

The Treasure of Things

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Tips of the Day · 2 min read

Every year we try to give away the stuff that we have accumulated - things that we don't use now such as two pressure cookers and things that people have left such as scarves, shoes and even coats. If we can't give them away, we try to take them to a charity and if they won't have them, to scrap. It is a practice I am developing to express gratitude to the object. I don't think the object is aware of my thankfulness. But, of course, that's not the point. In our society where objects are so cheap, we discard them without a blink. It wasn't so in the poor 50s in my childhood. A broken cup would deserve a severe reprimand and a reminder that 'cups cost money'. Recognising the preciousness of our homes, our clothes, our pens, our mobiles, (without which we can no longer live!), develops an attitude of treasuring things. And that brings joy to the heart. This treasuring of things assists our mindfulness. If everything is seen as a rare Ming vase, we will pick things up carefully, handle them carefully, put them down carefully. This is honouring the Buddha's last exhortation, 'Strive diligently'. And how can we possibly forget where we put the keys! However, a problem may arise with treasuring and that, of course, is attachment. So it is also good practice to remind ourselves that we can only use things. The idea of ownership is a psychological construct. The object does not feel owned. It can be used by a thief. It is a legal fiction, necessary for the orderly run of society. But how difficult it is to let go of something that has served you so well. I was bought a pair of boots at a cost 40\$! They were gloves to my feet. Lasted years and then water began to seep in. I tried all sorts of ways to maintain them, failing each time. Finally, I had to consign them to the wheely bin. But not without a lingering fear I would never find such a pair of boots again. Treasuring things also makes us tidy. Something I'm working on! Only in the rarest of cases, do meditators fold the blanket neatly. It's just another one of those useless, time wasting things we have to do. But bringing gratitude to mind, recognising the work that has gone into making it, acknowledging it as a gift of nature and how it keeps us warm, we would naturally fold it carefully. And when we do things carefully, we naturally do it beautifully. And when we do things beautifully, joy arises naturally. This is all part of our commitment to bring the Dhamma practice into everyday life.

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