

Thanksgiving Ceremony

As human beings, no one can avoid the vicissitudes of life which consists of constant changes between like/dislike, good/bad, gain/loss, love/hate, etc.

Good and Bad behaviors are a common characteristic of human nature. A person who carries more bad traits is someone who is morally bad; he/she is careless about obeying parents and never thinks about paying back what he/she has received from society. Such a person only knows about doing evil things such as hatred, selfishness, jealousy and trickery. This person will tend to payback his or her benefactor with wicked deeds.

In contrary, a person who carries more good characteristics is someone one who always treats others with sincerity and virtue even with his or her enemies. Such a person will always be a good son or daughter in the family; he or she will always be thinking about repaying whatever he or she receives from others. In other words, to such a person every minute is a moment of Thanksgiving, Honoring Parents and offering of the Three Treasures.

Due to the dualistic characteristics of human beings, there arise some individuals that are:

- * Sages with their doctrines, including rules and traditions that help people to behave kindly and morally

- * Bodhisattvas who emerge in different forms with profound dogmas aimed at arousing those who are sinking deeply into the dualism of “Good and Bad” and “Life and Death.”

Traditionally, we have different kinds of ceremonies or offerings handed down from generations. No matter what the celebrations or offerings which may differ by name, the meaning of all of them is the same. The most important part is to follow it in a serious and solemn manner, otherwise, retribution or karma cannot be avoided. Hence, before doing anything, one should think carefully and understand clearly what you are doing to avoid the consequence of “unconsciousness”.

To call it a “Thanksgiving,” our actions should represent the full meaning with respect to both our deeds and our understanding.

There are hundreds and thousands of ways to show this. No matter which method we chose, we should follow it completely and clearly with respect to our relationship between ourselves, and the external.

A ceremony in such a manner certainly implies sincerity, respect, mercy, equality, humbleness and reverence; this is done with wisdom.

On the other hand, holding a ceremony unconsciously by doing something in exchange, to show off, to fulfill a task, in disrespect, or even with a consequence of hurting others or animals, or to take another’s life as a means to repay and show gratefulness, how ironic and hurtful it is to the true meaning of Thanksgiving.

This is truly a cruel, inhumane, immoral and totally unconscious behavior! One must learn to be a wise person and have compassion towards all life. The close relationship of all beings is inseparable and the lives of all beings are bound together in the universe.

Why don’t we put ourselves in the place of the animals: pigs, cows, chickens, ducks, etc. Millions of turkeys are being killed every year; they experience the same feelings like us when facing their destiny. It’s an endless suffering!

We care about our mortality. We don’t want to experience pain, suffering or death, so too do other living beings (even small creatures like insects) have the same wish! As humans, we use our intelligence and power to take advantage and bully other beings without their permission.

Such brutal behaviors are rocking our universe! We shall receive the consequences of our foolish and unconscious conducts. To avoid these consequences or karma, we have to repent our folly wrong doings with sincerity and a vow not to repeat it otherwise no one can save us.

As previously stated, there are hundreds and thousands of ways to celebrate Thanksgiving, Honoring Parents or Offering of the Three Treasures depending upon your circumstances. The offering of material goods or even in spirit should be with respect, sincerity, humbleness and purity. A heartfelt offering without judgment or knowledge of gain, regardless of the size, quantity or value, will bring forth endless merit and blessings.

That's a true equality, a profound meaning of the truth! Hence, the poor and the rich with incense, a flower, a prostration or even with a look or a smile will be sufficient.

Today:

- With our body, mind as an incense/flower, we offer it to all Buddhas, all Patriarchs and all Sanghas.
- With our body, mind as an incense/flower, we offer it to our ancestors, our grandparents, parents from the past and present, our teachers and mentors.
- With our body, mind as an incense/flower, we offer it to our relatives near and far, our friends, our benefactors and enemies.
- With our body, mind as an incense/flower, we offer it to our heroes, martyrs, soldiers and those who fought for our freedom and safety.
- With our body, mind as an incense/flower, we offer it to all beings, creatures with sense or without sense and with form or without form.
- With our body, mind as an incense/flower, we offer it to all animals: pigs, cows, chicken, ducks, etc., especially the turkeys which have served as material offerings from Thanksgiving, Christmas all through New Years.
- We wish everyone regardless of religion, race, nationality, human and creatures alike from the past, present and future shall be liberated from suffering, pain, birth and death.
- We wish everyone health, peace and diligence in practicing The Great Way or their religion to become a truly perfect one.

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