

## Collect Merit So Easily at the Center

The most unbelievable way to collect merit in the West is in the center, where you go to receive Dharma teachings, where there is a resident teacher from whom you take teachings and who you regard as your guru, and the students at that center have the same guru, so they are the disciples of one's own guru, whether the guru is there at the center or far away, they are disciples of one's own guru. So at the center making offerings to the students [of the same guru], even just offering a glass of water, or a glass of beer, a glass of whatever is the best beer, a glass of water, if you offer to everybody, can you imagine the merits? Woowooow. Can you imagine the merits? Wow, wow, wow, most amazing. Even if you offer to only one student you create far more merits than making offerings to numberless Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha in numberless universes. Offering to all those [is less merit] than offering one glass of water to a student who is the disciple of the same guru as you. So at the center even if you offer to only one person, [you create the] most unimaginable, unimaginable, unimaginable merits. Actually I should add more, I should add on unimaginable many hundreds, even thousands, I should be doing that: maybe the hours today, tonight, are not enough, it is a reality like this.

You don't need to think that to collect merit you have to send far. Even if there is one to whom you can make offerings it is amazing: you have to understand that, have to know that. Just right there where you are, whatever help you are giving to the center, your time, making something, whatever help you are doing you are offering to all the guru's pores, and that is offering to the guru himself, every single thing becomes offering to the guru. Whatever you do at the center it is offering to all the students, to all the guru's pores. You should think about this, can you imagine how many merits you collect? Offering tea, offering food during a puja. Whether there is a puja or not, it is not that you have to do puja, I'm not saying that, you can do if you want, but just gather and offer tea, offer snacks, food, a meal, like that. Of course can also do some practice, it is more powerful, much more powerful. Food, anything, whatever you offer, then the same thing regarding offering to the center itself, whatever help [you provide] is offering to the guru: offering to the disciples, offering to the guru's pores. Whatever you do, you have to understand that.

Generally when you make charity, when you do the practice of giving it looks like going away, you are finishing your money, it looks like it is going away but actually in the *Arya Sanghata Sutra* the Buddha explained that the size of a hair - not all your hair, just making charity with one hair, just to give an idea, you practice giving something so small, you make charity to somebody with something the size of your hair, from that 80 - maybe somebody can remember? You read *Sanghata Sutra* or *Golden Light Sutra*? How many times did you read?

Ven Dr. Adrian Gyatso: Five hundred times.

Rinpoche: Doctor Adrian read the *Arya Sanghata Sutra* 500 times. Wow, amazing. That is aaaaaaaaamazing. Thank you very much. Doctor Adrian during three years' retreat on Kangaroo Island read the sutra 500 times, his main preliminary practice. Of course his main preliminary practice is all those places [where he helped], the many things that Doctor Adrian did. I don't remember at the moment, there were many people who read *Arya Sanghata Sutra* a number of times, but the number that Doctor Adrian read [the sutra] is probably the highest number.

In the *Arya Sanghata Sutra* the Buddha says the benefits of making charity to sentient beings of even one hair is 80 eons, 80 thousand, or 80 eons? 80 eons, not years, 80 eons, the result is

unbelievable wealth, the result of giving something very tiny, like hair, one time to somebody [who is a disciple of the same guru as you] is 80 eons' of wealth.

So to be able to come to the center, either giving to students, offering to them, or to the center itself, your time, finances, whatever, every single thing becomes an offering to the guru, and to all the pores of the guru - everybody who comes to listen to teachings, everybody who comes to meditate there, for their use, for their benefit, basically it is for all the sentient beings who come there, to benefit them, so the merits you collect, can you imagine? The merits that you collect are most amazing, most amazing.

*Colophon: Teaching given on April 14<sup>th</sup> 2011 at the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, Bendigo, Australia. Typed simultaneously as Rinpoche taught by Ven Joan Nicell, edited by Claire Isitt.*