄGULI,MĀLA. The monks asked Aṅguli,māla, “Avuso, were you not afraid of the rogue elephant standing beside you holding a parasol?”

“I was not afraid, avuso.”

The monks approached the Teacher and said, “Bhante, Aṅguli,māla answered in ignorance.”⁶

The teacher said, “Bhikshus, Aṅguli,māla was not afraid. Amongst the lordly bulls of the canker-destroyed he is the eldest. He is like a son amongst the monks. He fears not.” Having said that, he uttered this Dhammapada verse from the Brāhmaṇa Vagga:

<i>Usabham pavaram vīram, mahesim vijitāvinam anejam nhātakam buddham tam aham brūmi brāhmaṇan ti.</i>	The lordly bull, the noble hero, the great seer, conqueror, lustfree, washed clean, awakened— him I call a brahmin.	(Dh 422)
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2.8 PASENADI IS DISTRESSED. The king was distressed. He thought, “Even though I stood before him, the Teacher did not give thanksgiving commensurate to my almsgiving made to such a congregation, but after uttering only a single verse, rose from his seat and left. Could be it that I have not made an appropriate almsgiving to the Teacher, but made an inappropriate one; not giving allowable things, and giving unallowable things? The Teacher must be angry with me. For an alms-offering such as the incomparable giving, he had not given thanks appropriate to the giving.

Thinking thus, he went to the monastery, and having saluted the Teacher, said this: “Bhante, have I made the giving in the manner that it should be given, or have I not given any allowable thing that is appropriate as a gift, and given something that is unallowable?”

“Why do you say that, maharajah?”

“You did not give thanks as appropriate to the giving I have made.”

“Maharajah, your giving is indeed appropriate. For, such an incomparable giving can be given only once to a Buddha. Such a giving can never be made again.”

“Then, bhante, why did you not give thanks as appropriate to the giving?”

“The congregation is impure, maharajah.”⁷

“What, bhante, is the fault of the congregation?”

Then the Teacher told him about the thoughts of the two ministers, and explained that his non-action (not giving thanks) was out of compassion for Kāḷa.

2.9 PASENADI BANISHES KĀḶA. The king asked, “Kāḷa, is it true that you thought thus?”

“It is true,” said Kāḷa.

Then the king said, “I have not taken anything from you, but my wives and children, along with me, gave only what was due to me. What wrong have I done you? Go now, sir, let what I have given be just that, and what you have given be so. Depart you from this kingdom!”

When he had been banished from the country, he summoned Junḥa, and asked: “Is it true that you thought thus?”

⁶ *Aṅgulimālo, bhante, aññam vyākarosī ti.*

⁷ This statement is somewhat out of place here, but fits better in its orig Vinaya. It is said that once when the monks have assembled for the fortnightly recitation of the Pāṭimokkha, the Buddha remains silent although invited thrice by Ānanda. Then the Buddha explains that “The assembly is impure” (*aparissuddhā Ānanda parisā ti*). Moggallāna, surveying the gathering, weeds out the offending monk and throws him out when he refuses to budge (A 8.20.1-5/4:204-206; U 5.5/51 f; Cv 9.1 = V 2:236 f).

“It is true,” he said.

“Excellent, uncle, I’m impressed (*pasanno’smi*). Take you my court (*parijana*), and make alms-giving for seven days in the same manner as I have done!”

Having surrendered his kingdom for seven days, he said to the Teacher, “See, bhante, the action of a fool. After I have given such an alms-offering, he deals me a blow!”

The Teacher said, “Yes, maharajah, the foolish disapproving of others’ giving, are destined for a suffering state hereafter, but the wise, rejoicing in others’ giving, win heaven in the hereafter.”

Having said that, he uttered this verse:

<i>Na ve kadariyā deva, lokam vajanti</i>	The miserly go not to a heavenly world.
<i>bālā have na-p, pasamsanti dānam</i>	Fools indeed do not praise generosity.
<i>dhīro ca dānam anumodamāno</i>	Rejoicing in giving, the wise
<i>ten’eva so hoti sukhi paratthā ti.</i>	thereby is surely happy hereafter. (Dh 177) ⁸

At the end of the discourse, Juṅha was established in the fruit of streamwinning. The congregation, too, benefitted from the Dharma teaching. Juṅha, after attaining the fruit of streamwinning, made alms-giving for seven days in the same manner as the king.

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3 COMMENTS ON THE ASADISA, DĀNA VATTHU

3.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF STORIES. This amazing commentarial legend hints at the beginnings of the glorification of the Buddha as a deity and the ritualization of giving,⁹ both being clear signs of post-Buddha developments. Although the actors are canonical, the story is commentarial and legendary (like the characters of the Lotus Sutra and many of the later Mahayana sutras). The story should be understood as a *mythical construction*, that is to say, it is not a question of whether the story is true or false, but what spiritual, psychological or moral lesson the story is trying to tell.

3.2 THE GIVING’S SUCCESS. The story opens with Pasenadi, the king of Kosala, giving the Buddha and the order an alms-offering, but six times his subjects outdo him. On the advice of his chief queen, Mallikā, the “incomparable giving” is prepared and, according to legend, only a woman can manage such an offering. We here see the popularity of the Buddha on both the level of the common citizen as well as on that of the powers that be. Understandably, women are the best managers of such alms-offering, especially one the magnitude of the incomparable giving. Women would have the greater patience for the details and effort behind it, and also have a more natural connection with food and feeding (especially in India of the Buddha’s time).

Altogether the king spends 140 million coins on the incomparable giving. The highlight of the incomparable giving, however, is a set of four priceless objects—a white parasol, a couch, a stool, and a foot-stool—given to the Buddha. Understandably, the incomparable giving is given to every Buddha but only once.

3.3 AṄGULIMĀLA. Mallikā, a very intelligent woman and queen, also advises king Pasenadi on other difficulties attending the event, such as solving the shortage of an elephant. Mallikā is familiar with the royal elephants and asks the king to use one of the younger rogue elephants (which would be less fierce). This young elephant is strategically placed next to the monk Aṅguli, māla.¹⁰ The story-teller’s humour is evident here, as we are expected to recall that Aṅgulimāla was an erstwhile serial killer, looking for a thousand fingers (one from each person he had killed), and that even in the young elephant’s memory, he is still a formidable person.

⁸ The brief commentary that follows has been omitted. For a similar statement, see (Dāna) Vaccha, gotta S (A 3.57/1:162) = SD 22.12.

⁹ The next stage is the deification of the Buddha, fully developed in the Mahayana doctrines.

¹⁰ Aṅguli, māla S (M 86/2:97-105) = SD 5.11.

After the almsgiving, the monks ask Aṅguli,māla if he feels fear in the presence of the young rogue elephant. Understandably, he replies no, since he is an arhat. The disbelieving monks report his reply to the Buddha who confirms that he is an arhat (implying that he has no fear). Aṅgulimāla is given a cameo role apparently to boost Mallikā's acumen in placing a rogue elephant near him to keep it docile! The ignorant monks simply tell us that not everyone is able to recognize an arhat even if we know him personally.

3.4 PROPER GIVING. The most interesting (and important) part of the story concerns the two ministers, Kāla and Juṇha, whose names *kāla*, meaning “dark, black,” signifying our unwholesome qualities, and *juṇha*, meaning “moon-light, a moonlit night, the bright fortnight,” signifying our wholesome qualities. Kāla thinks that the king's giving is such a great waste. We are told that Kāla's lack of faith “defiles” the king's giving, the meaning of which is found in such discourses as **the (Sumana) Dāna Sutta** (A 6.37), where the three “limbs of a giver” (*dāyakassa tīṇ'aṅgāni*) are given as:¹¹

- (1) before giving (preparing to give), the giver is happy;
 - (2) while giving her mind is joyful with faith;
 - (3) having given, her mind is joyful.¹²
- (A 6.37.2/3:336) = SD 22.1

Kāla not only thinks that the king's giving is simply wasteful, but has a bad opinion of the monks (“after taking this alms-offering, they will go away, lie down, and sleep!”).

Ironically, it is only through the Buddha that Pasenadi learns of Kāla's negative views, and, as its result, banishes him as punishment! **Juṇha**, on the other hand, is congratulated and the palace handed over to him for seven days so that he could give alms-offerings during that period “in the same manner” as the king has done. We are not told how this is done: *it certainly cannot be seven more incomparable givings*.¹³ At this point, the Buddha gives a discourse based on **Dh 177** (about giving), at the end of which Juṇha becomes a streamwinner.

That Kāla suffers on account of the Buddha's telling the king about his lack of faith is an unprecedented hermeneutical problem. The historical Buddha clearly would not have told a truth that would be useless to another or would harm another, as stated in **the Abhaya Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 58)!¹⁴ Nevertheless, as stated in **the Ādhipateyya Sutta** (A 3.40), the Buddha (and the devas) know our every action:

There is in the world no secret of one who does an evil deed.
You yourself, O human, know what is true and what is false!
Alas! My friend, you, the witness, look down upon your own goodness!
How can you hide the evil that there is in the self from the self?
The devas and the Tathāgatas [Buddhas thus come] see the fool living falsely in the world.
(Ādhipateyya Sutta, A 3.40/1:147-150)

3.5 THE FOUR VERSES. The story has a brahminical element: head-splitting (or rather the threat of one). Surveying the congregation, the Buddha sees that Kāla lacked faith (as mentioned). Hence, the story-teller tells us if the Buddha were to give the full thanks-giving of four verses, Kāla's head would shatter sevenfold!¹⁵ Out of compassion, the Buddha recites only the first verse.

Like any status-conscious king, Pasenadi wonders why the Buddha does not give a full thanksgiving for the royal incomparable giving, perhaps even breaking royal protocol in doing so. The good king worries if he has failed in some aspects of his giving. Interestingly, we are not told here that the Buddha

¹¹ For other right conditions of giving, see **Dutiyāputtaka S** (S 3.20) = SD 22.5 Intro (2).

¹² *Idha bhikkhave pubb'eva dānā sumano hoti, dadam cittaṃ pasādeti, datvā attamano hoti.* See also **Aṅkura Pv** (Pv 11.9.49/27), PvA 132 f.

¹³ On how such lavish donations to monastics and monasteries in China (such as during the Liang dynasty), see Gregory K Ornatowski, “Continuity and change in the economic ethics of Buddhism,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 3, 1996:198-240. <http://www.buddhistethics.org/3/ornatow1.pdf>.

¹⁴ M 58.8be/1:395 = SD 7.12.

¹⁵ On head-shattering, see **Ambaṭṭha S** (D3.1.20 f/1:95) = SD 21.3 Intro (4).

reads his mind. He actually questions the Buddha about this troubling matter, and the Buddha explains that the congregation is “defiled” by Kāḷa’s lack of faith. This is another brahminical element in the story.

Anyway, if only Pasenadi had asked the Buddha regarding what to do with Kāḷa’s lack of faith, the Buddha’s compassionate wisdom could have won him over, rather than having Kāḷa banished, surely making him a shattered and bitter man. Indeed, Pasenadi is known to be haughty in his ways, and in the end pays for it by losing his throne prematurely to his own son, Viḍudabha, and dies a sad lonely and painful death.¹⁶

We are only told of “a four-stanza verse” (*catuppadika gāthā*)—also translatable as “a four-line stanza”—with mention neither of their contents nor any citation. The Dīgha Commentary on the Mahā Govinda Sutta (D 19) identifies it with Dh 177 [2.9].¹⁷ My own guess, from what we find in the Suttas, and what is popularly chanted by the monks (especially in Thailand) as part of the after-meal thanksgiving, is the well known four-stanza verse from **the Agga-p,pasāda Sutta 1** (A 4.34), **the Cundī Sutta** (A 5.32) and **the Agga-p,pasāda Sutta 2** (It 5.1), that is, the Agga-p,pasāda Gāthā, which goes thus:

<i>Aggato ve pasannānaṃ aggam dhammaṃ vijānataṃ agge buddhe pasannānaṃ dakkhiṇeyye anuttare</i>	For those with faith as foremost, for those who understand the foremost Dharma, for those with faith in the Buddha, the supreme one worthy of offerings,
<i>Agge dhamme pasannānaṃ virāgūpasame sukhe agge saṅghe pasannānaṃ puñña-k,khette anuttare</i>	for those with faith in the Dharma, happily stilled by way of dispassion, for those with faith in the Sangha, the supreme field of merit,
<i>Aggasmim dānaṃ dadataṃ aggam puññaṃ pavaḍḍhati aggam āyu ca vaṇṇo ca yaso kitti sukhaṃ balaṃ</i>	for those giving gift to the foremost, foremost merit increases: the foremost lifespan, and beauty, fame, reputation, happiness and strength.
<i>Aggassa dātā medhāvī Agga,dhamma,samāhito deva,bhūto manusso vā agga-p,patto pamodatī ti</i>	The wise who gives the foremost, having attained samadhi in the foremost state, whether he becomes a human or a deva, he rejoices, having attained the foremost. (A 4.34/2:34 f = A 5.32/3:36 = It 5.1/88)

Since the first three verses are contiguous, the Buddha apparently recited only the fourth verse which can stand by itself.

3.6 VELĀMA’S GIVING. King Pasenadi’s incomparable giving (DhA 13.10) reminds us of the brahmin’s Velāma own great giving, related as an embedded Jātaka tale in **the Velāma Sutta** (A 9.20).¹⁸

Long ago, householder, there was the brahmin Velāma. He gave great gifts [alms] such as these:

- (1) he gave 84,000 golden bowls full of silver;
- (2) he gave 84,000 silver bowls full of gold;
- (3) he gave 84,000 copper bowls full of gems;
- (4) he gave 84,000 elephants caparisoned in gold, with golden banners, each covered with a golden net;

¹⁶ On Pasenadi’s tragic fate, see Piya Tan, **The Buddha and His Disciples**, 2004, ch 8 (The Thunderous Silence) §19. See MA 3:352; J 4:151; DhA 1:356; also MA 2:753 f; J 4:131.

¹⁷ DA 2:655.

¹⁸ A 9.20/4:392-396 = SD 16.6.

- (5) he gave 84,000 chariots spread with lion-skins, with tiger-skins, with leopard-skins, with saffron-coloured blankets, with gold trappings, with golden banners, each covered with a golden net;
- (6) he gave 84,000 milk cows spread over with fine jute cloth,¹⁹ with silver milk-pails;
- (7) he gave 84,000 maidens adorned with jewelled ear-rings;
- (8) he gave 84,000 couches covered with fleece, with woolen coverlets, with excellent rugs of the kadalī deer, with awnings above and crimson cushions at each end;
- (9) he gave 84,000 pieces of cloth of fine flax, of fine silk, of fine wool, of fine cotton.

And what more to say of the food and drinks: food hard and soft, food to be licked and drunk, flowing like a river, I say!

Householder, you might think that this brahmin Velāma who gave those great gifts were someone else. But, householder, it is not to be viewed thus.

At that time, I was the brahmin Velāma; I gave those great gifts.

But then, householder, there were none worthy of the gifts; no one purified [blessed] the gifts.²⁰ (A 9.20/4:393 f) = SD 16.6

While Pasenadi's incomparable giving is presented as the greatest act of merit in terms of giving, Velāma's giving acts as a foil for something more spiritual. For, the Buddha declares that

- (1) of greater fruit it is to feed a single saint "endowed with right view" (that is, a streamwinner);
- (2) feeding a single once-returned is of greater fruit than feeding a hundred streamwinners;
- (3) feeding a single non-returned is of greater fruit than feeding a hundred once-returned;
- (4) feeding a single arhat is of greater fruit than feeding a hundred non-returned;
- (5) feeding a single pratyeka-buddha is of greater fruit than feeding a hundred non-returned;
- (6) feeding a single Buddha is of greater fruit than feeding a hundred pratyeka-buddhas;
- (7) building a monastery for the universal sangha is of greater fruit than feeding a sangha headed by the Buddha;
- (8) taking refuge in the three jewels is of greater fruit than building a monastery for the universal sangha;
- (9) undertaking the moral precepts is of greater fruit than taking refuge;
- (10) cultivating a heart of lovingkindness for even as long as it takes to tug at a cow's teat (to milk it) is of greater fruit than undertaking the precepts; and
- (11) cultivating the perception of impermanence for even the moment of a finger-snap is of greater fruit than cultivating a heart of lovingkindness. (A 9.20.5b/4:394 f) = SD 16.6

It is important to understand, however, that the Velāma Sutta is not about numbers ("a hundred," for example, is only a symbolic figure): it is *a reminder on the priority of spiritual practice*—that the teaching comes before the teacher. Giving may well be good, but it has an instrumental purpose, that of serving as *a wholesome support for mental concentration*, which in turn should be instrumental in one's realizing insight wisdom, leading to spiritual liberation.

3.7 GREATER THAN THE INCOMPARABLE GIVING. The brahmin Velāma's giving (as recorded in the Velāma Sutta, A 9.20) is not the only example of a gift magnitude greater than the incomparable giving (*asadisa,dāna*).²¹ Ironically, although it is said that each Buddha is "entitled" to only one incomparable giving, it is not exactly the greatest giving either in magnitude or in splendour, as for example that of the brahmin Velāma's giving. [3.6]

¹⁹ *Caturāsīti dhenu,sahassāni adāsi dukūla,sanathanāni kaṁsūpadhāraṇāni*. DPL gives *dukūla* as "fine cloth." Cf EM Hare's tr of *dukūla,sanathanāni*, "with tethers of fine jute" (A:H 4:263).

²⁰ This last sentence means that no one was "pure" enough, ie, has the past good karma of being able to enjoy the giving, and the present wholesome mind of rejoicing in it.

²¹ **Āditta J** (J 424) = SD 22.10a Intro (1.3).

The Āditta Jātaka (J 424) is about how a king (Bharata or Bheruva) realizes that he should look for more worthy recipients of his giving, and, instead of giving to “immoral and greedy beings,” decides to give almsfood to seven pratyeka-buddhas from the Himalayas.²² The Āditta Jātaka is clearly the story referred to as “the Sucira Jātaka²³ of the Eights Collection (*Aṭṭha, nipāta*)” in the introduction to **the Dasa Brāhmaṇa Jātaka** (J 495) (on discriminate giving),²⁴ and again as “the Sovīra Jātaka²⁵ of the Eights Collection” in the introductory story of **the Sivi Jātaka** (J 499) (on giving of the self, that is, king Sivi donates his own eyes to anyone who asks for them). These two Jātakas, interestingly, shows that these gifts are spiritually greater than the “incomparable giving!”²⁶

While king Pasenadi gives only to *a single Buddha and his order*, king Koravya of the Dasa Brāhmaṇa Jātaka (like the king in the Āditta Jātaka, J 424) gives to *500 pratyeka-buddhas*.²⁷ While all that Pasenadi’s incomparable giving is merely *external* (material things), king Sivi makes *internal* gifts, that is, one of his own self (he gives away his own eyes). A Bodhisattva (who has not yet awakened to the liberating Dharma), the Jātakas remind us, would unhesitatingly give away his own wealth, loved ones, limb and even life to any who asks for them. However, as the Buddha, he declares that there is nothing better than giving the Dharma itself, for it brings us liberation from suffering:

*Sabba, dānaṃ dhamma, dānaṃ jināti
sabbhaṃ rasaṃ dhamma, raso jināti
sabbhaṃ ratim dhamma, ratim jināti
taṅha-k, khayo sabba, dukkhaṃ jināti*

The gift of the Dharma excels all giving;
the taste of the Dharma excels all tastes;
the joy of the Dharma excels all joys;
the destruction of lust conquers all suffering.

(Dh 354)

3.8 THE BASES OF SAINTHOOD FOR LAYMEN. The perception of impermanence (*anicca, saññā*) is listed in the Velāma Sutta (A 9.20) [3.2.6] as the most important practice for a very good reason: *it is the basis for streamwinning*. This important point is clearly confirmed in the ten short but remarkable suttas of **the Okkanti Saṃyutta** (S 25): whether we merely have *faith* in the impermanence of all that exists (the world) (that is, as a faith-follower, *saddhā’nusārī*), or accept this truth *after wisely examining* it (that is, as a truth-follower, *dhammānusārī*), we are assured of becoming a streamwinner. We would not die without having realized the fruit of streamwinning.²⁸

How do we become streamwinners in this life itself? The first step is to that *we should want to be free from suffering in this life itself*. This aspiration is best made after performing any act of merit, such as after doing meditation, or after offering alms to anyone (especially worthy monastics), or after a Sutta or Dharma class, or the last thought before falling asleep. The next step is to constantly see how *impermanence* occur in our lives and around us, in times of happiness or of sorrow, or of praise or of blame, or of gain or of loss, or of success or of failure.

A number of discourses, such as **the (Maha-p,phala) Dāna Sutta** (A 7.49),²⁹ **the Dāna Sutta 1** (A 8.31)³⁰ and **the Dāna Vatthu Sutta** (A 8.33),³¹ instruct us to recollect thus after almsgiving: “May this

²² J 424/3:469-474 = SD 22.10a.

²³ Se *Vidhūra Jātaka*, after the minister Vidhūra, the protagonist of Dasa Brāhmaṇa J (J 495).

²⁴ *Viceyya, dāna*. King Koravya of the Yuddhiṭṭhila (Skt Yudhiṣṭhira), disillusioned with the immoral brahmins, is advised by his minister Vidhūra to offer alms to the 500 pratyeka-buddhas of Nanda, mūla Pabbhāra. Cf **Āditta J** (J 424) [2] where king Bharata (or Bheruva) offers to all the 500 pratyeka-buddhas of Nanda, mūla Pabbhāra [2.2].

²⁵ Se *Sivi Jātaka*, after the protagonist of Sivi J (J 499).

²⁶ See **Asadisa, dāna Vatthu** (DhA 13.10/3:182-192) = SD 12.10b.

²⁷ If we odiously go by numbers, we can say, quoting **Velāma S** (A 9.20.5b/4:394 f = SD 16.6) [3.6], that “feeding a single **Buddha** is of greater fruit than feeding a hundred pratyeka-buddhas,” but here the king is feed 500 pratyeka-buddhas; hence, this latter is of greater merit! It is important to remember that in *Velāma S*, the Buddha declares that it is not *what* or *how much* that we give, but *how* we give, that matters, ie, we should give with care, with the right frame of mind, personally, not as if throwing something away, and mindful of its spiritual benefits (A 9.20.5b/4:394 f).

²⁸ On the certainty of streamwinning, see **Entering the Stream** = SD 3.3(7) & also (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1/3:225) = SD 16.7.

²⁹ A 7.49/4:59-62 = SD 2.3.

³⁰ A 8.31/4:236 = SD 6.6a.

merit adorn my mind, be a support for my mind.” That is to say, by this act of merit may my mind remain wholesome (free from negative thoughts), and may my mind easily focus in mindfulness (or in attaining dhyana, if you wish to). **The (Maha-p,phala) Dāna Sutta (A 7.49)** explains even greater benefits of right giving:

He gives a gift, thinking, ‘**This is an ornament for the mind, a support for the mind**’³²—when the body has broken up after death, he reappears in the company of Brahma’s Retinue. Then, [63] having exhausted that karma, that power, that status, that sovereignty, he is a non-returner.³³ He does not come back to this world. (A 7.49/4:59-62) = SD 2.3

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³¹ A 8.33/4:236 f = SD 6.6c.

³² *Cittālaṅkāraṃ citta,parikkhār’attham*. In other words, the giving is part of one’s cultivation of moral virtue as a support for mental cultivation. With abundant moral virtue, it is easier for one to cultivate the mind. Conversely, if one finds difficulty in meditating then one should examine one’s moral conduct and rectify any unwholesome habits or resolve negative thoughts.

³³ **A non-returner** (*anāgāmi*), on overcoming the five lower fetters (*orambhāgiya samyojanā*), is reborn in the Brahmā worlds known as the Pure Abodes (*suddh’āvāsa*), the five highest heavens of the form world (*rūpa,loka*) where only non-returners assume their last birth to become arhats and attain nirvana. These worlds are Āviha (“non-declining”), Ātappa (“Unworried”), Sudassā (“Clearly Visible”), Sudassī (“Clear-visioned”) and Akaṇiṭṭha (“Highest”) (D 3:237, M 3:103, Vbh 425, Pug 42-46).

The 10 fetters are: Personality view (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*), persistent doubt (*vicikicchā*), attachment to rules and rites (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*), sensual lust (*kāma,rāga*), repulsion (*paṭigha*), greed for form existence (*rūpa,rāga*), greed for formless existence (*arūpa,rāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61, A 5:13, Vbh 377). In some places, no. 5 (*paṭigha*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*uddhambhāgiya*). See “Is rebirth immediate?” = SD 2.17(4).