

## 2018\_01\_28\_pm1\_Shamatha\_LMC.mp4

*the bodhicitta aspiration is essential to realization itself and we can refresh it each time we're distracted*

[00:01:59] First of all, welcome to all of you this evening and can you hear in the back? We have two sessions this evening and this one, we're beginning now... we'll explore the practice of calm abiding and a few additional components of that practice. Then we'll take a break. And then we'll come back and have a period of open conversation so that... any needed effort for clarification we can explore together.

[00:03:29] When we look at our... liturgy page, which is titled 'A Recitation for the Practice of Calm Abiding' ... we see that the subtitle for that is Refuge & Bodhicitta. One of the... important pieces of all of our practices, our efforts... is to engage in two pieces. One is... that we, of course, would like to accomplish the practices. Attain higher levels of realization and understanding and ultimately attain complete enlightenment. The bodhicitta, where it says Refuge & Bodhicitta, the bodhicitta is about... our intention and our motivation. ... And that motivation, in order for it to function... *well...* for us, must *be...* motivation to *attain* those levels of realization and full enlightenment... in order to benefit all sentient beings.

[00:05:19] First of all... many people will have the... sense... that holding the aspiration to bring benefit to others... is a compromise to our... own realization. Compromise in terms of diverting some of our energy in that direction. But actually, the opposite is true. The aspiration to benefit others through our practice and through our awakening... is essential... to the realization itself. So without holding that motivation... to be personally, from our own side, a *cause...* for the benefit of others... we cannot accomplish the practice. That aspiration and intention itself... *is* a significant part of... the power of the practice. It feeds into the likelihood that... we will attain... these states of realization that we aspire to attain. So we begin with first the Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer, which will recite together three times.

**sangha** [00:07:31] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:09:32] Most of us are aware... perhaps all of us, that... our minds are mostly filled with ... fears ... aspirations ... emotional relationships with... all of our experiences, as well as with all of our friends and family and loved ones. And the mind generally... churns out thoughts... and more feelings... continuously day and night... ... And mostly it's common... for us to feel... just carried away by all of these... mental phenomena. And so we may begin the practice of meditation... with the thought that we might be... more calm... more stable... more clear... experientially and... intellectually, conceptually... in other words, a kind of stillness and clarity... pervading our entire being, which... we might like to accomplish.

[00:11:55] A common approach to the practice of calm abiding is to use our breath. Place our... awareness... on the continuous... experience of breathing. ... So if you embrace this approach, it's helpful... as it may *lead...* likely, to the experience of a stable... practice of calm abiding.

[00:12:47] But it is also common for us to... engage in the practice of calm abiding... and to set aside... the aspiration... to *engage* in the practice, in order to... benefit all sentient beings. ... Without that aspiration... time goes by... and we are likely to become discouraged. The aspiration... to benefit all sentient beings... you may discover is more important... than even the

stable practice of calm abiding. Holding that aspiration at the same time that we rest our awareness on the movement of the breath... holding the aspiration to benefit all beings... is a *key* part of the practice. Not just a line of text to be read in the liturgy before beginning the meditation. So this is by way of... encouraging you to... treat with the utmost respect and gratitude... your ability and willingness... to expend your energy and your time... with the aspiration to benefit all sentient beings... *while* you engage in the practice of calm abiding.

[00:14:54] So you might remind yourself of it during the practice. Before, as a prerequisite to beginning the practice of meditation. And during the period of your... calm abiding practice from time to time, of course, we get distracted. And of course, we bring our minds back to the meditation. A *good* habit, a helpful habit to develop is... before bringing your mind back to the meditation... *refresh*... the aspiration to be *able* to... become a benefactor for all sentient beings. And having *refreshed* it, then just let go of it and continue with the... calm abiding practice. The mind resting on the movement of the breath.

[00:16:11] So back and forth like that is... one of the most effective ways to engage in both the practice of bodhicitta and the meditation of calm abiding. So take a little time now and you can engage in those steps and then we'll talk about them later.

[00:16:34] *period of meditation*

**sangha** [00:38:44] *dedicating the merit*