

Donating to the Tsunami and Earthquake Survivors

It is worthwhile to make charity, even of the cost of one of your daily meals, in order to help those millions of homeless and sick survivors – not only for their immediate help, but also for the long term construction of villages and factories, for the creation of jobs, if the governments can organise them. If you don't have any money to donate, maybe you can go without dinner one time and offer that.

My suggestion is especially good for alcoholics, or people who like to drink alcohol, because you are not only wasting your money but you are wasting all the money your parents so kindly worked so hard to earn for your upbringing and education. They worked so many years to be able to pay for your education in school, college and university; for you to become a kind and good human being; to be healthy and have a long life. Finally, you found a job, you used your perfect human body to make money and now you use that for your own comfort, not for your survival but only for pleasure. It's a total waste.

Not only that, it destroys your health and endangers yourself and others' lives, through car accidents or fighting with your wife, husband, children and other people; it makes you lose your job and your wealth. It causes you to engage in many evil actions, endangering yourself and others with your uncontrolled mind. No shame.

However, if one makes charity of this beer money to the world, even to one sick or homeless person or to educate a child, it is so useful. Here you can donate for millions of people just by giving \$100, \$10 or even \$5, whatever. It will cover many millions of people because it mixes with the general funds.

For example, in monasteries, even if you can't offer tea to thousands of monks, just offering one tea bag or some tea leaves to the main pot covers all the monks so you get the benefit of offering tea to thousands of monks. The point is that you collect that much merit.

During Buddha's time, somebody who had nothing offered medicinal drinks to four monks. From that karma, the person was born in the next life as an Indian king, with much power and wealth. Because karma is expandable, the result is you experience so many chances, not only in one life but in hundreds and thousands of lifetimes.

Because of holding vows, monks become holy objects; the more vows, the higher the object, so anyone who makes offerings receives much greater merit and from that merit they can have enjoyable lives over many lifetimes. This is by being an ordained person. Simply living in the vows you can benefit so many sentient beings, even though you are not famous and don't have great scriptural knowledge. Simply living in the vows every day you become a very powerful source of happiness to others. They collect so much powerful merit from you. By living in the vows you stop so much harm to yourself and others in the world. One vow stops those harmful negative karmas. You make a vow to abandon negativity, to live in morality. Each morality you practice becomes an incredible source of peace and happiness, not only for you but for your family and all the living beings in the area, in the country and in the world, because living in morality you have peace of mind and abstain from vices.

Not abstaining from vices means no peace of mind. Well-trained peaceful actions support a peaceful mind. On that basis only can you gain realisations of perfect meditation and great insight, from which you can have wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, the arya path. Then you can directly cease the delusions and karma, including the seeds of delusions. This is how you achieve nirvana, total liberation, freedom for ever from the ocean of samsaric suffering and its causes. Also, by actualising bodhicitta and entering the Mahayana path you are able to cease the subtle defilements, with all those extensive collections of merit. Then you are able to achieve the limitless qualities of Buddha's holy body, holy speech and holy mind. Then you are able to do perfect work for sentient beings, freeing them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bringing them to full enlightenment. Not only to cease the continuity of samsaric rebirth but able to bring them to full enlightenment.

This is talking about the sangha but as another example, these five million people need shelter and food, and in the long-term, factories to create jobs. If it costs \$1 billion, if there is \$1 less it cannot become \$1 billion so your contribution of \$1 helps it to become \$1 billion.

Regarding alcoholics and smokers... finally in the west it is being discovered more and more how these substances cause cancer. They make the body very dirty, impure and that affects the mind. It's like putting drink into a dirty cup – it becomes dirty. Recently, on the TV or radio, I heard a doctor from a western country saying they have discovered that alcohol causes cancer. He was talking about this discovery as his own experience.

Nowadays, smoking is forbidden in many places. Anyway, if somebody is happy smoking or is unable to stop, here you can spend that money to make charity to others. Each dollar you spend on smoking can help millions of people. This also can apply to drug addicts or people who take drugs. If you make donations of this to others, you get so much satisfaction, so much happiness because there are so many millions of people, so much suffering. For others it is a matter of survival, for you it's not. Because you can see the need it gives so much satisfaction, makes you so happy. This happiness is peaceful, you can feel it deep inside, in your heart.

When you take drugs, you get some pleasure, and that's it, finished. That gives a desire to buy more and get the pleasure again. That again gives you desire for more – there's no end. Then you go to prison as punishment. Then you run out of money so you have to steal money to get drugs, or you give problems to your parents by stealing jewellery or money from them. So it creates many problems for others, especially for your own most kind parents, and that is very heavy negative karma.

This is a good opportunity, a nice way to switch. Also you will be liberated from bad health, cancer and all those potential problems. You are free from that and free from the negative karma and all the resultant sufferings, a heavy, terrifying death and so many future lives of very deep suffering.

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