



Dana in Action

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At SIMS, we have no paid staff to do the work needed to host our programs and events. But because our dharma center is all set up when we arrive, we can have the sense that everything is being taken care of when in fact, behind the scenes, a few dedicated volunteers are providing most of the effort. The truth is without the service of our sangha members, there would be no SIMS events. That's why we must all serve at some level; if we don't do it, the events we cherish just won't happen.

But serving the sangha is more than volunteering; it's more than a warm body to do a job or perform a function. It is simply Dharma practice. It is where we find our edge. When we are thrown in connection with others, we see where our attachments are; we see our clinging and our ego as well as our kindness, compassion and equanimity. So how does an act of dana or generosity, relate to meditation practice?

- In her book, *Lovingkindness*, Sharon Salzberg writes, *"The Buddha said that no true spirituality is possible without a generous heart. Generosity allies itself with an inner feeling of abundance—the feeling that we have enough to share."*

Giving dana in action

Gifts of service truly are the backbone and engine of our organization. The SIMS board recognizes that "dana in action" offered through service to the sangha is as important to the sangha as financial generosity. We encourage everyone to consider giving dana through service. To recognize and appreciate the importance of this form of dana, those who sign up in advance to volunteer onsite for any event are welcome to give volunteer service in lieu of a monetary donation to SIMS for the event registration. Our motivations to serve the sangha may differ and many of us will choose to both give dana financially and through service.

Volunteering through the on-line registration process

SIMS has added volunteer opportunities to the on-line registration page for Non-Residential Retreats. This allows us to check a box when we sign up to volunteer to help set up before the retreat or to staff the greeter table for a few hours. We can also sign up to be an overnight host of a retreatant from out of town.

Sangha pitches in

When we gather for a retreat, we're in sangha for the day. We sit under the same roof and share the same resources. We can pitch in to help keep the space comfortable and orderly. Event managers will ask those of us in attendance to help set up the main hall and tea station, manage lunch tables, and clean up after a retreat. Simple instruction cards lead new volunteers through their tasks under the guidance of an event manager. In our sangha, we can never fail. It's all practice.

SIMS is working to reorganize the volunteer structure and engage new volunteers

A group of lead volunteers is taking a closer look at the structure, roles and responsibilities of volunteers. The group has been asked to think outside the box to look for greater efficiencies. At a

recent meeting, many people said volunteering was how they connected with the sangha when they were new.

The door is open

If you have been waiting for an invitation to volunteer, the door to the SIMS Center is open. Follow your impulse to give service and come inside; you are warmly welcome. To learn more about volunteer opportunities contact Volunteer Coordinator, Susan Alotrico at volunteer@seattleinsight.org.