

## 2018\_05\_06\_1\_Shamatha\_LMC.mp4

*the Dharma bears fruit through consistent endeavor*

[00:06:01] Good morning. It's nice to see all of you this morning. ... Our meditation today and our program today in general is the practice of zhinay. ... Also known as calm abiding. And we'll begin by turning our minds from all of our worldly concerns... our busy lives. Even when we try to accomplish the benefit of others... it seems *inescapable*, we become busier and busier. And so, on this day, one of our... sessions that we call the all-day sit, from now until this afternoon, but... no need to be terrified. We will take breaks along the way. And a lunch break at noon and an open discussion in the afternoon after lunch. And we'll finish around 4:30. So it's probable that... a good number of you cannot come to the second half. But I'd like to encourage you... to come if you can. And in the future, make an effort to set the day aside, the first Sunday in each month. To set the day aside like this for... a morning and afternoon of meditation, once a month is... a small commitment for something which brings such large benefits... not only to yourself. But by virtue of... engaging in the Dharma and practicing... the goodness that you feel, of course, becomes... something which automatically... communicates to others. And so you accomplish not only your own benefit, but the benefit of other beings as well, fulfilling our vow... to practice in order to benefit all sentient beings.

[00:10:01] Before we begin the refuge prayer, I'd also like to just mention... the *theme* for today. ... The theme that I thought would be useful today is... consistency. Consistency here does not mean... *any* kind of consistency. It means... when we discover something that bears fruit in our stream of consciousness... sometimes we notice it and have a moment of... appreciation for that. And that's it! Maybe we never do it again. The Dharma bears its fruit... through *consistent* endeavor.

[00:11:27] A really dirty word, endeavor. It doesn't need to be. It can be... that we are consistently applying ourselves to what brings us the most joy, the most peace of mind, the most stability in our stream of consciousness, the most clarity. All of that comes from *consistent*... ideally moment to moment, engaging... in practice. And the practice of calm abiding... is probably the single *most* important practice. Because it's what fuels, stabilizes, bears fruit in all of our other practices. So, it is a *particularly* important... approach to the Dharma.

[00:12:34] So, we'll begin by reciting the refuge prayer together three times, along with the aspiration to accomplish the benefit of all others, called bodhicitta.

**sangha** [00:12:57] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:15:09] A brief and... easy... approach to the practice of calm abiding... is the best. Not because... we are unable... to engage in more sophisticated and complicated practices. But because... the simple approach sometimes... is actually the more profound. [00:16:14] We are, if we... bring our attention to it... a personal source, for each one of us... like it or not, a continuous stream of experience. Normally, as we... sit and... are subject to all of these experiences... we develop a running commentary on all of them. I like this one. I don't like that one. I wish I was sitting somewhere else in this room. Or... this is perfect. But I'm disappointed because it will be gone in the afternoon. And I don't like the person sitting next to me, or behind

me, or in front of me. I wish there were fewer people here. I don't know what I'm going to do for lunch. [laughing] ... This is *not* meditation. It's just what we do all the time.

[00:18:15] Some people feel like the answer is to... *repress* that flow of experience. That is even worse. ... It's like holding your breath... beyond your ability to do so. It is neither pleasant nor fruitful. ... So the practice of calm abiding is... not about *repressing*... all of the experiences, the sensations. Not about reducing those experiences, nor about increasing them, nor about controlling them. ... So what's left?

[00:19:35] One thing that's left is... we could... make the effort... to notice... what is happening. To see... the experiences as they rise and fall. The itch on your back. The cool breeze on your face. The indigestion from what you ate for breakfast. ... Just like we are continuous machines of experience... we also are capable... of recognizing those experiences as they unfold. We are even able to... give up our attachment and our aversion to those experiences... and merely to be present with them. ... To do so... *that* is meditation.

[00:22:03] So in this first session... having established your place, sitting... as still as possible. But if you are unable to sit still, *notice* that you are unable to sit still. ... As thoughts and visions and experiences arise... in the body and the mind... just remain clear and still with them. ... Even the distractions... cannot survive long. ... So, just continually bring your awareness back. Settle into it. ... Come back again, settle into it over and over.

[00:23:36] *period of meditation*  
**sangha** [00:46:13] *dedicating the merit*