

SHARING THE MERIT

It is suggested that the leader for the evening recite a version of Sharing the Merit. This is a short, informal, non-ritualistic recitation that takes less than a minute and typically is done after the discussion and before announcements. It can also be done in the circle at the very end of the evening.

We recite sharing to merit to remind us that we don't practice for ourselves but, rather, we practice to alleviate suffering in all beings. In our tradition, there is no formal, or specifically-required version of "Sharing the Merit." Often, the leader improvises with something along the lines of:

We dedicate the benefit of our practice tonight to alleviate the suffering of all beings, everywhere.

Or,

May the benefit of our practice tonight serve to alleviate the suffering everyone in this sangha and all beings, everywhere.

Another version is found in the Plum Village *Chanting from the Heart* book:

Reciting the sutras, practicing the way of awareness,

Gives rise to benefits without limit.

We vow to share the fruits with all beings.

We vow to offer tribute to parents, teachers, friends and numerous beings

Who give guidance and support along the path.

Or, feel free to improvise your own version. The important part isn't the exact words but, rather, that, particularly in our tradition of "engaged Buddhism," our practice is motivated by the desire to achieve deeper understanding, which leads to an end of suffering.