

2018_09_09_am1_Shamatha_LMC.mp4

continual aspiration that all our actions are of benefit for all beings, using our actual experiences as object

[00:08:55] So welcome to our morning of... zhinay, which is calm abiding, which is the... foundation of all of our meditation practices. ... But even the simple practice of zhinay has prerequisites for *each* of our sessions. So important to understand and embrace... the prerequisite of turning our minds to refuge... in the three jewels. ... Our awakened nature... that we call buddhanature. ... The teachings, that we call the Dharma. [... And the... harmonious community of practitioners, who we refer to as the sangha. ... So, we'll begin this morning with the recitation of refuge together three times.

sangha [00:11:19] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:13:03] So the reference... to all sentient beings is... particularly important. ... Particularly important that... we... hold tight... the importance... the *primary* importance... of the benefit of all sentient beings. ... Thus, we reference all of those beings in the refuge liturgy. ... And a support for... that practice is to imagine... as we sit... that in front of us... *all* sentient beings, human... non-human, visible and invisible... all of them arrayed in front of us... in unfathomable, uncountable numbers... extending to the very limits of space itself.

[00:15:01] This wish and intention... to engage in our meditation practice, not... for our *own* calm abiding. But rather, that we might become such... an extraordinary example of that calm abiding... that others will want to follow. To develop the ability... to allow the mind to rest... free of fear... free of attachment... free of any wanting at all... no matter the circumstances

[00:16:13] So, for most of us, giving rise to that... aspiration that we call bodhicitta... the wish for all beings to attain complete realization; to recognize the nature of their own minds... this is the foundation of the entire path. No matter what the practice, no matter what the lineage, no matter... whether we are enthusiastic, happy, sad. The primary thing to remind ourselves of, as continuously as possible, that all of our practices, every one of our thoughts, every one of our actions, every word that we utter is on behalf... of all sentient beings.

[00:17:33] So when we sit and put our... clear awareness... to rest upon, perhaps... our experience... of just sitting here... the *intention*... really does not need to *be* that we are free of thoughts, free of feelings... free of hopes and fears. It does not need to be like that. Which is a *good* thing. Since there is precious little chance that we *would* be free of all those things. With our intention upon the benefit of others... and stabilizing that intention... whatever thoughts and feelings and experiences might arise in our mindstream, they become somewhat insignificant... next to the *grand* aspiration to be a cause for the benefit and ultimate enlightenment of all beings.

[00:19:21] So, as we sit this morning... of the *myriad* ways that we can engage in this practice of calm abiding... more and more in the previous weeks, we have been focusing on... placing our awareness on *actual* experiences. Not merely inanimate objects, but actual experiences. If we use our favorite object as the thing to put our awareness on, we will lose that object. We'll forget to bring it with us. Or we may not like the experiences we're currently having, and so we find it difficult. But, if we *always* place our awareness upon our current experience, then we can be

always present in the practice of shamatha. Always practicing... the Buddhadharma. Always holding aspirations for all sentient beings.

[00:21:16] Each of us here has a physical body. So, experiences are ubiquitous. They're continuous. ... They never come to an end. They may be strong or weak. But they are never ending. ... So, if you place your awareness on some aspect of your body and the experience that is occurring, that's a profoundly good... meditation. But you must not talk to yourself about that experience. Put that aside as if you needed to maintain silence even in your own presence. We just put our awareness on the experience. The comfort or discomfort in the body, by virtue of sitting... in a chair or on the floor, doesn't matter. Whatever, the experience is. Pleasant or unpleasant. Place your awareness there and let it rest on that experience. And as the experience changes... or completely vanishes... we know it will reappear again quickly. But it will not be the same experience. So, it's important, not only to abandon talking to yourself about the experience... but also abandon assumptions about it.

[00:23:42] So, for now, rest your awareness... on any experience, most preferably... at this point, just your physical body... without regard... to comfort or discomfort. ... And when the mind drifts, you find yourself... in a running commentary on your experience, just... carefully... without too much effort abandon that commentary. And place your awareness again upon... your current experience. And if the experience dissolves, which it will... there may be a space before... a distraction occurs. And just let your awareness rest... in that space.

[00:25:07] *period of meditation*

sangha [00:46:23] *dedicating the merit*