

## 2017\_04\_30\_am1\_Shamatha\_LMC.mp4

*refuge in detail, calm abiding using the breath*

[00:06:13] Good morning to all of you. And especially welcome to all of you who are here for the first time. So first off, this morning, for those of you who were here and recall the presence of Lama Tashi over many years... while he lived here. This morning, around 6:30, he passed away. ... And maybe we'll have a few more things to say about that following the break. But even more important, is our tradition of holding the welfare of anyone who has died that we're familiar with... hold their welfare... in our hearts and our minds as prayers. That whatever causes and conditions they accumulated in this life, will be *positive*... in their futures. And likewise, by extension, in the futures of all they touch. ...

[00:09:17] When we begin to recite the Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer this morning, remember first, the reason why we recite that prayer. Which is primarily because we go for refuge hundreds, if not thousands of times a day... to all sorts of things. Our material possessions. Our image of ourselves, shared or not, by others. Our hopes. We go for refuge to our hopes in all manner of things. We spend our lives looking for the causes of happiness. But sometimes we make the unfortunate mistake of just repeating what we've always done... over and over again. And concretizing, stabilizing... the very approach that brings us what we don't want and bars us from what we do want.

[00:11:07] So the first thing to do is to... recognize that having a body which is reasonably functional, the older we get we have to put that a little *reasonable* modifier there. Which is funny in one sense. And in another way, if you don't take into account these things, then you begin to be critical of yourself and dislike yourself and so on. So it's important to take into account what we can do and to put aside what we cannot do.

[00:12:04] So Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer. This is a means of turning away... from all of our normal worldly refuges that promise to deliver great things but never do. The word 'never' is intentional. The world of samsara never delivers, but always promises. So we would like to rise above... that certain sense of betraying ourselves, betraying our grandest aspirations... we would like to see those fulfilled. Doing the things that bring benefit to ourselves and at the same time to others. And that provide us with an opportunity to skillfully bring those things to others also.

[00:13:38] So our prayer begins with a simple sentence, "Until the summit of enlightenment is reached," which means many different things can be stated in many different ways. But in this very moment, it could mean... when we give up all of our false refuges and recognize the value of refuge in the awakened mind, which we call the Buddha. And in the Dharma, which we call the teachings and the way that we practice the teachings. And in the sangha, the community of others who share our aspirations. We would like to soak in this warm and comfortable place. And coming to the practice this morning, or at any time, is really a means of doing that, no matter what the circumstances outside are.

[00:15:03] So it says, "Until the summit of enlightenment," until we attain this and "*all* beings go for refuge to the sources of true refuge." Our means of recalling this *grand* aspiration that all beings might attain enlightenment and be free of the causes of suffering, we imagine our family, our friends, relatives, friends of friends and so on, in front of us. And beyond them, we imagine

all sentient beings extending to the very limits of space itself. And in this way, we are given the opportunity to make a *grand* wish... that our practice, even just this morning, might bring benefit to uncountable beings. Then it says, "I will [now] practice the absorption of calm abiding," the meditation we'll do this morning, "in order to release all beings from their *particular* suffering. And establish them in lasting peace and happiness." Sometimes when you're alone, it's good to go through these steps and think about and contemplate the meaning of this prayer which we do every time we begin any practice. In some form or another, we always do it. So we'll begin this morning by reciting this prayer three times together

**sangha** [00:17:09] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayers*

[00:19:10] Many of the practices, the meditation practices, that we sometimes engage in are very difficult to understand. In the case of calm abiding... it's very straightforward. Generally, we place our mind, our awareness, upon an object. We allow the mind to rest there on that object. With our eyes open, either literally or figuratively, we pay attention to the object we rest our awareness upon. Commonly, we use our breath.

[00:20:22] And when we use our breath, the best way to do it... is to do something really difficult. ... Try placing your awareness upon your breath as if it was not part of you. As if it happened without your intention. Which is mostly what it does. Happen without your intention. Without your even recognizing that it's happening. So now we sit down and we place our awareness on the breath. Ideally, without controlling it... or controlling it as little as possible. We just bring awareness to the experience of breathing. ... And when distracted, we bring the mind back immediately to that experience... even if it's 10 times a minute or more. And gradually, the mind will become trained to rest there. All it requires is a consistent effort.

[00:22:12] *period of meditation*

**sangha** [00:45:32] *dedicating the merit*