

The Practice of Generosity at Common Ground Meditation Center

Dana – the Pali Word for Generosity

Common Ground Meditation Center has adopted the practice of “Dana” as both a spiritual practice for the community and a practical way to meet the financial needs of the organization. Dana is the Pali word for generosity. Throughout Buddhist history spiritual teachings have been offered to people free of charge. In turn, those receiving the teachings supported the monks, nuns, lay teachers and various centers as best they could – completing the circle of giving and receiving. In this way the teachers, students and centers were protected by the spirit of generosity.

Dana as a Spiritual Practice

As a spiritual practice, generosity invites us to explore the effects of giving and receiving freely. Every participant is asked to reflect both on the joy of receiving the teachings and programs; and also on the joy of supporting the Center, the teachers and the community. There is no right way to practice dana except to bring greater and greater awareness to the process of giving and receiving. This is an opportunity to see any fear, greed and confusion as well as the basic goodness of a generous act. Mindfulness provides the necessary space needed to recognize and act on our generous intentions. This is often not an easy practice. At times we feel uncomfortable because we think that we did not give enough or that we gave too much. Once again, we simply take refuge in mindfulness. Only by listening can we discover an appropriate level of support.

Dana and Common Ground

Common Ground exists only because of people’s generosity. We can be inspired by this great history of giving, from the example of the Buddha on down to all the people in our community who have contributed their practice, efforts and resources over the years. Each of us in our own way can be part of this tradition of generosity. At Common Ground your contributions are used to support the teachers and paid staff, and to pay for all of the Center’s expenses. Mark Nunberg and Shelly Graf, the Center’s Guiding Teachers, receive their entire livelihood from your gifts. Other teachers at the center receive two-thirds of the contributions offered at their programs for support, the other money is used to support the Center’s operations. There are no suggested donations for the programs. Every person’s situation will be different. Some people may want to leave a contribution after each visit and others may find it more appropriate to come up with a weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly schedule. Contributing by check in this regular way helps to simplify the center’s bookkeeping. All donations to Common Ground are tax deductible. All donations by check are recorded and contributors will receive an acknowledgement at the end of the year for tax purposes. This way of supporting each other is meant to be a source of joy and connection, and an essential step in awakening the heart of freedom. Please feel free to ask questions and give feedback. This is a creative process and we expect that our understanding of generosity will deepen as we continue to practice and talk together.

2700 East 26th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55046 612-722-8260

info@commongroundmeditation.org

www.commongroundmeditation.org