

## Buddha's four ways of Answering

- Pañha Sutta. AN 8:2

This sutta explains four skillful ways of answering questions:

1. There are questions that should be answered categorically, for example, yes or no answer.
2. There are questions that should be answered with an analytical (qualified) answer. You explain the answer in detail defining and redefining the terms.
3. There are questions that should be answered with a counter questions.
4. There are questions that should be put aside.

Buddha went on to say that "any persons who is practicing Dhamma (Buddha's teachings) will be skilled in the four types of questions: hard to overcome, hard to beat, profound, hard to defeat. He will know what is worthwhile and what is not, and will be proficient in recognizing both. He will reject what is worthless, and will grasp what is worthwhile. He is called who is prudent and wise"

Could we apply this to our daily lives? It will not be easy, but we can try.

Let me share with you some of my personal experience. A common mistake I make is trying to answer questions analytically when the answer should be a simple yes or no. This was an old habit of my mine that came with my training. This has got me in to lot of trouble in the past. Now I am a little more mindful on this. The other problem was I often failed to recognize the questions that should be put a side. This still happens and I have to be more mindful on this.

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"four-cornered" system of argumentation - *Catuṣkoṭi*