

Exploration 14: Based on exercise 10 from class 5 and exercise 11 from class 6:

Review your lists of the adjectives and qualities, descriptors you associated with figures in exercise 10 and the same for exercise 11. Are there adjectives and qualities, descriptors that are shared in common? If so, make a list of these. If not, make a list of what you believe is shared, even if it is short.

If you have an image or images associated exercise 10 and 11, get them out and place them in front of you. Sit comfortably and let them appear to your eyes. Do you notice any other similarities that they represent? If so add them to your list. Then....

Relax again, and take another look. Are there any descriptors that are on your list as shared that you no longer believe are shared? If so, leave them on the list, but put a note on that descriptor. Then...

Using your list, look into your experience find examples of those descriptors as they might apply to you. Note the ones that you find in an instance or more of in your personal experience, and note the ones that you cannot find. Then...

Based on the list of ones that you do find your personal experience, ask yourself: how might they be distilled into a bodhisattva symbol? Then free of hope and fear, let your mind wander freely to find a visual representation that satisfies you. Once found, or not, once you feel distracted, then relax, aspire, and dedicate the merit.

If you feel like it and have time, make a representation of this very personal bodhisattva symbol.

## Exploration 15:

Pick a representation of a Buddha or Bodhisattva and, while seated comfortably, place it in front of you so it falls easily within your gaze.

Recalling enlightened body, speech, and mind, ask yourself: For me, does this image evoke wisdom, compassion, and/or the skillful means to overcome whatever obscures bodhicitta? Sit with that for a while and see what the representation offers. Then....

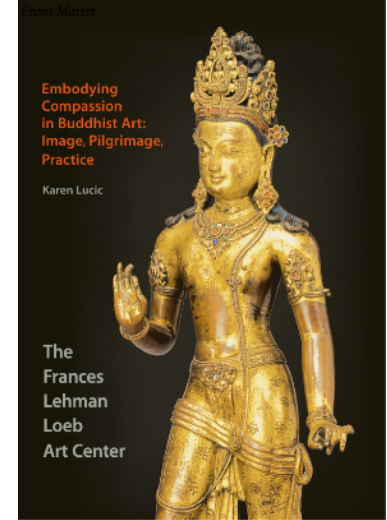
Let that go and relax bit. Once refreshed, go back to the representation and ask yourself: What do I see that is the basis for evoking these enlightened qualities? Sit with that for a while and see what the bases are. Then....

Let that go and relax bit. Formally conclude your exploration.

As you move around through your day, see if things or circumstances appear that naturally remind you of these qualities.

If you feel like it and have time, try this on different days and with other representations.

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## Readings:

- Read the *Four Immeasurables* and contemplate in light of what has been presented in this course
- Read the *Four Reliances* and contemplate in light of what has been presented in this course

## Optional:

- <https://www.siddharthasintent.org/resources/chants/heart-sutra/>
- for a short helpful explanation of 11 headed Avalokiteshvara forms, on YouTube search for "Avalokiteshvara: Eleven Faces (HAR)"
- Himalayan Art Resources website, search for Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig



# Buddhist Visual Literacy: Bodhisattva Ideal Throughout Asian Art



Class 8: Thursday April 21

- NA: 9am PT, 10am MT, 12pm ET, 1pm AT • EU: 6pm CET • Taiwan, 1am