

Dana

Dana means to give, whether in goods, money, or of oneself. Giving is its own reward. Being thanked or acknowledged for one's Dana is a double edged sword. In its deepest meaning Dana means to give of oneself for the sake of another without regard or concern for recognition or benefit. It is the practice of selflessness - a practice because we never seem to get it right, itself a calculating judgement. Simply put, people who give are happy in that giving - they are happy in the moment of giving - not before or after, not contemplating doing it nor reflecting on the deed done. Egolessness is the definition of happiness. The ego getting what it wants is called suffering. And just as the ego can never get enough of what it wants, and really does not need, it can never cease in creating its own suffering. Being egoless is not realistic nor particularly desirable - moving in egolessness is.

If you make a large donation to help people in suffering, try for a tax write-off, but don't let not getting a write-off stop you from giving. It is the conditionless giving that is happiness, and the closer we get to that the closer we get to happiness. Happiness cannot be acquired since it is the condition of giving of one self for the betterment of another. Bodhi, the awakening experience, is to see our attachment to the idea of self. Attachment is about our attachment to self. Attachment to things, fame, and power are but a consequence of our attachment to self. Giving ourselves for the betterment of others is its own reward, its own happiness.

“Just practice. good, do good for others, without thinking of making yourself known so that you may gain reward. Really bring benefit to others, gaining no thing for yourself. This is the primary requisite for braking free of attachment to self.

- Dogen Zenji

The English word "donation" is related to the "Dana" of its sister language Sanskrit

Gassho,

Rev Mas