

2018_08_26_pm1_Shamatha_LMC.mp4

taking refuge in awakened mind, bodhicitta aspiration, experience as object of shamatha

[00:06:19] So first, good evening to all of you. And... the schedule this evening, for those of you who are not aware of it, is now a period of meditation with some brief instruction... for about 45 minutes... followed by a break... and then a period of open discussion or conversation.

[00:07:19] So first, as we... approach the... meditation, even before we receive any instruction at all... we need to turn our minds from all of our ordinary concerns. Our pleasures and our... unhappy situations alike. Everything in between. To put it all aside. ... And at the very least, take a short break... and engage in the meditation practice that we call shamatha. Which is also known as calm abiding.

[00:08:40] So, when we put aside our ordinary worldly concerns... we often find that difficult to do... because we're attached to our ordinary worldly concerns. A slightly more direct explanation... *we take refuge* in our ordinary worldly concerns. From the perspective of this tradition... that act of taking refuge in our ordinary worldly concerns... does not relieve us... of the angst, the anxiety, the... concerns that we have in the world. And so instead of just attempting to... put aside those concerns... we place our refuge in a different place. A place which has a number of names, but generally speaking, we say we go for refuge to the Buddha. ... That in itself can be misunderstood. So, we need to understand that... in the deepest sense... we're turning our minds towards a refuge... in our own primordially awakened mind.

[00:10:43] There's a problem with that, too. While our minds are inherently awakened... we do not recognize that. ... Not recognizing it... we engage... in all sorts of activities of body, speech and mind... that lead us... to more situations, externally and internally, that cause us to want to... again, escape... from all of our problems. ... So, this evening in our usual meditation, we will first begin by turning our minds to refuge in the Buddha. The historical figure included. All those who have attained full realization... included. And by definition, it also includes... the awakened mind, which is who we are... even though we are not yet familiar with it and do not recognize it. So, we'll begin by reciting the liturgy for refuge first, three times together.

sangha [00:12:37] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:14:52] In short, as a foundation for our practice... we understand, are *meant* to understand, that the very sense of happiness that we yearn for is... dependent... upon our aspirations and intention... to bring... great benefit to *all* sentient beings without exception. That they might be free of suffering and its causes. And have the happiness that... is supported... by having the causes of happiness. So, our aspirations to encourage ourselves and others... to hold the aspiration of benefiting others is... the foundation of our own happiness. There appears to be no other way that it can be accomplished. So, we'll now spend some time just resting our mind.

[00:16:33] And we have... for our... need to place the mind upon an object or an experience... we can put our awareness upon any object in front of us. A cup or a lid, a coin, a leaf, anything whatsoever. And when distracted, we bring the mind back to that object... over and over again... until the mind begins to naturally settle.

[00:17:24] Alternatively, if you are... able to do it... and potentially even more... useful... is to use our own experience as the object of... our calm abiding meditation. So, our experience can include such things as... sensations in our bodies... which are inevitable, sitting together like this. It can include... emotional states... that we ordinarily... engage in whole heartedly. But in this case, we would... just place our awareness upon that emotion as it unfolds. ... And beyond that, any experience whatsoever in the body... or apparently, in the mind... can be an object upon which we rest... our awareness. And in so resting our awareness... without further... intentions than to just benefit all sentient beings... in time... the object of our awareness, our experience, dissolves. And when it dissolves... the instruction for the practice is... to just rest naturally... in the state that remains... following the dissolution of experience. If you become distracted following that... then you just repeat... the previous pieces again. Finally, again, resting your awareness upon... an experience. So, for the duration of this session... try to follow those instructions carefully.

[00:20:35] *period of meditation*

sangha [00:46:32] *dedicating the merit*