

## 2017\_02\_26\_pm1\_Shamatha\_LMC.mp4

*develop skill to be present without manipulating experience*

[00:04:04] So we'll begin this evening with our recitation together of the Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer.

*reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:08:51] So this evening I would like to suggest an alternative to our usual practice of calm abiding. ... Just as a change, not as a permanent thing. But as an alternative and *means...* to more deeply experience and understand the practice of calm abiding. ... It is sometimes the case, that we can get caught up in... measuring our practice. Trying to decide whether we're doing it right or wrong. And mostly, it's safe to say, the measuring itself is the issue. Not so much the meditation.

[00:10:46] Normally, in the practice of calm abiding, we *settle* our minds... by placing our attention upon any of a number of objects. Such as an external small object, a stick or a stone or a coin. Or an internal object such as our breath. But for this evening, at least, try engaging in the practice of calm abiding according to the following instruction. And afterwards we can have our usual discussion.

[00:12:09] Begin by just relaxing physically. ... Paying attention to your posture. Not too stiff and not too casual. ... And if I say, "Now, spend the duration of this session relaxed naturally. ... And don't follow any of the mental images and thoughts that arise." ... it's not likely that things will go well. ... In essence, our minds... are not only capable... of an unlimited display of thoughts and feelings and images of all kinds. Not *only* are they capable... of an unlimited range... every time that we sit down to meditate... we experience that range. A little bit unfortunately, we may judge our meditation performance negatively as a result. So if you understand how the experiences arise in the mind. ... And you can have the experience... of just noticing all of those experiences arising, falling away and rising and falling away... then you are on the *edge*, if you can do that, of some unusual clarity.

[00:16:07] So without making a big *deal* about it... as the practice of calm abiding goes... and understanding... that thoughts and emotional feelings and images of all kinds arise continuously in the mind... the objective here is to just... rest, relax... and pay attention. When you are distracted... see if you can just notice the distraction itself... as the object of the meditation. When the mind has the experience of clarity... that clarity itself, *noticed* without elaboration... is the experience of clarity.

[00:18:02] In this approach, then there is nothing that needs to be repaired. Nothing that needs improvement. And yet there is a skill to be developed. ... That skill is the ability to be present with each experience as it arises... without manipulation. But *if* manipulation occurs, that also is just another experience. ... So for this evening, if you would not mind making an effort in this direction. And following our meditation, we can have an interesting and fruitful conversation about it. So continue in this way then, until the end of this session.

*[00:19:53] period of meditation*

[00:37:15] Take a short break. ... The purpose of a short break in the middle of a session, in this case is to... let go of the intentional meditation. Let go of the *effort*... you are expending in that direction. And just allow the body to relax and allow the mind to relax. And any stretch or a change in your position, it's a good time to do that. And then when you're ready, establish your posture again and begin fresh.

[00:38:19] *period of meditation*

**sangha** [00:47:29] *dedicating the merit*