

2017_02_26_am1_Shamatha_LMC.mp4

working with *distractions*

[00:10:07] First, good morning to all of you. [00:12:20] In the context of our meditation and the practice of what we call calm abiding or shamatha, we often place our awareness on some object ... and let the mind sit there. And when it gets distracted, we pull it back and put it there again. ... And since that process is so difficult... difficult to master... we invoke all the help that we can get. And so we begin by turning our minds away from all of our usual... preoccupations... so that we can become... less distracted. ...

[00:14:11] But there is something to be said for this approach... as being a distraction itself. Perhaps the problem begins with... our wish... to be good meditators. ... To overcome our causes of suffering, such as... difficult work environments and difficult... political situations... difficult relationships. And the list could be really quite long. Maybe we should strike out the word *could*. ... All of these distracting elements... or we could say, none of these distracting elements begin when we sit down to meditate. They were there before and they continue. And following the meditation, when we get up and go home... they're there still! ... A good question to ask is, am I looking in the wrong place?

[00:17:00] It's helpful to recognize, or even just to pretend if you're not yet convinced... that our minds are the source of all experience. Whether we were sitting on the cushion... trying to work with these things... or we're watching television, sharing a meal with friends... driving to the Dharma Center... our own mind is... always there. And all the experiences that arise there... are the *basis*, in that mind, the *basis* of all of our work. No matter whether we're practicing Buddhists... or anything else.

[00:19:00] It's a useful focus, in the meditation... to look through the lens of this understanding. That the *mind* is the source of confusion, the source of clarity. And nothing else is responsible for the experiences that arise there. If you can experience that... regularly... then you are clear much more than most.

[00:20:06] So as we begin this morning, reciting the Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer, try to let the words trigger experiences in your mind. And keep your mind... looking at those experiences. When you are distracted... those are like the trees in the forest when you're on a long hike. ... You just keep your eyes on them. They are not the path. The path is actually the method through the trees. So in a nutshell, the basis of our work is entirely to do with the mind. And not another single thing. So we'll begin first with the recitation of Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer together three times.

sangha [00:21:51] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:23:54] So as you watch the experiences arise and fall in the mind... the experiences themselves are not separate from the mind. ... And there is no other place to explore... to discover the nature of that mind... then to continually... rest your awareness in the place of those experiences as they arise. All of them.

[00:25:00] *period of meditation*

[00:50:18] *dedicating the merit*