

2018_03_25_am1_Shamatha_LMC.mp4

bodhicitta and don't we ever get to practice for ourselves? learning to rest awareness on experiences as they unfold

[00:06:35] Good morning on this fine Portland day. ... First of all, our schedule this morning will include an hour of meditation. Little less than an hour, maybe. At least if you think like that, you'll sit longer. ... And following the meditation, we'll take a break and... then come back and have an open... conversation about the Dharma and about your questions... and issues.

[00:08:11] So I want to say a couple of things about... our first step, which is the practice of going for refuge... in the Buddha, the Dharma and the sangha. And secondly... giving rise to... the awakened mind, which we summarize in the word *bodhicitta*... awakened mind. ... Now we put a lot of *emphasis*... on the importance of holding the value of others... as more important than ourselves. ... And we are encouraged to... hold that view of... the *primacy* of others. ... A few weeks ago, during a... difficult time for one individual... this individual who is *not* here... alive and well, but not here... asked, "Don't we ever get to practice for ourselves?" ... It was a great question. And so... I thought maybe we could... embrace that question as a theme for this morning. Don't we ever get to practice for ourselves?

LMC [00:10:46] So first, you are all aware... that we are going to have a guest... in Khenpo Rinpoche or... more full name, Khenpo Lodro Donyo Rinpoche. He will be coming in a few weeks. And one thing I would like to suggest that you notice about... Khenpo Lodro Donyo Rinpoche... he is always happy. ... You cannot blow the candle out... no matter how hard you blow. [laughter] There are many stories around him, of course... which we don't need to go into today... but suffice it to say, I think if you asked him, he would say, "I never practice for myself." So one might, naively ask the question, then how come you look so good? [laughter] And so I think to start with, we'll just let that *hang* for a while and we'll begin by reciting the Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer three times together.

sangha [00:12:52] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:15:20] It is safe to say that... every one of us from time to time... experiences... an overwhelmingly busy mind. ... Busy enough such that we recognize our own confusion. And we do not generally take that recognition as a gift. ... Our practice of meditation is meant to take us... meant to provide tools... that we might be able to... rise above the confusion. ... And rise above the *causes* of our confusion... so that we might be able to... settle the mind. ... Allow the mind to settle... and fully experience all of our... sensations... emotional states... positive and negative... pleasant and unpleasant. To experience these things... without attachment and without aversion. ... So our practice of calm abiding, or *zhinay*, as we call it in Tibetan... will provide these tools.

[00:18:34] And just before we step into that... also... a word of encouragement. ... Whether you are a Buddhist or not... you are a human being. ... And so day and night, you experience... your body... whether it's pleasant or not... the thoughts and feelings that flow continuously from the mind. ... In order to... not be *ruled* by all of those experiences... we need to develop a skill. And that skill is the ability to rest our awareness right on... the experiences as they unfold. ... So we can start where we often start, but just to... kindle within you, a sense of... interest... curiosity... we can bring our awareness to the movement of our breath. ... And of course, it's *important* that

we're breathing! ... And there is *always* a subtle or gross level of experience happening. Generally, we pay almost no attention to it. But *if* we are... to benefit... *ourselves*... we need to be able to rest our awareness on that experience... of breathing, for example... even for a very short time, a few seconds. We need to get good at... *placing* the awareness on the experience... and then relaxing.

[00:22:37] And so in this first session, if you can... make an effort in this direction, that will be helpful for... the remainder of the morning, along with a few added... recommendations along the way. So first, bring your awareness... of the breath... into your, kind of *working consciousness*. ... Place that awareness on the *experience* of breathing... in the manner of *noticing* the experience, just the noticing. ... When the mind is on the breath, then relax. ... The nice thing is when you are relaxed, the breath takes care of itself. No effort required. ... But in the long run... we want to discover the *nature*... of the experiences that we're having. And the nature of the mind that experiences those things. ... And in order for that to happen... we must... become good at... going *very slow*. And placing the mind on the experience again. ... And deeply relaxing... with the mind there. Resting on the experience of the breath, moving back and forth.

[00:25:06] If you get distracted... you need to start again fresh. And here is an interesting key... for starting again fresh. You *know*, you've been distracted. ... And so just before you start again... give rise, in your own mind... the recollection... that I am *engaging* in this meditation practice... for the benefit of others. ... Really... it's okay to be an extremist about this. You can say... *only* for the benefit of others... if you're up for it. And having given rise to that fresh aspiration and motivation, then you begin again. Rest your awareness on the breath. ... Rest your awareness on the experience... of breathing... effortlessly. So in that way, you can use those tools back and forth. Slowly. Easily. Ideally with no conceptual... component whatsoever.

[00:27:09] *period of meditation*
sangha [00:46:38] *dedicating the merit*