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The bodhisattva's four methods of guidance are giving, kind speech, beneficial action, and identity action.

Giving

“Giving ” means nongreed. Nongreed means not to covet. Not to covet means not to curry favor. Even if you govern the Four Continents, you should always convey the authentic path with nongreed. It is like giving away unneeded belongings to someone you don't know,

Offering flowers blooming on a distant mountain to the Tathagata, or, again, offering treasures you had in your former life to sentient beings. Whether it is of teaching or of material, each gift has its value and is worth giving. Even if the gift is not your own, there is no reason to abstain from giving. The question is not whether the gift is valuable but whether there is genuine merit.

When you leave the way to the way, you attain the way. At the time of attaining the way, the way is always left to the way. When treasure is left just as treasure, treasure becomes giving. You give yourself to your self and others to others. The power of the causal relations of giving reaches to devas, human beings, and even

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First is giving or dana. Second is loving-speech. Third is beneficial-action. Fourth is identity-action.

Offering

Giving or offering means not being greedy. Not to be greedy means not to covet. Not to covet commonly means not to flatter. Even if we rule the four continents, in order to offer teachings of the true Way we must simply and unfailingly not be greedy. It is like offering treasures we are about to discard to those we do not know.

We give flowers blooming on the distant mountains to the Tathagata, and offer treasures accumulated in past lives to living beings. Whether our gifts are Dharma or material objects, each gift is truly endowed with the virtue of offering or dana. Even if this gift is not our personal possession, our practice of offering is not hindered. No gift is too small, but our effort should be genuine.

When the Way is entrusted to the Way, we attain the Way. When we attain the Way, the Way unfailingly continues to be entrusted to the Way. When material treasures remain as treasures, these treasures actually become dana. We offer ourselves to ourselves, and we offer others to others. The karma of giving

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[Four ways for a bodhisattva to act include] unconditional giving, compassionate words, [carrying out deeds that] benefit all beings and union with [or, identity with] the action (2).

Unconditional giving means to not be covetous. To be uncovetous may be more commonly understood as not currying favor. Even though we may rule over vast domains (3), to offer the Way directly and with certainty is simply not to be covetous (4). It is like offering something we are about to throw away to a person we do not know(5).

An offering of flowers to the Tathagata one after another without cessation (6), or offering something of value from a former lifetime to all sentient beings, whether it be something spiritual or material, the virtuous functioning of unconditional giving is commensurate with and inherent in each individual act (7). Although there is nothing that we possess by nature, this is no obstacle to unconditional giving. We should not look lightly on something we are about to give away, even though it may seem trivial to us, as the [inherent] virtue of that gift will surely bear fruit (8).

When the Way is entrusted to the Way, the Way has been attained. On gaining the Way, the Way has been entrusted to the Way (9). Only when a gift is entrusted to the [inherent qualities of the] gift does that treasure become an unconditional gift (10). Self is being offered to self, and other is being

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Translator's Introduction: The four exemplary acts are also known as the four wisdoms: charity, tenderness, benevolence, and sympathy. The first is offering alms. The second is using kindly speech. The third is showing benevolence. The fourth is manifesting sympathy.

Offering alms means not being covetous. Not being covetous means not being greedy. Not being greedy, to put it in worldly terms, includes not currying favors by groveling or flattery. If we want to bestow the Teaching of the Genuine Way, even if it were upon someone who rules over the four continents, we must do it without wanting anything in return. Offering alms, for example, is like bestowing upon strangers wealth that we freely part with.

Were we to offer to the Tathagata flowers from a far-off mountain or give to some sentient being a treasure coming from a previous life—be it Dharma or something material—in either case, the act would be endowed with the merit that accords with the offering of alms. There is the principle that even though such things are not something that we personally own, it does not hinder our offering them as alms. And the humbleness of such offerings is not to be despised, for it is the sincerity of these meritorious deeds that counts.

When we leave the Way to the Way, we realize the Way. When we realize the Way, the Way will invariably continue to be left to the Way. When treasures are left to being treasures, such treasures will invariably end up as alms offerings. We bestow ‘self ’ on ourselves, and we bestow ‘other’ on others. The influence of this

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First is free giving. Second is kind speech. Third is helpful conduct. Fourth is cooperation.

"Free giving"2 means not being greedy. Not being greedy means not coveting. Not coveting means, in everyday language, not courting favor.3 Even if we rule the four continents, if we want to bestow the teaching of the right truth, we simply must not be greedy. That might mean, for example, donating treasures that are to be thrown away to people we do not know.

When we offer flowers from distant mountains to the Tathagata, and when we donate treasures accumulated in our past life to living beings, whether [the gift] is Dharma or material objects, in each case we are originally endowed with the virtue that accompanies free giving. There is a Buddhist principle that even if things are not our own, this does not hinder our free giving. And a gift is not to be hated for its small value, but its effect should be real.

When we leave the truth to the truth, we attain the truth. When we attain the truth, the truth inevitably continues to be left to the truth. When possessions are left to be possessions, possessions inevitably turn into gifts. We give ourselves to ourselves, and we give the external world to the external world. The

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enlightened sages. When giving becomes actual, such causal relations are immediately formed.

The Buddha said, “When a person who practices giving goes to an assembly, people take notice.” Know that the mind of such a person communicates subtly with others. This being so, give even a phrase or verse of the truth; it will be a wholesome seed for this and other life times. Give your valuables, even a penny or a blade of grass; it will be a wholesome root for this and other lifetimes. The truth can turn into valuables; valuables can turn into the truth. This is all because the giver is willing.

A king [Emperor Tai of the Tang Dynasty] gave his beard as medicine to cure his retainers disease. A child offered sand to Buddha and became King [Ashoka] in a later birth. They were not greedy for reward but only shared what they could. To launch a boat or build a bridge is an act of giving. If you study giving closely, you see that to accept a body and to give up the body are both giving.

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pervades the heavens above and our human world alike. It even reaches the realm of those sages who have attained the fruits of realization. Whether we give or receive, we connect ourselves with all beings throughout the world.

The Buddha said, “When a person who practices dana comes into an assembly, other people watch that person with admiration.” We should know that the mind of such a person quietly reaches others. Even if we offer just one word or a verse of Dharma, it will become a seed of goodness in this lifetime and other lives to come. Even if we give something humble—a single penny or a stalk of grass—it will plant a root of goodness in this and other ages. Dharma can be a material treasure, and a material treasure can be Dharma. This depends entirely upon the giver’s vow and wish.

Offering his beard, a Chinese emperor harmonized his minister’s mind. Offering sand, a child gained the throne. These people did not covet rewards from others. They simply shared what they had according to their ability. To launch a boat or build a bridge is the practice of dana paramita. When we understand the meaning of dana, receiving a body and giving up a body are both offerings.

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offered to other (11). The virtuous power of unconditional giving that is present in the conditions and characteristics of all things is transmitted to those living in the heavenly and human realms; it is felt as well by those at various levels in their practice (12). This is because the giving [inherent in the gift] serves to connect all things—the giver [actually becomes one] with the receiver.

The Buddha has said that when a new entrant who is well known for having offered freely comes into the assembly, everyone greets him/her with warm anticipation (13). You should understand that such a spirit [of giving] becomes transmitted deeply and without fanfare. In that same way, one word or one verse of the Dharma teaching becomes an offering as well. Such becomes a seed for carrying out good (14) in this and other lives. A trifling sum, even a blade of grass, should never be withheld; this, too, possesses giving, it becomes the root that functions as a power engendering good (15) in any age (16). The Teaching of the Dharma is a treasure; material treasures are also dharmas, either one depending on the fervency of our vow (17).

It is true that when it is called for, even the offering of one’s beard [as medicine for healing] can bring health into another’s life (18). One child’s offering of sand enabled him to become king in a later generation (19). These examples show unsparing gratefulness, they were people willing to share their strength [wealth] freely, of their own will. Unconditional giving is crossing over (20); it is like providing a boat or building a bridge. We truly practice (21) giving when we use the life we have been given [for the benefit of all].

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offering of alms not only penetrates far into the realms of those in lofty positions and of those who are ordinary people, but also permeates the realms of the wise and the saintly. This is because when people have become capable of accepting an offering of alms, they have therefore already formed a link with the donor.

The Buddha once remarked, “When a donor comes into a monastic assembly, others admire that person right from the start. You should realize that they have tacitly understood the heart of that person.” As a consequence, should we offer only one sentence or one verse of the Dharma as alms, it will become a good seed in this life and in future lives. Should we offer the gift of even a single coin or a single blade of grass as alms, it will sprout good roots in this generation and in future generations. Dharma can be wealth and wealth can be Dharma—which it is depends on our wish and our pleasure.

Truly, bestowing one’s beard on another once put someone’s mind in order, and an offering of a few grains of sand once gained someone the rank of king. These people did not covet some reward, but simply shared what they had. Providing a ferry or building a bridge as an alms offering creates a way to the Other Shore. When we have learned well what the offering of alms means, then we can see that accepting oneself and letting go of oneself are both offerings of alms.

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direct and indirect influences of this giving pervade far into the heavens above and through the human world, even reaching the wise and the sacred who have experienced the effect. The reason is that in becoming giver and receiver, the subject and object of giving are connected;

this is why the Buddha says, *“When a person who gives comes into an assembly, others admire that person from the beginning. Remember, the mind of such a person is tacitly understood.”* So we should freely give even a single word or a single verse of Dharma, and it will become a good seed in this life and in other lives. We should freely give even a single penny or a single grass-stalk of alms, and it will sprout a good root in this age and in other ages.⁵ Dharma can be a treasure, and material gifts can be dharma—it may depend upon [people’s] hopes and pleasures.

Truly, the gift of a beard can regulate a person’s mind,⁶ and the service of sand can gain a throne.⁷ Such givers covet no reward, but just share according to their ability. To provide a boat or to build a bridge are free giving as the dana-paramita.⁸ When we learn giving well, both receiving the body and giving up the body are free giving. Earning a living and doing productive work are originally nothing other than free giving. Leaving flowers to the wind, and leaving birds to time,⁹ may also be

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Making a living and producing things can be nothing other than giving. To leave flowers to the wind, to leave birds to the seasons, are also acts of giving.

Great King Ashoka was able to offer enough food for hundreds of monks with half a myrobalan fruit. People who practice giving should understand that King Ashoka thus proved the greatness of giving. Not only should you make an effort to give, but also be mindful of every opportunity to give. You are born into this present life because you originally embodied the merit of giving [in the past].

The Buddha said, “If you are to practice giving to yourself, how much more so to your parents, wife, and children.” Thus, know that to give to yourself is a part of giving. To give to your family is also giving. Even when you give a particle of dust, you should rejoice in your own act, because you authentically transmit the merit of all buddhas, and begin to practice an act of a bodhisattva.

The mind of a sentient being is difficult to change. Keep on changing the minds of sentient beings, from the moment that you offer one valuable, to the moment that they attain the way. This should

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Earning a livelihood and managing a business are nothing other than giving. Trusting flowers to the wind, and trusting birds to the season may also be the meritorious action of dana. When we give and when we receive, we should study this principle:

Great King Ashoka’s offering of half a mango to hundreds of monks was a boundless offering. Not only should we urge ourselves to make offerings, but we must not overlook any opportunity to practice dana. Because we are blessed with the virtue of offering, we have received our present lives.

The Buddha said, “One may offer and use one’s own gift; even more, one can pass it to one’s parents, wife, and children.” Therefore we should know that giving to ourselves is a kind of offering. To give to parents, wife, and children is also offering. Whenever we can give up even one speck of dust for the practice of dana we should quietly rejoice in it. This is because we have already correctly transmitted a virtue of the buddhas, and because we practice one dharma of a bodhisattva for the first time.

The mind of a sentient being is difficult to change. We begin to transform the mind of living beings by offering material things, and we resolve to continue to transform them until they attain the Way. From

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Fundamentally, there is nothing in making a livelihood or in producing various things for our daily lives that is not giving (22). Entrusting the flowers to the wind and the birds to time, the results of freely giving is the manifestation of unconditional giving (23).

King Asoka gave half a mango to several hundred monks with all his heart. To clarify the truth of his act as a great offering is something for those who are on the receiving end of the giving should emulate through their own practice. It is not just a matter of physically exerting ourselves, we must be constantly looking out for opportunities to offer [ourselves]. Truly, it is due to inherent unconditional giving that we are who we are today.

The Buddha said, “Unconditional giving functions through oneself; of course, when such giving is directed towards one’s family, that is all the better”(24). So, the functioning of unconditional giving for the benefit of oneself is the full functioning of such giving and, unconditional giving to one’s family is also the totality of unconditional giving. Even when our action is one we would normally be expected to perform, if for the sake of unconditional giving, though it involves the loss of only a trifling to oneself, we should be deeply pleased at another’s joy (in receiving the benefit), because it shows that one virtue of all buddhas has been directly transmitted. Moreover, it reflects the practice of one dimension of the bodhisattva spirit.

It is most difficult to change the rigid, habitual mind of sentient beings. Still, from the first, you should aspire to work with the [narrow and biased] mind like the change involved in planting a

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Earning a living and doing productive work have never been anything other than an offering of alms. Leaving flowers to float upon the wind and leaving birds to sing in their season will also be meritorious training in almsgiving.

Upon his deathbed, the great King Ashoka offered half of a mango to several hundred monks as alms. As persons who are capable of accepting alms, we need to explore well the principle that this great alms gift points to. Not only should we make physical efforts to give alms, but we should also not overlook opportunities to do so. Truly, because we have inherited the merit from having given alms in past lives, we have obtained the human body that we now have.

“Even if you give alms to yourselves, there can be merit, and how much more so were you to give alms to your parents, spouse, or children!” As a consequence of this statement, I have realized that even giving to oneself is a part of almsgiving, and giving to one’s parents, spouse, or children will be almsgiving as well. Should we let go of a single dust mote of defiling passion as an alms offering, even though it is done for our own sake, we will feel a quiet, heartfelt gratitude because we will have had one of the meritorious deeds of Buddhas genuinely Transmitted to us, and because, for the first time, we will be practicing one of the methods of bodhisattvas. (*See Glossary).

What is truly hard to turn around is the heart and mind of sentient beings. By making one offering, we begin to turn their mental state around, after which we hope to keep turning it around until they realize

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the meritorious conduct of free giving. Both givers and receivers should thoroughly learn the truth which certifies that

Great King Asoka's being able to serve half a mango¹⁰ as an offering for hundreds of monks is a wide and great service of offerings.¹¹ We should not only muster the energy of our body but should also take care not to overlook suitable opportunities. Truly, it is because we are originally equipped with the virtue of free giving that we have received ourselves as we are now.

The Buddha says, *"It is possible to receive and to use [giving] even if the object is oneself, and it is all the easier to give to parents, wives, and children."* Clearly, to practice it by oneself is one kind of free giving, and to give to parents, wives, and children may also be free giving. When we can give up even one speck of dust for free giving, though it is our own act we will quietly rejoice in it, because we will have already received the authentic transmission of one of the virtues of the buddhas, and because for the first time we will be practicing one of the methods of a bodhisattva.

What is hard to change is the mind of living beings.¹² By starting with a gift we begin to change the mental state of living beings, after which we resolve to change them until they attain the truth. At the outset we

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be initiated by giving. Thus, giving is the first of the six paramitas [realizations].

Mind is beyond measure. Things given are beyond measure. And yet, in giving, mind transforms the gift and the gift transforms mind.

“Kind speech” means that when you see sentient beings, you arouse the heart of compassion and offer words of loving care. It is contrary to cruel or violent speech.

In the secular world, there is the custom of asking after someone’s health. In the buddha way there is the phrase “Please treasure yourself ” and the respectful address to seniors, “May I ask how you are? ” It is kind speech to speak to sentient beings as you would to a baby.

Praise those with virtue; pity those without it. If kind speech is offered, little by little kind speech expands. Thus, even kind speech that is not ordinarily known or seen comes into being. Be willing to practice it for this entire present life; do not give up, world after world, life after life. Kind speech is the basis for

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the beginning we should make use of offering. This is the reason why the first of the six paramitas is dana-paramita.

The vastness or narrowness of mind can not be measured, and the greatness or smallness of material things can not be weighed. But there are times when our mind turns things, and there is offering, in which things turn our mind.

Loving-speech

Loving-speech means, first of all, to arouse compassionate mind when meeting with living beings, and to offer caring and loving words. In general, we should not use any violent or harmful words.

In society, there is a courtesy of asking others if they are well. In the buddha way, we have the words “Please treasure yourself,” and there is a disciple’s filial duty to ask their teachers “How are you?” To speak with a mind that “compassionately cares for living beings as if they were our own babies” is loving-speech.

We should praise those with virtue and we should pity those without virtue. From the moment we begin to delight in loving-speech, loving-speech is nurtured little by little. When we practice like this, loving-speech, which is usually not known or seen, will manifest itself. In our present life we should practice

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treasure seed that will grow until one has completely gained the Way. In the beginning, that seed is the seed of unconditional giving. That is why the first of the six paramitas is that of unconditional giving—fuse.

Do not try to measure the magnanimity or pettiness of mind, nor endeavor to figure out whether a thing is large or a small. Sometimes, [our frame of] mind moves things; at other times, things have an influence on our [frame of] mind (25).

Algo or compassionate words means to arouse a loving or benevolent attitude, offering words of care and concern for all beings. Surely, using rough or violent language will naturally decline.

In any civil society, people inquire of each other as to how everything is going as a simple courtesy. In Buddhist circles, we part with words to the affect of taking care of the preciousness of the life we have been given (26). Inquiry as to the health of those who are older or above us is also an expression of devotion (27). Bearing in mind the words of the Lotus Sutra in which it is mentioned that taking care of sentient beings is like taking care of one’s children is an example of aigo (28).

Give credit to and praise those with excellent character and show compassion towards those lacking in such a virtue. From the time one first seeks to employ compassionate words, those words will gradually abound (in one’s speech). Therefore, as the days pass, in ways

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the Way. From this beginning, we should by all means continue to assist them by making alms offerings. This is why the first of the Six Paramitas is the Almsgiving Paramita. The size of any mind is beyond measure: the size of any thing is also beyond measure. Be that as it may, there are times when the mind turns things around and there is also the practice of almsgiving, whereby things turn the mind around.

Kindly speech means that when we encounter sentient beings, we first of all give rise to feelings of genuine affection for them and offer them words that express our pleasure in knowing them. To put it more broadly, we do not use language that is harsh or rude.

Even in secular society there are respectful customs for asking others how they are; in Buddhism there is the Master’s phrase, “May you take good care of yourself,” and there is the disciple’s greeting, “I have been wondering how you’ve been doing.” To speak with a feeling of genuine affection for sentient beings, as if they were still new-born babes, is what kindly speech is.

We should praise those who have virtue and pity those who do not. Through our having fondness for kindly speech, kindly speech gradually increases. Thus, even kindly speech that goes unrecognized or unnoticed will still manifest itself right before us. While our present life persists, we should become fond

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should always make use of free giving. This is why the first of the six paramitas is the dana-paramita.¹³ The bigness or smallness of mind is beyond measurement, and the bigness or smallness of things is also beyond measurement, but there are times when mind changes things, and there is free giving in which things change mind.

"Kind speech"¹⁴ means, when meeting living beings, first of all to feel compassion for them and to offer caring and loving words. Broadly, it is there being no rude or bad words.

In secular societies there are polite customs of asking others if they are well. In Buddhism there are the words "Take good care of yourself!"¹⁵ and there is the disciple's greeting "How are you?"¹⁶ Speaking with the feeling of compassion for living beings as if they were babies¹⁷ is kind speech.

We should praise those who have virtue and should pity those who lack virtue. Through love of kind speech, kind speech is gradually nurtured. Thus, kind speech which is ordinarily neither recognized nor experienced manifests itself before us. While the present body and life exist we should enjoy kind speech,

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reconciling rulers and subduing enemies. Those who hear kind speech from you have a delighted expression and a joyful mind. Those who hear of your kind speech will be deeply touched; they will always remember it.

Know that kind speech arises from kind heart, and kind heart from the seed of compassionate heart. Ponder the fact that kind speech is not just praising the merit of others; it has the power to turn the destiny of the nation.

“Beneficial action” is skillfully to benefit all classes of sentient beings; that is, to care about their distant and near future, and to help them by using skillful means. In ancient times, someone helped a caged tortoise; another took care of a sick sparrow. They did not expect a reward; they were moved to do so only for the sake of beneficial action.

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loving-speech without fail, and continue this practice through many lives. Whether subduing a deadly enemy or making peace, loving-speech is fundamental. When people hear loving-speech directly their faces brighten and their minds become joyful. When people hear of a someone else’s loving-speech, they inscribe it in their hearts and souls.

We should know that loving-speech arises from a loving mind, and that the seed of a loving mind is compassionate heart. We should study how loving-speech has power to transform the world. It is not merely praising someone’s ability.

Beneficial-action

Beneficial-action means creating skillful means to benefit living beings, whether they are noble or humble. For example, we care for the near and distant future of others, and use skillful means to benefit them. We should take pity on a cornered tortoise and care for a sick sparrow. When we see this tortoise or sparrow, we try to help it without expecting any reward. We are motivated solely by beneficial action itself.

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you will not see [yourself] and without realizing it, aigo will appear more and more through your words. While life continues to flow through your body, foster a spirit to use compassionate words at various times and in your various lives without backsliding. Compassionate words are fundamental to defeating any outrageous or malicious enemy or to reconciling with someone in high position.

Compassionate words directly bring joy to the hearer and great inner pleasure. To hear such words even indirectly, they become engraved on one’s heart and soul. Compassionate words arise from a benevolent mind, and a benevolent mind engenders the seed of love and affection. You should realize that compassionate words have the power to change the direction of the times (29). They are not merely used to praise the emperor.

Rigyou or actions benefiting all beings means to act in a sensitive and skillful way toward all living beings; regardless of whether they’re rich or poor, in high position or low; to carry out such actions in a way that will be of great worth and help to all. Concretely speaking, skillful means that benefit others is carefully considering and focusing on the enactment of such deeds for the near and distant future. Releasing a caged turtle, nourishing a sick sparrow—in both instances, there was no consideration for reward [on the part of those who carried out the deeds] (30). They simply felt moved to act in a beneficent way [by the power of rigyou].

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of speaking kindly, so that we do not regress or turn away from it for generation after generation and for life after life. Kindly speech is the foundation for overcoming those who are angry and hostile, as well as for promoting harmony among others. When we hear kindly speech that is spoken directly to us, it brightens our countenance and delights our heart. When we hear of kind speech having been spoken about us in our absence, this makes a deep impression on our heart and our spirit.

Keep in mind that kindly speech arises from a loving heart, and a loving heart makes compassion its seed. You should explore the idea that kindly speech can have the power to turn the very heavens around, and it is not merely a matter of praising someone’s abilities.

Showing benevolence means working out skillful methods by which to benefit sentient beings, be they of high or low station. One may do this, for instance, by looking at someone’s future prospects, both immediate and far ranging, and then practicing skillful means to help that person. Someone once took pity on a stricken turtle and another once tended to a sick sparrow. Neither of these people was seeking a reward; they simply acted from a feeling of benevolence.

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and we will not regress or deviate through many ages and many lives. Whether in defeating adversaries or in promoting harmony among gentlefolk, kind speech is fundamental. To hear kind speech spoken to us directly makes the face happy and the mind joyful. To hear kind speech indirectly etches an impression in the heart and in the soul.

Remember, kind speech arises from a loving mind, and the seed of a loving mind is compassion. We should learn that kind speech has the power to turn around the heavens; it is not merely the praise of ability.

"Helpful conduct"²⁰ means utilizing skillful means to benefit living beings, high or low; for example, by looking into the distant and near future and employing expedient methods to benefit them. People have taken pity on stricken turtles and taken care of sick sparrows. When they saw the stricken turtle and the sick sparrow, they did not seek any reward from the turtle and the sparrow; they were motivated solely by helpful conduct itself.

Foolish people think that if they help others first, their own benefit will be lost, but this is not so. Beneficial action is an act of oneness, benefiting self and others together.

To greet petitioners, a lord of old stopped three times in the middle of his bath to arrange his hair, and three times left his dinner table. He did this solely with the intention of benefiting others. He did not mind instructing even subjects of other lords.

Thus, benefit friend and enemy equally. Benefit self and others alike. If you have this heart, even beneficial action for the sake of grass, trees, wind, and water is spontaneous and unremitting. This being so, make a wholehearted effort to help the ignorant.

“Identity action” means nondifference. It is nondifference from self, nondifference from others. For example, in the human world the Tatha- gata took the form of a human being. From this we know that he did the same in other realms. When we know identity action, self and others are one.

Ignorant people may think that if we benefit others too much, our own benefit will be excluded. This is not the case. Beneficial-action is the whole of Dharma; it benefits both self and others widely.

In an ancient era, a man who tied up his hair three times while he took a bath, and who stopped eating three times in the space of one meal solely intended to benefit others. He never withheld instructions from people of other countries.

Therefore, we should equally benefit friends and foes alike; we should benefit self and others alike. Because beneficial actions never regress, if we attain such a mind we can perform beneficial-action even for grass, trees, wind, and water. We should solely strive to help ignorant beings.

Identity-action

Identity-action means not to be different—neither different from self nor from others. For example, it is how, in the human world, the Tathagata identifies himself with human beings. Because he identifies himself in the human world, we know that he must be the same in other worlds. When we realize identity-action, self and others are one suchness.

There are some people who foolishly think that if they put benefitting others ahead of themselves, they will surely lose out; however, benefitting others is not like that. Beneficial actions are actions that include everyone and all things including oneself.

There is the legendary example of an emperor who reset his hair three times before taking a bath and who vomited up his dinner on three different occasions [in order to hear those who came to him for advice]. He acted in this way in order to devote his efforts to benefiting those who brought him their entreaties. He couldn't help but try to benefit even the people of other countries in any way he could despite the inconvenience to himself.

Therefore, we should try to benefit equally both those with whom we are close as well as those we may despise, as benefitting others benefits oneself. If we are able to acquire such an attitude, then naturally we will benefit without ever backsliding or turning away in the same way the grasses and trees or the wind and rivers [never turn away], and manifest the principle of beneficial action. Endeavor to help those who are foolish or mistaken.

Douji

Douji refers to acting in correspondence without any difference. Identity of action never adversely affects oneself, nor does such an action [run counter to the best interests] of others. A human being as a tathagata is saying that a tathagata identifies with every human being. In the same way the tathagata identifies with the human world, there is identification with the other worlds (31) When we understand identity of action, there

Some people may foolishly think that if they were to put the welfare of others first, their own benefits would be reduced. This is not so. Benevolence is all-encompassing, universally benefiting both self and others.

A person long ago bound up his hair three times during the course of his taking a single bath, and thrice spat out what he had in his mouth during the course of a single meal. And he did so solely from a heart that would benefit others. He was not reluctant to instruct his son to do so, if his son should encounter guests from a foreign land.

So, we should act to benefit equally both those who are hostile and those who are friendly, and act for the benefit of both self and other alike. When we attain such an attitude of mind, our showing of benevolence will neither retreat nor turn away from anything, and this benevolence will be shown even towards grass and trees, wind and water. And, in all humility, we should engage ourselves in helping those who are given to foolishness.

☸ Manifesting sympathy

Manifesting sympathy means not making differences, not treating yourself as different and not treating others as different. For instance, the Tathagata was a human being just like other human beings. From His being the same as those in the human world, we know that He must have been the same as those in any other world. When we really understand what manifesting sympathy means, we will see that self and other are one and the same.

Stupid people think that if we put the benefit of others first, our own benefit will be eliminated. This is not true. Helpful conduct is the whole Dharma. It universally benefits self and others.

The man of the past who bound his hair three times in the course of one bath, and who spat out his food three times in the course of one meal, solely had a mind to help others. There was never a question that he might not teach them just because they were the people of a foreign land.

So we should benefit friends and foes equally, and we should benefit ourselves and others alike. If we realize this state of mind, the truth that helpful conduct naturally neither regresses nor deviates will be helpfully enacted even in grass, trees, wind, and water. We should solely endeavor to save the foolish.

“Cooperation”²⁵ means not being contrary. It is not being contrary to oneself and ²⁶ not being contrary to others. For example, the human Tathagata identified²⁷ himself with humanity. Judging from this identification with the human world we can suppose that he might identify himself with other worlds. When we know cooperation, self and others are oneness.

Lute, song, and wine are one with human beings, devas, and spirit beings. Human beings are one with lute, song, and wine. Lute, song, and wine are one with lute, song, and wine. Human beings are one with human beings; devas are one with devas; spirit beings are one with spirit beings. To understand this is to understand identity action.

“Action” means right form, dignity, correct manner. This means that you cause yourself to be in identity with others after causing others to be in identity with you. However, the relationship of self and others varies limitlessly according to circumstances.

The Guanzi says, “The ocean does not exclude water; that is why it is large. The mountain does not exclude soil; that is why it is high. A wise lord does not exclude people; that is why he has many subjects.”

That the ocean does not exclude water is identity action. Water does not exclude the ocean either. This being so, water comes together to form the ocean. Soil piles up to form mountains.

Harps, poetry, and wine make friends with people, with heavenly beings, and with spirits. People befriend harps, poetry, and wine. There is a principle that harps, poetry, and wine befriend harps, poetry, and wine; that people make friends with people; that heavenly beings befriend heavenly beings, and that spirits befriend spirits. This is how we study identity-action.

For example, “action” means form, dignity, and attitude. After letting others identify with our “self,” there may be a principle of letting our “self” identify with others. Relations between self and others vary infinitely depending on time and condition.

Guanzi says, “The ocean does not refuse water; therefore it is able to achieve vastness. Mountains do not refuse earth; therefore they are able to become tall. Wise rulers do not weary of people, therefore they form a large nation.”

That the ocean does not refuse water is identity-action. We should also know that the virtue of water does not refuse the ocean. This is why water is able to form an ocean and earth is able to form mountains.

is no difference between self and other.

Those things which are familiar and well-known—music, poetry, spirits (32)—become companions among human beings and deities above and on earth. Likewise, human beings become intimate with music, with poetry and literature and with spirits. Music becomes intimate with music, poetry with poetry and spirits with spirits. Human beings identify with human beings, the same for heavenly and earthly deities. This is the internalization of douji—identity of action.

For example, douji consists of deportment, of behavior, of attitude. Other identifies with us, and we identify with other. What is ‘self and ‘other’ has no boundary and is dependent on the situation.

Kanshi wrote, “The sea never turns away water and for that, it can do great things. A mountain never turns away more soil and for that, it performs feats of greatness. The emperor never loathes anyone and for that, he can lead the people” (33).

Know that the sea ‘s never refusing water is [an example of] identity of action. Neither does water turn away from the sea. Because of this, the water gathers into a sea; soil piles up to form a mountain.

Music, poetry, and wine have been companions for ordinary people, companions for those in lofty positions, and companions for the hosts of celestial beings. And there is the principle that ordinary people have been companions for music, poetry, and wine. And music, poetry, and wine have been companions for music, poetry, and wine. And ordinary people have been companions for ordinary people. And those in lofty positions have been companions for those in lofty positions. And celestial beings have been companions for celestial beings. This is what studying ‘manifesting sympathy’ means.

In particular, what the ‘manifesting’ in manifesting sympathy refers to is our ways of behaving, our everyday actions, and our attitudes of mind. In this manifesting, there will be the principle of letting people identify with us and of letting ourselves identify with others. Depending on the occasion, there are no boundaries between self and other.

It says in the *Kuan-tsu*,⁶ “A sea does not reject water, and therefore is able to bring about its vastness. A mountain does not reject soil, and therefore can bring about its height. An enlightened ruler does not despise ordinary people, and therefore can bring about a large populace.”

You need to realize that a sea’s not rejecting water is its being in sympathy with water. Further, you need to realize that the water has the complete virtue of not refusing the sea. For that reason, it is possible for waters to come together and form a sea, and for earth to pile up and form a mountain.

The proverbial harps, poems, and sake²⁸ make friends with people, make friends with celestial gods, and make friends with earthly spirits. [At the same time,] there is a principle that people make friends with harps, poems, and sake, and that harps, poems, and sake make friends with harps, poems, and sake; that people make friends with people; that celestial gods make friends with celestial gods; and that earthly spirits make friends with earthly spirits. This is learning of cooperation.

“The task [of cooperation]”²⁹ means, for example, concrete behavior, a dignified attitude, and a real situation. There may be a principle of, after letting others identify with us, then letting ourselves identify with others. [The relations between] self and others are, depending on the occasion, without limit.

Kanshi³⁰ says: “The sea does not refuse water; therefore it is able to realize its greatness. Mountains do not refuse earth; therefore they are able to realize their height. Enlightened rulers do not hate people; therefore they are able to realize a large following.”

Remember, the sea not refusing water is cooperation. Remember also that water has the virtue of not refusing the sea. For this reason it is possible for water to come together to form the sea and for the earth to pile up to form mountains.

My understanding is that because the ocean itself does not exclude the ocean, it is the ocean and it is large. Because mountains do not exclude mountains, they are mountains and they are high. Because a wise lord does not weary of people, his people assemble. "People" means the nation. "A wise lord" means ruler of the nation. A ruler is not supposed to weary of people. "Not to weary of people" does not mean to give no reward or punishment. Although a ruler gives reward and punishment, he does not weary of people. In ancient times, when people were less complicated, there was neither legal reward nor punishment in the country. The concept of reward and punishment was different.

Even at present, there should be some people who seek the way without expecting a reward. This is beyond the understanding of ignorant people. Because a wise lord understands this, he does not weary of people.

People form a nation and seek a wise lord, but as they do not completely know the reason why a wise lord is wise, they only hope to be supported by the wise lord. They do not notice that they are the ones who support the wise lord. In this way, the principle of identity action is applied to both a wise lord and all people. This being so, identity action is a vow of bodhisattvas. With a gentle expression, practice identity action for all people.

We should know in ourselves that because the ocean does not refuse to be the ocean, it can be the ocean and achieve greatness. Because mountains do not refuse to be mountains, they can be mountains and reach great heights. Because wise rulers do not weary of their people they attract many people. "Many people" means a nation. "A wise ruler" may mean an emperor. Emperors do not weary of their people. This does not mean that they fail to offer rewards and punishments, but that they never tire of their people. In ancient times, when people were gentle and honest, there were no rewards and punishments in the country. The idea of reward and punishment in those days was different.

Even these days, there must be some people who seek the Way with no expectation of reward. This is beyond the thought of ignorant people. Because wise rulers are clear, they do not weary of their people.

Although people always desire to form a nation and to find a wise ruler, few of them fully understand the reason why a wise ruler is wise. Therefore, they are simply glad to be embraced by the wise ruler. They don't realize that they themselves are embracing a wise ruler. Thus the principle of identity action exists both in the wise ruler and ignorant people. This is why identity-action is the practice and vow of a bodhisattva. We should simply face all beings with a gentle expression.

The sea knows itself intimately, so it does not reject itself and is able to do great things. Likewise, a mountain attains to great heights because it does not refuse itself. Precisely because the ruler does not loathe the people, he is able to govern well. The people form the country. The ruler refers to an emperor, and the emperor does not loathe the people. Though he does not loathe them it is not as though there were no reward and punishment. There is reward and punishment, but this does not derive from a loathing of the people. In ancient times when the country was at peace, there was no [need for] reward and punishment. Or if there was, it was not the same sort of reward and punishment as that of today.

Even now, there are some who pursue the Way oblivious to any reward they might receive, although this is totally beyond the comprehension of the foolish. Precisely because the ruler is perfectly clear [in his ways], he does not loathe the people.

And the people carry out the activities of the country willingly. Because it is highly unusual to know entirely the reasoning of a gifted ruler, people are happy just to think they are not despised by him. Because they identify with him, the people do not know that they are not disliked by him. For both the emperor and the blind, because of [this truth of] douji or identity of action, douji is one of the bodhisattva vows (34), although surely, both face all things with a softer countenance.

And you certainly know for yourself that because one sea does not reject another sea, it forms an ocean, which is something much bigger. And because one mountain does not reject another mountain, it forms a larger mountain, which is something much higher. And because an enlightened ruler does not despise ordinary people, he creates a large populace. A large populace means a nation. An enlightened ruler means an emperor. An emperor does not despise people. And even though he does not despise people, it does not mean that there are no rewards and punishments. And even though there are rewards and punishments, they do not come about because he despises people. Long ago, when people were submissive, nations were without rewards or punishments—at least to the extent that rewards and punishments then were not the same as those of today.

Even today, there may be people who seek the Way without expecting any reward, but this is beyond what foolish people concern themselves with. Because an enlightened ruler is clear-minded, he does not despise people.

Although people invariably form nations and try to seek out an enlightened leader, nevertheless those who completely understand the principle of what makes an enlightened ruler 'enlightened' are rare. As a result, even though they are happy enough about not being despised by an enlightened ruler, they do not comprehend that they mutually should not despise their enlightened ruler. As a consequence, there is the principle of manifesting sympathy which is for both enlightened rulers and unenlightened people. This is why bodhisattvas vow to practice

We can think to ourselves that because the sea does not refuse the sea it realizes the sea and realizes greatness, and because mountains do not refuse mountains they realize mountains and realize height. Because enlightened rulers do not hate people they realize a large following. "A large following" means a nation. "An enlightened ruler" may mean an emperor. Emperors do not hate the people. They do not hate the people, but that does not mean there is no reward and punishment. Even if there is reward and punishment, there is no hatred for the people. In ancient times, when people were unaffected, nations were without reward and punishment—at least in as much as the reward and punishment of those days were different from those of today.

Even today there may be people who seek the truth with no expectation of reward, but this is beyond the thinking of stupid men. Because enlightened rulers are enlightened, they do not hate people.

Although people always have the will to form a nation and to find an enlightened ruler, few completely understand the truth of an enlightened ruler being an enlightened ruler. Therefore, they are glad simply not to be hated by the enlightened ruler, while never recognizing that they themselves do not hate the enlightened ruler. Thus the truth of cooperation exists both for enlightened rulers and for ignorant people, and this is why cooperation is the conduct and the vow of a bodhisattva. We should face all things only with gentle faces.

Tanahashi & Richmond

Okumura & Senauke

Daitsu Tom Wright

Nearman Shasta Abbey

Nishijima & Cross

9

Each of these four methods of guidance includes all four. Thus, there are sixteen methods of guiding sentient beings.

Written on the fifth day, the fifth month, the fourth year of the Ninji Era [1243] by Monk Dogen, who transmitted dharma from China.

Because each these Four Embracing Dharmas include all the Four Embracing Dharmas, there are Sixteen Embracing Dharmas.

Written on the 5th day of the 5th lunar month in the 4th year of Ninji (1243) By Monk Dogen who went to Sung China
Even these days, there must be some people who seek the Way with no expectation of reward. This is beyond the thought of ignorant people. Because wise rulers are clear, they do not weary of their people.

All four of these attitudes are contained in each bodhisattva attitude thereby making sixteen.

Recorded: May 5th, 1243 by Shamon [Dogen], having received transmission of the teaching of the Buddhadharma in Sung, China

manifesting sympathy. And to do so, they need but face all things with a gentle demeanor.

Because each of these four exemplary acts completely encompasses all four exemplary acts, there will be, all told, sixteen exemplary acts.

Written down on the day of the Tango Festival in the fourth year of the Ninji era (May 24, 1243).
Written by the mendicant monk Dōgen who entered Sung China and received the Transmission of the Dharma

Because these four elements of sociability are each equipped with four elements of sociability, they may be sixteen elements of sociability.

Or if there was, it was not the same sort of reward and punishment as that of today.

Even now, there are some who pursue the Way oblivious to any reward they might receive, although this is totally beyond the comprehension of the foolish. Precisely because the ruler is perfectly clear [in his ways], he does not loathe the people.

And the people carry out the activities of the country willingly. Because it is highly unusual to know entirely the reasoning of a gifted ruler, people are happy just to think they are not despised by him. Because they identify with him, the people do not know that they are not disliked by him. For both the emperor and the blind, because of [this truth of] douji or identity of action, douji is one of the bodhisattva vows (34), although surely, both face all things with a softer countenance.

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