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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhasa

### Summary

This article introduces the practice of generosity by making offerings on altars and to Dhamma teachers. The offerings on altars represents the four great elements of earth, water, fire and air. With the right intention, practitioners can use generosity to develop a mind that can connect with the particular deity the altar is honoring.

It is also virtuous for Buddhist practitioners to make flowers offerings to Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, family and friends.

### Offerings On Altars

Generosity, or Dana in Pali, is the first of the six perfections a person needs to cultivate within themselves if they wish to make progress along the Buddha Dhamma path. A generous mind provides a person with a greater capacity to comprehend the complex teachings of the Buddha and therefore work towards realizing His teachings.

Buddha Dhamma altars provide a student with an excellent opportunity to develop their generosity. By making regular offerings on a Buddha Dhamma altar, a practitioner can use generosity to develop a mind that can connect with the particular deity the altar is honoring.

Offerings on altars represent the four great elements of earth, water, fire and air. The earth element is represented by the offering of beautiful and abundant flowers, the water with bowls of clean, pure water, the fire by candles and the air element is represented with the offering of incense. As time passes, the flowers wilt, the water evaporates, the candles die out and the incense burns away reminding the student of the impermanent nature of phenomena and providing him with yet another opportunity to develop his generosity.

It is important to make offerings with the right intention. A student must remind himself that the purpose of the offering is to wake up for the sake of

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self and others. This means recollecting the five precepts, taking refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha and prompting the understanding of emptiness of the offering. These actions will increase the mind's purity and hence, the power of the offering.

For many centuries Dhamma Practitioners have understood the virtue in offering flowers to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, Family and friends.

The Buddha taught that due to cause and effect there are ten blessings arising from the offering of flowers.

These are:

1. Long Life
2. Good Health
3. Strength
4. Beauty
5. Wisdom
6. Ease along the Buddha Dhamma Path
7. Being born in beautiful environments
8. Born with good skin, hair and beautiful to look at
9. Always having a sweet-smelling body
10. Pleasant relationships with friends