

Important points for reflection related to the 4th Session – 22th July 2021

1. What are the entry points of the Buddhist path in general, and particularly Shravakayana (foundational vehicle) and Mahayana? Why are they significant for Buddhist practitioners of different levels?
2. Define Bodhichitta. How can one understand Bodhi and the possibility for all beings to achieve it sooner or later? Is Bodhichitta limited to the wish to attain enlightenment for the sake of others or is it much more than that? Reflect upon the 37 qualities of Bodhichitta.
3. Reflect on Buddhanature, the basic goodness that we all share as sentient beings. What is the logic or fundamental reason behind this concept? How would one develop confidence in it?
4. Why are mental defilements not in our innate nature and what is the main reason behind the fact that once they are removed they won't recur or relapse?
5. If rivers can have different names in different places, can Bodhichitta have different names as one climbs up the ladder to enlightenment? If yes, what are they?
6. Using the Bodhichitta mindmap, try to find the many facets of Bodhichitta in various levels of path and bhūmis of the bodhisattvas and their interconnectedness?
7. Read the first chapter of Shantideva's Way of the Bodhisattvas on the Excellence of Bodhichitta and summarize its great qualities. Why is it important to reflect on its excellence?

Note on Bodhicitta's 37 qualities

Bodhicitta is not just limited to the aspiration to achieve enlightenment – of course that is the fundamental/foundation understanding of Bodhicitta, but there is more to it as we go along the path – what kind of qualities should Bodhicitta have in order to rediscover the full potential/the awakened state in us.

When we talk about Bodhicitta and go by the definition, the Bodhicitta is just limited to this aspiration to achieve enlightenment for others and that's it. No, Bodhicitta starts with that and when it is being nurtured it should have all these qualities, and is very important.

1. Bodhicitta is wise and not ignorant [?] the aspect of wisdom comes here.
2. It is compassionate/Empathetic and not cruel
3. It is loving, caring, gentle, soft, warm and tender, and not cunning, harsh, hard or cold
4. It is generous and not stingy
5. It is disciplined and not unrestrained [?] when it comes to the practice of discipline, when we do not have this power of restraint, how to have the control over our emotions and senses, to have control over our temptations, indulgences, etc. the aspect discipline comes in
6. It is patient and not angry or hateful
7. It is resilient and not fragile
8. It is spacious and not narrow
9. It is open and not closed
10. It is focussed and not distracted
11. It is profound and not shallow
12. It is clear and not deluded
13. It is careful and not careless
14. It is vigilant and not unheedful
15. It is mindful and not mindless
16. It is faithful and not-doubtful
17. It is diligent and not lazy
18. It is far-sighted and not short-sighted
19. All-encompassing and not partial [?] this is very important because Bodhicitta is not partial, it is all-encompassing. I
20. It also should have the element of fearless, being fearless/courageous and not frightened
21. Confident and not confused
22. It has the superior intent and not feeble minded
23. It is meritorious and not non-virtuous
24. Skilful [?] this is very important, a quality of the Bodhisattva is being skilful and not

incompetent

25. It is compromising – when one needs to accommodate beings, and because of the compassion it has the compromising aspect to it, where you can accommodate the weakness of others, where you can have the understanding and acceptance of the weakness of others.

26. Having said that when it comes to the truth one is uncompromising

27. One is flexible and not rigid

28. Balanced/free from extremes and not falling into the extremes

29. Accommodating and not competitive

30. Inclusive and not differentiative

31. Powerful and not weak

32. Detached – this is a very important aspect of Bodhicitta, it is detached and not attached

33. Selfless and not selfish

When the Bodhicitta gets refined and when it reaches the ultimate, becomes absolute Bodhicitta, then the qualities like:

34. Non-grasping and not grasping

35. Non-dual and not dualistic

36. Non-conceptual and not conceptual

37. Spontaneous and not calculated.

these are the qualities enumerated, there can be more qualities and not just limited to 37, but the most important qualities of Bodhicitta.