



# Dhargyey Buddhist Centre

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Bodhicitta is easy to talk about but quite difficult to have it in one's mind. It is a topic that is quite expansive in its scope. Of all kinds of caring attitudes that one may have and that others may have, Bodhicitta is the highest form of sense of caring for others. It is quite clear to see that it is only through Bodhicitta that we can bring happiness for oneself and for other beings and people. When uncritical we find it hard to accept that your happiness can be found in others' happiness, that when others are happy you could also be happy, and making others happy brings your own happiness. When we are in an uncritical, casual state of mind this will not go down well because our casual mind is quite entrenched in self-cherishing concern and attitude. Careful consideration clearly points out that indeed this is the case. Not only does the final outcome of mind training, Bodhicitta, generates happiness for self. Even the foundation practice of Bodhicitta which is equanimity of which there are many types, one has nine rounds of visualisation, even if one were to spend time to think about one of the nine steps, that could bring a state of stability and equanimity in one's mind. For example, someone says something unpleasant to you or does something unpleasant, rather than being reactive, if only one can reflect on one of the nine steps of visualisation, and that is despite what the person is doing to one, one and the other are the same, lacking real happiness. Even a minor step of the foundation of Bodhicitta which is one of the nine steps, can bring instant relief to one's mind in making it less reactive and therefore more at peace with other people trying to harm one, then there is no doubt that the mind of Bodhicitta, the highest form of altruism, wanting to bring the highest good to all sentient beings without exception will certainly bring unimaginable depth of stability and peace. It can easily be inferred and deduced from reasoning. If I say to you if you spend a few months going through the nine steps of equanimity they will help address stressful situations, problems and bring instant relief to one's mind. Therefore practise and reflection on these do not only mean to develop ultimately Bodhicitta but they have practical benefits to come to terms with very challenging and stressful situations.

Mind training is difficult in the sense that it is difficult to develop, but persistent practice does pay. Just as it is difficult to teach a newly born child to walk but in time the child becomes independent in walking. In the beginning the child crawls, even that is difficult in the beginning. After that the child attempts to stand on its feet, and being helped by an adult it can make faltering steps. These are critical stepping stones for gaining independence of walking and in a matter of time the child does indeed walk and play on its feet. In the same way, training out mind like our child, quite young at this stage of our development, this will take time. People who have worked hard in the past, meaning meditators, have tried all means like some people do in different educational settings, serious practitioners would write down pithy mind training statements and stick these on bits of paper on the pillow, doors, in the inside of toilet, in the kitchen, so that wherever they go they are constantly bombarded by these reminders. Such things have proved to be useful. You could try all kinds of means. Few people have time to sit down and go through mind training teaching. However, these days we have a lot of electronic devices that ring every hour. If you have such a device and when it rings you think of something. If you take such sounds take a few moments to think of the steps that you are going through. On the first hour you thought of the first step, the next hour you could think of the second step etc.

We have talked a lot about mind training to date. Mind training boils down to seeing self-cherishing thought as nothing but full of drawbacks; seeing the drawbacks of self-cherishing thoughts. The essence of mind training is to appreciate other-caring, other-cherishing attitude, in other words altruistic feelings for others. As a result of seeing self-cherishing thought as nothing but full of drawbacks and something that brings unpleasant

consequences for self. Having reminded you and myself of what is the quintessential mind of mind training, let us move to the 5<sup>th</sup> section of mind training:

### The measurement of having trained your mind – setting the benchmark

A lot of people have had previous teachings of mind training. Those people know and those that are new I suggest you get hold of Buddhist books on mind training and then turn to the section on the evil nature of self-cherishing thought, the crippling drawbacks of self-centredness, how under the guise of pursuing your good on the contrary has undermined your ultimate and temporary welfare. Conversely if you turn to the subsection about the enlightening virtues and liberating qualities of selflessness and caring for others, then the benefits are again immense. Please if you go through these, do not simply go through these but spend time to reason then after a while they will give you special sensation to your heart or mind. What Buddhism does is it addresses problems and matters of mind for mind is seen as the dominant factor that brings about our state of happiness or wellness, whereas these days modern day education, a lot of it is about how to improve matter and material advancement, how to make advances in material comfort and enjoyment. They address how to find happiness through matter and therefore the depth of the state of wellbeing achieved by the two is quite different.

How do we know that one's mind is now trained in the mind training teaching? Your mind could be said to have reached standard mind training quality if in the past your mind cherished nothing but self, and now your mind cherishes anything else but others. In other words, now you cherish other people if not more at least as much you cherish yourself. If your mind has reached that degree of spontaneous sense of cherishing others, that is the benchmark. There are five indicators that show whether you have reached it.

1. The mark of great austerity. This means to be able to withstand any hardship in the course of your practise. Rather than giving up you withstand the hardship and stick to your core mind training practise. If you succeed then you have seen the first mark: the great austerity.
2. The second mark is Mahasattva – great-minded or broad-minded – in that the mind has now great space and accommodation and it accommodates others' welfare and concerns more than your own and thus your mind is now expanded and broad.
3. Great virtue or greatly virtuous. That means not only do you do a great deal of virtues for others' sake, even small virtues that you do out of which you gain some merit, even a seemingly insignificant virtue when it is done it is done for others' sake.
4. The great Vinayaist – the great disciplined. That means, not only do you abstain from serious grave negative actions, thoughts and speech, you have strong resistance even to performing seemingly negligible and insignificant non-virtue, you find that really hard because you have achieved a sense of great natural restraint. Thus the great holder of restraint.
5. The mark of great Yogin: the real or core, connected to the core. You are called this in this context for you are now spontaneously connected to the core of Mahayana practice: Bodhicitta. Now day in and out you think of nothing but you are immersed in Bodhicitta.

As a result of having trained your mind, you see these five marks then they will certainly indicate as to where one is in terms of mind training. That is all about the standard benchmark of developing mind training realisation. The 6<sup>th</sup> sections is:

### Commitments of mind training:

1. The first commitment is to ensure that your mind training is not erratic and fair-weather mind training. This is to show unbiased training. Your mind training would be biased were you be able to apply the principles of mind training to your fellow human beings but when it comes to animals you have difficulties applying the principles of mind training. It would also be biased and partial if you were very comfortable and good at practicing mind training with friends and family members but not with other people like people who hate you or your enemies. If you have difficulties developing altruism with regard to your enemies but not with regard to your family, then your mind training is partial and biased. The point is to ensure your mind training is not partial and biased.
2. Mind training practice should not transgress other vows that you as a practitioner have. What it means is in the name of mind training and giving the impression that 'now I am in mind training, I don't care

about the norms of society. I even in have transcended them and even the vows of ordination and so on. If one therefore were to knowingly broke your vows of ordination, your tantric vows, your Bodhisattva vows in the name of being a transcendent mind trainee who can now do things.

3. To ensure sensitivity on your part to the sensibilities of spirits, ngags, and subterranean beings. What it means is again in the name of being a great mind training practitioner who does not care about any harm from any quarter and who therefore then becomes reckless in their action and in the process were to recklessly damage the environment where these non-human beings live, where they could be the casualty of your brave mind training activity, then that would have violated mind training precepts.
4. Change inside, not outside, change the interior not the exterior. Change the interior means it is the mind that needs to change for the better, and for that matter minimise self-cherishing thought, desire and so on and then work hard to bring about maximum interior change. Leave your exterior behaviour in the way it has been. What it means, on the grounds that now you have experienced great inner change, you don't care what other people thought of you and therefore you poke your nose and wear funny hats and so on. Don't do such things. Don't give such outer expression to express that you have some inner change.
5. Don't pick on others' faults. Although you know something that others have done is wrong and that they have weaknesses, it is very unkind to pick on it and make it public through verbal expression. If you know about it, keep quiet about it.
6. Do not think of others' faults. If you think a lot about others' faults it will upset your mind and unsettle your mind.
7. Address the strongest weakness or delusion that you have. For example, if desire is one's biggest problem then first address it and then move to the next one. For example, to address desire there is the special meditation on the loathsomeness of the object of desire: you think of how it is not as beautiful and attractive but extremely loathsome to the point that it gives you repulsion. If anger is one's problem then address it by developing love and patience. Think of all the steps that help develop patience and those that help develop love.
8. Abandon any expectation or give them up. This means that it will be going against mind training principles that you do mind training with the expectation that maybe this will help me bring some temporary benefit, better health, fame, recognition and so on.
9. Don't touch and use poisoned food. Obviously if you know that your food has been poisoned you would not touch it knowing that it would be fatal or ruin your health. In the context of mind training it means is don't do anything that would feed your self-cherishing thought and your ego. If anything was going to strength and feed the poison of self-cherishing thought it will become stronger. The advice is to avoid poisoned food.
10. Don't dwell in resentment against someone for long. In the world normally if somebody harms your community and then you stand up against the harmer and you have resentment, you stand up and you are considered good. Such behaviour is considered good. In the mind training context, no matter what others do to you, don't do such a thing. That is called don't dwell in resentment.
11. Don't nag others, reminding them of your immense kindnesses and breathing down their neck saying, 'Remember that when you were in difficulties, who came to your help? Me!' Don't keep on going on about it. If you have done something good and have been helpful just rejoice in that and there is no need to nag others reminding them of your kindnesses.
12. Don't wait in ambush. What it means is don't be an opportunist to harm others out of revenge. If someone has harmed you in the past and if you waited for an opportunity to retaliate that is then waiting in ambush. The point is not to do it.
13. Don't engage in great expose. That means if you know somebody that you don't like and then you also know their dark secret for example, then don't expose him or her by revealing in the public at a party their weaknesses or dark secret. Even if it were true, as a mind training practitioner you simply have to have the strength to control oneself from engaging in this great expose.
14. Not use mind training as a means to earn a living in terms of food, clothing and so on.
15. This comes with an analogy: don't transfer the load of the she-yak that is huge and carry a great weight onto the back of the small ox. It means don't find scape goat for your own weaknesses and failings.

16. Don't sprint for credit. It means is that if you and someone else have done something and you are both worthy of praise, and in a social context, when somebody is about to mention what a wonderful job has been done – don't say, 'I was there.' Let other people enjoy the credit and don't mention your name first so that you get the credit. If there is credit to you and others, then let others have it.
17. Don't let the divine become devilish. Again, it is explained by way of an analogy: in shamanistic societies where people turn to spirits and mundane deities who are extremely temperamental, if you please them well they can do some favours. The moment you upset them the so-called deity will act like a devil and harm you. It means that the devil inside us is self-cherishing thought. The divine that you seek is altruism and enriching your heart to work for other people. Now as a result of engaging in mind training don't let the outcome of mind training feed your self-cherishing thought. Don't think 'I am doing well in my mind training' and don't become puffed up with that. If you do that then the credit of your success will be fed to the devil inside which is self-cherishing thought.
18. Don't wish misery, failure and misfortune on others so that you can be happy. This will make you a winner and others lose the opportunity to succeed. If someone gets in your way, don't wish them to fail because you are the next one in line.

This is a long list with 18 commitment and they could be kept easily if only one were careful to see that whatever one does not go to feed egotistical self-centredness inside. There is no doubt that you would receive and experience the benefit of mind training. There is no doubt at all. If one trained one's mind in the mind training, the benefit is really tangible to be able to come to terms with all kinds of situations in this life and in the life hereafter. It is therefore worth investing time and effort in mind training and it will never get to waste while in the worldly norm is investing in wealth, resources, fame, family relations and your friends and so on. Fame, name, reputation and power come to nothing at the critical time. Whether your relations will be of benefit to you remains to be seen. Often they do the opposite. In other words, things that people normally invest in life-times worth of effort will fail them. If only we could spend more time on mind training, enriching the mind, developing resilience to withstand any hardships, then it is a rich investment.

Mind training is not a Buddhist thing. Anybody can embrace mind training message. If their mind is trained whereby they put others before them and self, then that is a value that will enrich society.

Q: regarding point 13, don't engage in a great expose, if by not exposing someone you are enabling them to harm a lot of people, is that still something one needs to commit to?

A: In that case, first it would be good to see whether you can change the person and their behaviour without having to engage in the great expose. If somehow you have some means to prevail on the person then that would be ideal to resort to. If that does not help and there are no avenues left then out of Bodhicitta or public welfare in your heart then you have no option but to do a great expose. When you do it you do it with a great sense of Bodhicitta. If you were not to do it then you would be going against Bodhicitta vow. One of the 46 secondary Bodhicitta vows was if an evil person cannot be transformed and helped through peaceful, humane and benign method and the person remains incorrigible then you need to resort to the wrathful action and be firm. In this case if you did nothing then you would go against that Bodhicitta vow and you would be obliged to do so.

Mind training is really enriching and therefore investing time and effort so that your mind truly upholds the mind training teaching to see how self-cherishing thought with crippling in nature and how other-cherishing thoughts are peace bringing. I appeal to you to take mind training very seriously. If need be paste these 18 commitment and seven sections of mind training onto various things in your household so that you are reminded time and again. That repetition reinforces what is already there and you become truly grounded in the mind training. Otherwise if these are not given serious thought and instead serious thought and attention is given to material things alone, as all great beings have said before, material things have let us down badly. And having had nothing to fall back on one would die with a heavy conscience and heart a painful death. One does not have face death in a painful way. If one has mind training principles to fall back on you would face death calmly, peacefully and in a very dignified way and you will stage a peaceful, dignified exit from this life and when you enter the next one it will be with a bright future.

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