

Dana - The Practice of Generosity

Dana (pronounced "dah-na") is a Pali word meaning generosity. Dating back to the time of the Buddha, there has existed an interdependence between those who offer the teachings and those who receive them. The teachings are given freely, since they are considered priceless. Registration fees for retreats cover food, rental, transportation, and other Gendun Drubpa expenses. None of this money goes directly to the teachers.

Classes are also held on a donation basis. To allow the teachers and Study Group to continue their dharma work, support from the students is needed. There will be an opportunity to contribute at the end of each retreat and class.

In addition, the development of Gendun Drubpa has been funded almost entirely by donations from individuals. The completion of the planned developments will depend on the continued generosity of committed supporters. Your support of both Gendun Drubpa and the Enlightenment Stupa will allow Gendun Drubpa to flourish and others to benefit from the teachings.

According to the Buddha, generosity, or sharing what we have, is one of the central pillars of a spiritual life. In the act of giving we develop our ability to let go, cultivate a spirit of caring, and acknowledge the interconnectedness that we all share. The Buddha created a system to develop this quality of open-handedness whereby those who share the teachings are dependent on those who receive them. Monks and nuns go on daily alms rounds with a begging bowl, relying on the generosity of lay people for support in continuing their teaching and spiritual life.

It is the practice of dana that has kept the Buddhist tradition alive for more than 2,500 years in Asia, where committed supporters have given generously to establish networks of monasteries and retreat centers providing for millions of teachers and practitioners.

As this ancient teaching moves to the West, we hope to keep alive this joyful tradition.