

## 2018-08-14 - Summary of the Bodhisattva Path Training - Part 9

Good morning, everyone! This is today's Dharma Espresso on the summary of the Bodhisattva Path Training, part 9.

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If you live in Orange County or if you came to the last Bodhisattva Path training, or went to the recent Dharma Assembly in Dallas then you should have seen my Mandala mats for just 6 people. Its graphic design is very beautiful with 6 seed syllables and seating places for just 6 people. Some of you asked me:

"Dear Thay, what is the mat for? Could it be used for home decor or in place of a carpet?"

No, it's not for that use.

The reason that I designed a 6-person mandala is a very important one. To understand my thoughts leading to this, you need to look back to the very first class of students that I had trained when teaching CK10 in 2004 at the Vien Dong Meeting Hall. The majority of these students had become ITC instructors. These instructors were the most outstanding ITC students at the time, including anh Hien, Sheila, Hua An, Lan Huong Nguyen, and many others. What's so special about this beginning period is their resolve which is still going strong to this day. The lineage started from an instructor who was me and passed down to many more instructors. Like a "blast", from one instructor burst forth to many instructors. From 2, 3 instructors per class to one instructor for each class, then, came the process of certification one by one.

Can we now do the same for our Bodhisattva Path?

The answer is that it's not realistic and feasible because a dharma teacher is different from an ITC instructor. After a long thinking process with many discussions and observations, I realized that between me as the master and other instructors, we need another level which we will call by a different name rather than instructor.

Everyone on the Bohdisattva Path first starts out as a student. When I teach them, they all sit and listen. How should I raise them from the position of students to teachers?

The Dharma Care program is a model of transforming you from a student to a dharma teacher using a scale that I have developed. First, from being a student you will become a coach or instructor, from a coach you will become a teacher, then from a teacher to a master. Finally, one day you will become a grand master. When you become a grand master, you are like a bodhisattva. But, from

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a coach to a teacher, to a master, then to a grand master, all are bodhisattvas-in-training. Then, how do you define these roles?

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A student is a person who only receives information and lessons to study and practice. But, what is a coach? It's a person who can take care and share his practices with a least 5 or more people.

In the old times, the Buddha said that 4 people form a monastery sangha. Four people form a community. Now we can form one with 6 people. That's easy with the number 6 like our dining table usually accommodates 6 people or our Viber groups have 6 people.

A coach is a person who takes care of the other 5 people. When studying the Bodhisattva Path together, taking care of each other isn't about providing food for each other but about sharing teaching materials and answering questions, etc. for other people. The coach and the 5 group members become a study group with the coach being the group leader. I designed this Mandala for 6 people to integrate the Mandala philosophy with the Six Hands and Eyes dharma practice philosophy. These two practices integrate with each other tightly, and this is the lecture I will give tomorrow.

An important ideal I want you to know is that we need to integrate the Six Hands and Eyes dharma with the Mandala dharma to become a unified system. You will see that any additional Six Hands and Eyes dharma you learn will all fit into to the Mandala dharma teaching. It's a revelation for me. It's an important discovery in my life because I now understand why the Buddha and all Buddhist schools taught us that "It doesn't matter how we practice, it must include the cultivation of transcending worldliness and engaging the world, meaning transforming ourselves from within and manifesting it in the outside world."

We definitely need to enter the world to verify what we've attained within. Whatever we practice, the ultimate goal is to develop our 4 most important characteristics:

1. Openness: Keeping our heart always open is so important in this path of awakening.
2. Singlemindedness: Staying focused.
3. Great compassion: Always feeling loving-kindness and compassion in our heart to develop forgiveness and inner joy. They are called the 4 virtues: kindness, compassion, joy, and forgiveness or letting go.

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4. The state of nondoing and nonobstructing: This is a special characteristic of the Avatamsaka Bodhisattva. It's an important characteristic of flowing through life without doing anything unnecessary or being a hindrance to anyone.

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The last two characteristics, great compassion and the state of nondoing and nonobstructing, will cover our whole system of meditation practice. These two characteristics are emphasized in the practice of transcending worldliness but are rarely mentioned in the cultivation of engaging with the world.

All 4 characteristics listed above represent the 4 sides of the Mandala. The coach or study group leader has to coach his or her members so they can understand how to use the Six Hands dharma practice to unpack those 4 characteristics. Unpacking these 4 characteristics means opening them up and developing them.

In the first stage, we are students transforming into coaches. We have to help, guide, share, and train at least 5 other members of our study group. In that process of sharing, we are the giver and also the receiver, and unexpectedly, we grow more and more mature. We call the leader of the group "the coach" who coaches the other 5, but in truth, these 5 members also coach, train, and share with "the coach". Therefore, this group can be called a sharing group.

In the second stage, the group leader as member #1, recognizes the other members. For example, member #3 is quite good and is recommended to form a new group. So, member #3 leaves this group to form a second group. It's fine if at first this new group has only 3 members. Eventually, more and more people will join until this new group has 6 members.

In the first group, probably 6 or 7 months after member #3 has left, member #4 also becomes proficient enough to leave and form a third group. Then, eventually, all members become more proficient and leave the first group to form new groups, to become a new coach, to lead, to train, and to share with others. As mature members leave, the group coach then brings in new people to refill the original group.

This way, each coach will eventually coach not just 6 people, but more. And the more people you coach, the more your coaching skills improve. You will attain great achievements in training new leaders.

Eventually we have to expand and cannot just stay in our Vietnamese community. Coach your American friends and others, then one day you will be called teacher, because you are no longer a coach. Once in a while, you can give talks, dharma lectures about this subject because, after practicing for some time, you will gain much more experience.

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Then, who is a teacher? A teacher is a coach with a high level of inner mind experience and a deep understanding of the dharma teaching through much practice. After some period of teaching students in small groups of 6 as well as students outside, you will realize that the more you teach, the less jealousy and obstruction you feel.

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The reason our group cannot expand is because some of us are jealous with our friends and want to obstruct them from becoming teachers. We don't want to build up or support them in their evolution and cultivation. If they stay in our group, we feel fine but once they emerge higher than ourselves and leave our group, we feel jealous and use all kinds of reasoning to stop their advancement. We can stay in harmony with people, talking joyfully with them, encouraging them, but once they start to get better than us, a desire to put them down begins sprouting in our heart. This is not the state of non-doing and non-obstructing but the opposite. Very mysteriously, we will commit to deter, obstruct, and criticize advancing members.

Therefore, the method of coaching groups of 6 requires us to fulfill our members' wishes. This is one way of deeply eliminating our jealousy, our desire to obstruct others, a characteristic that the Venerable Hsuan Hua often mentioned. This characteristic is the biggest blind spot that we cannot see. This coaching method helps us open our heart because aren't people we coach or people who coach us our loved ones? When 6 people stay together to practice, after a while, they cannot work against one another, but instead will naturally build each other up and contribute to each other's success. So, this coaching is a good antidote to the jealousy and obstruction disease.

Thus, you evolve from a student to a coach, then from a coach to a teacher. When you teach and train many people, you become a master. You will have deeply understood all aspects about Mandala and the Six Hands dharma. Finally you become a Grand Master who can see through everything. Not only will you have achieved your goal but also attained your inner manifestation of the Blue Lotus. You rise up to clearly see the whole universe.

Therefore, this coaching is the training for the Bodhisattva Path. Via this method, I will know the quantity of coaches we train, how many succeed in their cultivation, how many can attain their desired spiritual state so I can certify them in a different way from certifying ITC instructors.

This is really a breakthrough in the thinking process and the work of the Compassionate Service Society. Hopefully, anyone who follows the

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Bodhisattva Path will jump in to sign up. I will help Lan Huong Lam and Cam Van Nguyen to establish such a training system for you.

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I'm so excited about this new perspective of the Bodhisattva Path which helps us to be open and evolve as well as transform our mental attitude from an automatic and mindless mode to a more awakened mode. It means we will not just enter the Mandala, sit down, recite mantras, and leave. Now, we integrate the coaching in our practice. If we coach incorrectly, people will know immediately because they also attended the Bodhisattva training classes, listened to my dharma teachings, and had class materials for reference. This is a way to slowly but surely build a community of bodhisattvas-in-training with a solid foundation. We can certainly train and produce thousands of bodhisattvas.

I hope that there are highly intellectual people among you who are willing to step up and lead our community and propagate the Bodhisattva Path. If you listen to this Dharma Espresso, please open your heart to help me bring success to this method of training coaches. Please don't hesitate to text me: "Dear Thay, I like this idea. I will help you. I will become your right hand."

I need 42 Hands to achieve this. Don't hesitate. Just help me.

Thank you for listening. I wish you a happy, awakened, and beautiful day.

**Dharma Master Heng Chang**

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*Question or comment, please send email to [css.translators@gmail.com](mailto:css.translators@gmail.com).*