

Helping Others to Mature: Four Ways to Gather Disciples

Training in the 4 Ways to Gather Disciples that help others to Mature

5 Parts:

1. What the 4 ways to gather disciples are
2. The reason that they are stipulated as four
3. Their Functions
4. The need for those who gather a following to rely on them
5. A somewhat elaborate explanation

1. What the 4 ways to gather disciples are

1. **Generosity** - as explained in the section on this perfections
2. **Pleasant Speech** - teaching the perfections to disciples
3. **Working at the aims** - setting disciples to work on the aims as they have been taught, or involving them in correctly taking up these aims
4. **Consistency of behavior** - stabilizing yourself in the very aims in which you have established others, and then training in them.

2. The reason that they are stipulated as four

Q: Why are the ways of gathering disciples set as four?

A: In order to gather a following of disciples for the sake of establishing them in virtue, they must first be pleased. This relies on giving them material things, providing benefit to their bodies. Thus pleased, they first must know how to connect to the path. That is to say, by using pleasant speech to explain the teaching, you cause them to cast away ignorance and doubt, and then correctly apprehend the aims. Once they have understood these, you cause them to accomplish virtue by working at these aims.

However, if you do not accomplish virtue yourself, when you tell them what to do and not to do, they will say "Why do you tell us to do this, but you yourself dont?" They will not listen to what they have to practice.

But if you are practicing yourself, they will think "This person is established in the virtue to which

he or she is leading us, so we will definitely derive benefit and happiness if we accomplish it." They need engage in it anew, or for those already engaged, they do not reject it, and become stable in it. **So for this, you have to be consistent in your behavior.**

3. Their Functions

Q: What do these 4 ways to gather disciples do for the disciples?

A: **Generosity** makes them fit vessels to hear the teaching, it makes them happy with the person who explains it. **Pleasant speech** makes them take interest in the teaching that is to be given, because it gives them a detailed understanding of the aims and dispels their doubt.

Working at the aims makes them practice in accord with what they have been taught.

Consistency of behavior makes those who have engaged in the teachings not reject them but practice for a long time.

By the first they become vessels;
By the second they take interest;
By the third they practice;
By the fourth they train;

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4. The need for those who gather a following to rely on them

Because the buddhas have declared these 4 ways to gather disciples to be what achieves all the aims of all disciples and to be the superb method, those gathering a following must rely upon them.

Those involved in gathering a following
Rely on this means;
It is praised as a superb method,
Achieving all aims for all.

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5. A somewhat elaborate explanation

There are 2 types of pleasant speech:

1. **associated with worldly customs** - you first assume a clear expression free of anger,

give a smile, and then please living beings in worldly ways, such as inquiring about their health, etc.

2. **associated with presenting the perfect teachings** - you instruct living beings in the teaching for their benefit and happiness, beginning with teachings on developing faith, ethical discipline, study, generosity, and wisdom

The avenues of pleasant speech are as follows:

- **toward a hostile enemy** - say helpful words without a fault in your heart
- **very dull witted** - you willingly rise to the challenge, tirelessly giving talks on the teaching and causing them to adhere to virtue
- **devious beings who deceive their masters, abbots, etc, and engage in wrongdoing** - you speak pleasantly with helpful words and without anger, teaching even the most difficult persons
- **to those whose minds have not matured** - give discourses to them on the preliminary practices such as generosity and ethical discipline so they will have higher rebirths
- **to those whose minds have matured who are rid of obscuration and possess a joyful frame of mind** - you reveal the foremost and perfect teaching of the four noble truths.
- **householders and renunciates who are careless** - encourage them to be conscientious
- **to those who have doubts** - you speak elaborately and explain the teaching to them to dispel their doubts

Working at the aims is two-fold:

1. bringing the immature to maturity
2. liberating the mature

It is also presented in three parts as follows:

1. Involving persons in taking up the aims of this life

causing them to employ means consistent with the teaching to acquire, to protect, and to increase their resources

2. Involving the persons in taking up the purpose of future lives

to establish persons in the life of a renunciate who lives as a mendicant after they have rid themselves of possessions. Although this is certain to bring happiness in future lives, it is not certain to do so in this life.

3. Involving the persons in taking up the aims of both this and future lives

causing householders and renunciates to take up freedom from mundane and supramundane attachment, for this degenerates physical and mental pliancy in the present life, and the attainment of a purified deity and nirvana in the future

Work at the aims even when it is very difficult

It is difficult for:

- those who have not previously accumulated roots of virtue to take up virtue
- those who have a lot of resources because they live in a situation where there are so many grounds for being unconscientious.
- those indoctrinated with the views of non-Buddhist philosophers because they are hostile to the teachings, and because of their foolishness, do not understand reasoning

With respect for the stages of working at the aims:

1. first cause those with childlike intelligence to follow easy personal instructions
2. when their understanding has reached a middling level, have them follow intermediate instructions
3. when their wisdom has greatly expanded, you have them follow the profound teaching and subtle personal instructions

Consistency of behavior means that you maintain practices equal to or superior to those in which you establish others.

Some who are undisciplined use reasonable words, but
Contradict these words, so they are called "unable to help others to discipline themselves"
Knowing this, you placed all living beings in your heart,
And strove to discipline yourself wherever you had lacked discipline before

Praise of Infinite Qualities

The four ways to gather disciples also comprise two categories:

1. gathering disciples via material things
2. gathering disciples through the teaching

Giving materials is the first of the four ways. The remaining three of the four ways are included in the second, gather disciples through the teaching.

Moreover, these four ways to gather disciples are the way all the bodhisattvas of the three times work for the welfare of others, so it is the single path to travel

All those who have gathered disciples,
Are gathering, or will gather them
Do so in this way; Therefore, this is the path
For the maturation of living beings

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In general, then, though the bodhisattva deeds are limitless, the six perfections and the four ways to gather disciples are their best summation

For Bodhisattvas have just 2 tasks:

1. the maturation of causal collections for their own buddhahood
2. the maturation of the mindstreams of living beings

they accomplish both of these through these through the perfections and the ways to gather disciples

The perfections bring to complete maturation the buddha qualities you will have yourself. The ways to gather disciples bring all living beings to complete maturation. In sum, know these qualities to be the active expression of a bodhisattva's virtuous qualities

Bodhisattva Bhumis

Therefore, I have set forth in this section these 2 categories of practice. If you want to know them in more detail, look in the **Bodhisattva Bhumis**.

With respect to the way these practices are done during and after meditative equipoise, the Great Elder says:

The deeds of bodhisattvas are
The magnificent 6 perfections and so forth
The yogi arise from meditative equipoise
Resolutely accomplishes the path of accumulation

Atisha

Beginning bodhisattvas who have taken the vows and are on the path of accumulation practice only the 6 perfections, whether in meditative equipoise or subsequent to it.

During periods after rising from meditative equipoise,
Cultivate the view that all things
Are like a magician's illusions, as in the 8 similes.
Thereby emphasize in post-meditation thought

Purification and the training in method.
During periods of meditative equipoise
Continually condition yourself to
Serenity and insight in equal measure

Atisha

When bodhisattvas whose minds are untrained in such marvelous but difficult deeds hear of them, they feel distressed.

Although they are unable to practice such things at first, they come to understand them and then to intimately familiarize themselves with them as objects of aspiration.

Later they engage in them spontaneously without strain.

Thus familiarization is of the greatest importance, for if these bodhisattvas recognized their inability to actually engage in such deeds and then gave up on even the familiarization conducive to training the mind in them, they would greatly delay reaching the pure path

Deeds that hurt the worldly even to hear about
And that even you did not undertake for a long time
You accustomed yourself to, so in time they became spontaneous.
This, it is difficult to develop good qualities without familiarization

The Praise of Infinite Qualities

Those who have taken the bodhisattva vows have now choice but to learn the bodhisattva deeds.

But even those who have not adopted the engaged spirit of enlightenment through its ritual strive to inculcate a desire to learn the deeds, thus increasing the force of their enthusiasm for learning them. Then, when they take the vows, their vows will be extremely stable, so make an effort to do this.

From among the stages of the path for persons of great capacity, this concludes the explanation of the stages of the path for training in the aspirational spirit of enlightenment and for learning the deeds of the conquerors' children in general.

