

2018_08_26_am1_Shamatha_LMC.mp4

*important to recognize the 'fresh' and practice holding the view that no experience ever repeats, learning to relax and remain still during turmoil of experience, taking refuge in nature of our own mind, **Carrying Practice**: embracing every experience as a gift*

[00:07:03] Good morning to all of you. Nice to see you. Nice to be here. ... Every time we meet, I feel like we're... engaging in another experiment. Trying something new again. ... But of course, there's no new again. ... Needs to be *fresh*... each time. ... Even we look at the schedule and it says from 9:00 to 9:50. It's not the same piece of paper. Nor are we the same people... sitting down to follow the schedule from 9:00 to 9:50. And then a break. And then a period of conversation. Kind of a Q&A thing. And then finishing... around noon. ... It's important to notice when we sit down and recite, for example, the refuge prayer... turning our minds from all of our worldly concerns. Concerns about ourselves, friends, family, pets, everything. It's not just... helpful, it's important... to recognize that we've never done it before. That this is another first... that will never be repeated.

[00:10:40] This is not just a... *cute* way of looking at things. It helps us when we overtly raise that view in our minds. It helps us to understand a truth. We are not the same people, the same persons that we were, even from the point where we walked in the door. It is a gross level of identification to think... I must be the same person; I'm wearing the same clothes that I walked in on. And what you are thinking and experiencing now is the product of what you were thinking and experiencing when you drove here. And when you got out of the car and came in and then we had this little... upfront introduction... each of these things, one by one, changes... the content of our mindstream... which has no beginning and no end.

[00:12:19] Even if we feel like we can't quite grasp that yet, it's critical... that we hold the view. So, that gradually we come to have that experience that... *no* experience that we have ever occurs twice. We have so conditioned ourselves to think that. ... I am plagued by what I was thinking yesterday, now I can't get it out of my mind. Or the song that I heard; I can't turn it off. It just keeps going. It's helpful, even just from a conceptual perspective... to again hold the view... that there is *no such thing* as yesterday's thought repeating itself. If we are to accomplish the Dharma deeply and be deeply... *infected* by it... we must come to have this experience that... no thought, no feeling, no conceptual understanding... repeats itself. Ever. Even from one moment to the next. So, if you practice in this way, holding this view, you will gradually come to have a deeper understanding... of the nature of mind itself. And the teachings that we find inspirational... but sometimes bewildering, incomprehensible... will gradually become obvious... in a way which is... deeply helpful.

[00:14:54] So all of that said, we are here this morning... to practice zhinay. As zhinay is calm abiding, translated. Calm abiding is not our normal way of being. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here practicing... calm abiding. Our normal... experience is that... pleasant and unpleasant thoughts arise continuously. And we are attracted by all of them and identify with them and push them away... more or less continuously. And after a morning of that, we leave bewildered... sometimes with the question, why am I confused? ... The practice of calm abiding, before we start... to understand... the meaning of calm abiding is clear in the word itself. To *relax*. ... Still... your speech. Still your body. And sometimes we say... still the mind. ... But in case you haven't noticed... the mind does not follow that instruction. So a deeper understanding is *not* that we intend to still the mind. ... But rather that we learn to... relax and remain still... in the midst of the

storm, even when all our bewilderment, our anger, our confusion, our joy, our grief... is at a full boil.

[00:18:06] So in order to do that, beginning now... we need to first clear our minds a bit, and we do that by intentionally turning our minds from... all of our... worldly concerns, we say, but let's be more specific. All of the concerns that we came in here with this morning, we just turn our minds away from that and bring our awareness to the *experience*... of all the things that are continuously unfolding in our minds. Zhinay is not about repressing all of those things. It's about recognizing them. Kind of like, when you're outside and the wind is blowing and the leaves are blowing off the trees and the dust is swirling around, we know that we do not need to be confused by it. We can even enjoy... that wind and that dust... without being blown away by it.

[00:19:45] So in the same manner we start... with turning our minds from all of our worldly concerns to... refuge. We need a different refuge in order to accomplish this. Our usual refuge in who we think we are, refuge in our hopes that our friends will continue to like us, refuge in the good food that we ate, that we will not have an upset stomach. And so on. ... We need a *powerful* refuge. So we begin by turning our minds to refuge in the Buddha. And let's be clear! When we say 'The Buddha', we mean... the nature of our own mind. As we said earlier, normally when we are carried away by extraneous thoughts and feelings... we have the sense that those things are happening *to us*. That's not so helpful. We convert ourselves immediately into a victim. ... Our intention is to sit in the middle of whatever experience is arising... and remain still. So first, we began by reciting the refuge prayer together three times.

sangha [00:21:40] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:23:39] It's helpful to begin every session... of zhinay or calm abiding... with refuge. Just to continually turn the mind... in the direction of *relying* upon... our growing understanding and intimacy with our own mind. ... Coming to know things... we may never before... have consciously witnessed. ... Most importantly, what we need to do after having heard the instructions... is abandon them. ... If you're at the top of a mountain... preparing to ski down a steep slope... the instructions that you received from a book, from the mouth of someone who was an expert... will not save you. In our practice of calm abiding, the experiences that arise... in the moment... as we intend to rest the mind peacefully... and stably... on an object in front of us... or more importantly... on the experiences which continually flow from our minds.

[00:26:02] We normally think of calm abiding as a calm state. Without any turmoil. Without any conflict. But all of those things... for anyone who has cared to notice... all of those things continually arise whether we want them to or not. ... We need, as a matter of practical practice... to embrace every experience that comes to us... as a gift. No matter how... much we are grieving, no matter how joyful we are... *each* experience as a gift. Normally, that instruction is reserved... for those who have practiced for many, many years. So, if you find it difficult to embrace those experiences... well, that's why. Why it's reserved for those who have practiced many, many years. But I think, in any given minute, you can have that experience, even if it's not stable. If you *just stop now*... and allow your experiences... as they pass through your mind... just allow them to flow... and place your awareness on the flow of that experience. You may be surprised... at how well you can do it.

[00:29:06] So the last... little piece of... I guess you could call it advice... don't try to maintain that state... for any special length of time. Just begin by intentionally resting... relaxing the body... and of course, not to speak, but that's the easy one... and immediately, with your mind's eye

open... notice the experiences which are already flowing. Pleasant and unpleasant. Endowed with guilt, happiness, joy, prejudice. You can make a list of a thousand things and it wouldn't touch the depth. Your job is to be present with it... as much as possible and when you recognize that you've been distracted... bring your mind back... and begin fresh.

[00:30:44] period of meditation

[00:51:02] So we'll dedicate the benefit of our session to the welfare of all sentient beings without exception.

sangha *[00:51:16] dedicating the merit*