



19 *Absolute Reality is the Only Foundation*

“Subhuti, what do you think? If anyone filled three thousand galaxies of worlds with the seven treasures and gave all away in gifts of alms, would he gain great merit?”

“Yes, indeed, World-Honoured One, he would gain great merit!”

Subhuti, if such merit was Real, the Tathagata would not have declared it to be great, but because it is without a foundation the Tathagata characterised it as “great.”

In this short chapter, Buddha again turns to the true meaning of Dana. He has said earlier that giving with self in mind results in no merit. The true dana is giving selflessly, or giving away the self. This dana comes from the unborn, the no-mind or no self, terms with which we are now familiar.

The Absolute Reality of the title is this unborn mind. To realise this unborn mind is not to know nothing, rather it is being open to everything. People often fear becoming lost if they drop the self, but according to all the great teachers, everything can be done from the selfless, unborn mind. This unborn mind has no time, no boundaries and cannot be measured.

Fear and loneliness will drive us to gossip, to entertainment and make-believe, the running mind

feeds the running mind and so we move further from our true self. This true self is full, there is no loneliness and nothing to fear.

If there is any reason for action, then it has no true merit, it cannot be done with equanimity. "Reason" here, means action with any selfish intent.

When there is a fear of losing the "me," we cling to something, and hence we become that thing. We may cling to convictions, possessions or superstitions. We may cling to Buddha or to emptiness, just as mistakenly.

We can care for the world, for others with joy if we are not looking for any reward. It all comes back to dropping the "me," with its ideas, prejudices, religions and so forth. Buddha said, "If you cling to me and my teaching, you really betray me."

