

# *Compass Spirit Montreal*



*September 2017*

## Training for Instructors and Assistants

From August 17th to 20th 2017, a training session was held for instructors and assistants in Montreal at the headquarters on St-Michel street. Khai Nghiêm, a competent and above all very dedicated instructor from Global iTC in California, came in person to teach us. He had just returned from a trip in Asia, where he also taught classes; without taking a single day to rest, he flew to Montreal. No surprise, therefore, to see him fight against the jet lag during the first few days! A big THANK YOU to Khai Nghiêm! THANK YOU also to all those who contributed to the success of the event. All 31 participants agreed that the week was beneficial to them in all aspects: physical, intellectual and mental.



## CK10 Certification Training

The CK10 certification training for new instructors with Khai Nghiêm took place during the week of August 21st to 27th 2017. It was a good time for instructors to review the theory and have a week of intensive training. For the students of CK10, it was an opportunity to deepen their knowledge. Of the 33 participants, 10 students had been preparing for the certification exam for the past 6 months and successfully graduated.



*Congratulations to our Montreal instructors and assistants of 2017!*



## National Youth Leadership Camp/Conference

On the 26th of July, I boarded a flight to Virginia to attend a six days National Youth Leadership Camp/Conference. This event was organized by a few talented and dedicated young adults, whom I have had the chance to meet, along with 75 other attendees. With the help of volunteers of the CSS East in Virginia, the camp was a complete success. From transport from the airport to the hotel, to daily buffets, to the plenitude of activities, etc. - everything was planned to a tee. This camp gave me an opportunity to discover different types of meditation (appreciative, tea meditation, mindful breathing meditation). It also created a platform for young adolescents and children from Virginia, Texas, France and Canada to bond, and create a sense of familiarity. In that short period of time, we learned to care for each other, we shared laughter and made memories that I have brought back with me to Montreal. The activities included visitation of Washington DC, feeding people experiencing homelessness, hiking, kayaking and canoeing, board game nights, etc. - great fun!

Furthermore, the motivation, care and thoughtfulness demonstrated by each volunteer and leader was incredibly touching and genuine. Like a virus, this positive spirit spread throughout the camp, as each participant learned to care a little more for those around them. In only 6 days, participants and leaders became a little family, making the final day dreadful. Goodbyes were bittersweet, but excitement was already swarming at the thought of the next upcoming camp.



On a quick side-note, I was most inspired by and in awe of Nguyen Long-Nghi, one of the leaders of the camp, whom did an amazing job in leading the meditation sessions, and gave a memorable speech during the conference part of the camp.

All in all, I left Virginia feeling refreshed, but also puzzled. In a society where everything is always rolling, retreats like this are much needed. Not only does it offer a mental break from daily life stresses and struggles, but it also creates a chance to find support and refuge. One also gets the opportunity to learn a plethora of ways to live more mindfully, to be more compassionate. I could not help but think about how important it is to have organizations like this here in Montreal. Perhaps it is time to start a youth group here!

## The Three Virtues (part 2)

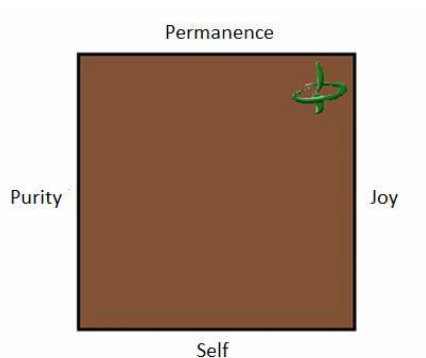
(From the book "Altruistic Home-Leaving: A Bodhisattva Path" by Master Heng Chang)

### 2- Liberation

Liberation is the second virtue. Dharma body is the nature of the True Mind, but the manifestation of the True Mind is absolute liberation anywhere and anytime. That manifestation is infinite, boundless light, and nothing can prevent its free and peaceful expansion. In reality, how does liberation manifest? According to the Avatamsaka Sutra, a Bodhisattva who has attained liberation is completely altruistic in all deeds; his motive is never selfish; he never wants fame or profit, or pursues desires. He gives away all possessions without any regret. He never stops giving and donating, sacrificing himself for all kinds of tasks, big or small, helping others succeed in their cultivation, rebuilding life of unfortunate people, etc. Hence, he never gets bored or stuck with the mundane world; he never wants to attain Nirvana but is never far away from the state of Nirvana. In other words, he is always free and serene. Though he stays with living beings, his mind is saint-like; he helps others but is never carried away by the subject of the self. He is free and liberated right in the polluted mundane world without leaving it.

That characteristic of liberation is contained in the image of the sitting cloth. A sitting cloth is a piece of cloth small enough for one person to sit on with crossed legs.

From the psychological aspect, the sitting cloth symbolizes four characteristics of liberation called the **Four Virtues of Nirvana**: Permanence, Joy, Self and Purity. Thus, when we sit on the sitting cloth, we are sitting on liberation, and completely dwell in the nature of Nirvana.



To Avatamsaka School practitioners, the **Four Virtues of Nirvana** is the resulting Buddhahood of the **Four Unlimited Aspects of Mind**: Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Joy, and Equanimity, as follows:

- When the practice is Loving-Kindness (gentleness, full of forgiveness), the resulting Buddhahood is Permanence.
- When the practice is Compassion (unconditional love), the resulting Buddhahood is Self.
- When the practice is Joy (tendency for feelings of peace, security, always bringing happiness, peace to all living beings), the resulting Buddhahood is Joy.
- When the practice is Equanimity (giving away all possessions, transforming all attachments, untying all knots), the resulting Buddhahood is Purity.

Thus, when we practice altruistic home-leaving, every time we sit on our sitting cloths, always remember that we are returning to sit on the Buddha home. The characteristics of the sitting cloth is our true home; our material house is not our true house, and this body of ours is not really our house either. Only loving-kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity are our true home.

In short, the sitting cloth symbolizes liberation, one of the three virtues passed down by the World-Honored One. When we sit on our sitting cloth, be grateful to the Buddha for giving us a house and helping us become aware of our liberation. This is the serene and gentle path, reminding us to be content that we have enough, not to get attached to our house. If we recognize that our house is Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Joy, Equanimity, we can find our path of liberation each time we sit on our sitting cloth.

(To be continued)

A little reminder:

Please register online for the Altruistic Temporary Home-Leaving: [Registration](#)