

Review Questions for Mahayana

These questions are a study guide for the Mahayana course. They can be used to review the course and uncover areas that need further discussion.

1. Why are the teachings of Hinayana presented before Mahayana? Specifically, what benefits from both the *practices* and the *teachings* of Hinayana serve as a ground for entry into Mahayana?
2. In the refuge vow, what are the three things a Buddhist takes refuge in?
3. What are the four immeasurables or the four limitless qualities? What makes these qualities limitless? How do they relate to aspiring bodhicitta?
4. What are the six paramitas? What makes them transcendent? Of the two stages of aspiring and entering, why is the practice of the paramitas said to be entering the bodhisattva path?
5. What does the bodhisattva vow to do? Doesn't his or her task seem impossible?
6. What is relative bodhicitta? What is absolute or ultimate bodhicitta? How do these two work together?
7. How can the lojong slogans help you to work with sticky situations in your life? Do any slogans readily come to mind for you?
8. When we hear teachings on emptiness we may experience many emotions, and in particular fear. Why does the Heart Sutra say "Since there is no obscuration of mind, there is no fear."?
9. What is the role of experiencing emptiness in giving rise to compassion? If giver, receiver and the act of giving are all empty of ultimate existence, does this mean that compassion really doesn't matter?
10. Why is the practice of compassion essential to realize Buddha Nature?
11. Of the five reasons why the teachings on Buddha Nature were given, which ones do you find most compelling and why? (The list of five is found in the essay for talk seven.)

Please prepare a paragraph or so reflecting on the following and bring to class.

How have the Mahayana teachings informed your life and influenced your interactions with others? How has your view or understanding changed during the course of this year's teachings?