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meaning of 3 chimes, using experiences especially difficult ones which are magnetizing, discussion of thinking both gross and subtle, working with pain

LMC [00:01:05] So, this is our... opportunity to have a conversation about... anything, but definitely if there are questions about the practice of shamatha, this would be a good time to raise them, but... doesn't have to be limited to that.

Student 1 [00:02:10] Lama Michael. What's the significance of the three chimes that the umdze does? Is it for refuge in the three jewels?

LMC [00:02:20] It has to be some number. [laughter]

Student 1 [00:02:21] And three is less than seven? [more laughter]

LMC [00:02:27] You have a better one?

Student 1 [00:02:34] No, I like the sound.

LMC [00:02:40] There's a lot of numbers... in this tradition. A lot of numbers ranging from one to, you know, a hundred thousand. Probably we don't want to go that far, but... the numbers all have some kind of meaning to them. And in the case of three chimes here is like... I just did that. There is no set tradition of three chimes. And many people don't do any chime at all, they just get up and leave. And other places they do one chime or... it really is dependent upon, what I would say, meaningless circumstances. [laughter]

Student 1 [00:03:35] Well, those are the type of rules I like. [more laughter]

LMC [00:03:37] Somebody once asked for a teaching on the three chimes. And so, I said... actually, I've been asked a number of times... and the teaching is always different. But I think it's good. And so, what I did was I said, well, we have the three jewels - the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha. So, you ring the bell once, and twice, and each time you place your awareness on the three jewels... each of the three jewels. In the context of what we were doing today, you could also place your awareness on each of the chimes on an experience. So, in order for that to work, for example, you could... place your awareness on whatever experience your awareness lands on. Because the truth is, is that in any given moment, we're having dozens, if not hundreds of experiences. Our minds tend to be... scattered and filled with extraneous things all the time. So is the body. And our experience of the body, always continuously, usually subtle, such that we don't even notice it, but not always.

LMC [00:05:08] So, one can also use the three jewels like the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Place your awareness on your experience *in this moment* of the Buddha. If you don't have an experience of the Buddha this moment, you *will...* as soon as you place your awareness on it. The Dharma is just the teaching, so you're just like placing your awareness on the teachings... in general, not an exploration of, of them in any way at all, it's just kind of like... *refreshing* your awareness of, of those things. And that way you close out from whatever was previously there by the three bells. And then you're kind of reminded also, of those three things.

So maybe you get up from the cushion and walk out with those three things in your mind, which may be helpful in establishing a kind of stable relationship with them.

Student 1 [00:06:06] Thanks.

Student 2 [00:06:34] So, you kind of answered my question a little bit just now. So, I was hesitant to ask, but... with that shamatha practice that you introduce today... so, I just want to make sure like that I'm... so, when I do that, which is kind of a new, like a lot of times we used to do a lot of... attention on the breath meditation here.

LMC [00:07:00] And that's good, that's....

Student 2 [00:07:00] And I do that at home sometimes.

LMC [00:07:04] Yeah. Not retiring that. [laughter]

Student 2 [00:07:09] Good. But with this other more open... meditation... that's what I noticed... was that things would suddenly... kind of like with sound meditation, like things would come, they would become dominant in my awareness. And then something else would become dominant. And sometimes I think I've had this feeling like I should be more... like I put a little more effort into pulling back. And trying not to have *one thing* in my awareness, almost like I'm looking at a TV screen. And I wonder if that's wrong. Like if I should just be relaxing into... those things. Becoming more.... or does it matter?

LMC [00:08:00] Well, it's a good point to raise. Because we have, as you remember, the most direct was the one-breath meditation. Where you bring your awareness to a breath, one breath which is unfolding. And you just follow it out and in and then you relax, you let go of it. You don't try to follow another breath. Though you will, you could, but usually you let that go for a little bit and you do another one.

[00:08:36] I think it's helpful... to hold the view... that what we're trying to do is completely... dominate... the way our mind normally functions. We're trying to completely dominate that process with... the Dharma. All of the teachings. So, in such a way that instead of having to remember, now let's see, I'm going to have a breath. So, I need to follow it and I need to follow it in this way. So, you can count it like from the exhalation or the inhalation. There are so many different ways in which it's done, that we can get completely... distracted by the details of it, which are actually not so important.

[00:09:31] The method is meant to give us a means for... *resting* the awareness in this case, on an experience which is breathing. Which is fairly important. So, we rest our awareness on the breathing. And even if we're having difficulty breathing, we still bring our awareness to the breathing. And it is a... natural place to place our awareness. Especially if you're having *difficulty*, for example, then it's even *easier* to place your awareness on it. It's almost like you can't *not* put your awareness on it.

[00:10:07] The difficult things are magnetizing in that way. Which I think is why..., many great teachers will say, that... the most profound object... to place your awareness upon... is the experience that you never wanted. That you definitely did *not* want. Even better! Because... we're magnetized by it. We're so drawn to it anyway. But generally, we're drawn to it in a way

which is not functional. We don't overcome whatever it is that we're struggling with. We tend to be drawn into it even deeper and... it becomes kind of pathological at some point.

[00:11:02] So, the idea is that you place your awareness on *some* experience that unfolds naturally. And you just put your awareness there and follow it with no commentary... whatsoever. The commentary is a way to get into the experience. It's not the experience. We want to make that clear. Because the conceptual is the enemy... of the mind resting on something. We want the conceptual utterly out of the way. And yet... it's easy to get things out of the way, but to remain with the awareness *on* the experience that's unfolding... is not always easy.

[00:11:46] If I say follow three breaths in a row, that's pretty easy to understand. We want to get rid of the... three... at some point where we are just... following the breaths. But the three is helpful in the beginning, even though it's conceptual. It's helpful because it gives us a sense of... where we start and where we end, that sort of thing. But otherwise, the experience is... preeminent. ... Is that okay?

Student 2 [00:12:35] Yes, thank you.

Student 3 [00:12:47] So, related to that, my 8-year-old niece this morning asked me, "How do you not think when you're meditating?" What would you tell an 8-year-old?

LMC [00:13:11] I would say, "What makes you think that you don't think when you meditate?" [laughter] For starters. And then, as adults, we can ask the question... so, she's eight years old? So, eight years old, this maybe a little bit much. But, as adults, we could ask the question, what is *think*? As opposed to any other experience that we have. Usually, I think most people would come to some kind of a conclusion like... it's mulling over in the mind... the experience. In other words, it's not just *having* the experience. Now I'm *talking* to myself about it. ... There's nothing wrong with talking to ourselves about it. The question is, can you *notice* that you're talking to yourself about it? And that... turns out to be... a rather deep puzzle. Can I just notice that I'm talking to myself about it? We generally don't notice that we're doing that. Or if we do, it's almost like we feel like it's happening *to* us. Like, I don't really want to talk to myself about it, but here I am talking to myself about it. And trying to figure out how I maybe could... get *out* of talking to myself about it. Which is just more talking to yourself about.

[00:14:42] So, you have to come back to the point... of resting the awareness on an experience. And if the experience is talking to yourself about it, that actually can work. But... in that case, it comes down to the point of... I'm talking to myself about it. Now, in order to be *clear* about that, I need to listen to myself. Because the talking to ourselves about things is often not intentional, nor is it cogent, nor is it... it's like, we're not trying to do it. We can't stop doing it. So, it's a place where we can actually step out of that circle... and just listen to ourselves doing it. Of course... that's very difficult. Because as soon as we start to do that, we realize... [said in a soft voice...] that we're insane. [big laughter]

[00:15:48] I mean, most people would not have much relationship with... I talk to myself and I listen to myself. Not like, listening in the way of... a conversation with myself. That's different. This is like I'm *talking* to myself. I don't *mean* to be talking to myself, but I *notice* that I'm talking to myself. And the object, or the subject, that I'm talking about is really compelling because it's something that happened. Maybe it happened a long time ago. Maybe it happened yesterday. And we just can't stop *thinking* about it. And it comes down to... what 'thinking' often is, is talking

about. So, we have to agree that talking to yourself is *a kind of* thinking about. It's a gross level of thinking about something, usually. Personally, I like to... be slightly more subtle... with my own self, my own mind. Subtlety, rather than let the conversation run on its own, like I'm watching a movie of some kind. That movie is never compelling. I always feel like it wasn't worth the price.

[00:17:17] But I think there's something to be said. So, if she says, how do you stop yourself thinking? I think the first question is... why would you stop yourself thinking? So, she might say, "Well, then what is meditation?" And so now you're making some progress, right? We have some subtlety there. Well... meditation is like, not really *intending* to talk to yourself about it, but *seeing* that you're doing that. Can you do that? Can you just see that you're doing it? Without any conclusion whatsoever. Now, if she can do that, then she should come here and teach. [laughter] That would be a good move.

Student 4 [00:18:20] Lama Michael, when we had the first open house here, I believe it was, where we had the whole thing marked off there. And people were coming in. We'd just opened this new building up for the people to come in for the first time, the community. Part of that day was a short meditation. And it was challenging, unlike a usual meditation here at KCC, in that there was still a bunch of people walking around and talking. And you were leading a calm abiding session here. And... I'm going to paraphrase what you said. But it was something like ...place your attention on your breath, or something like that, or on an object and rest it there. And if you can't do that, just notice the mind that can't do that. And I thought to myself, wow, that's such a profound instruction, you know? So, it just makes me think about your comment. And your comment also, you know, so, the experience of just noticing your mind in motion. So anyway, just wanted to say.

LMC [00:19:31] Yeah. Yeah, maybe most of us have heard the instruction for how to place the awareness on your awareness. So, these things get more and more subtle, right? Like, if I have a pain in my leg, putting my awareness on it is not so difficult. It's like, I even know where it is, exactly. Often, we don't know where the experience is. But sometimes we do. So, it's easy to put the awareness on that. It's better than putting your awareness on a cup of water. We've also done that. Inanimate things. But they don't have any power. And we, we need some power here. Otherwise, the mind drifts.

[00:20:25] So, I think this is why the old Kalu Rinpoche used to say... the best thing to rest your awareness on is the experience you never wanted. Or actively did *not* want. You had an aversion to it. So now... you have the opportunity to treat it as a gift. If you can treat it as a *gift* and really kind of get into *that*, you may be able to put your awareness on something... that actually has energy with it. Because it's something we don't want, but... we have it. Like, you know, you broke your leg, okay? You didn't want that. But don't miss the opportunity to put your awareness on it. It's not going to hurt things. And the ability to put your awareness on something which you have an abject *aversion* to is far more powerful than to put it on... a nickel, or some other inanimate object.

[00:21:30] Bringing it home, to ourselves is putting the awareness on our own experience. And the more intense the experience is, the more profound the result of resting your awareness there. Unless... you put your awareness there and you just start talking about it. And... 20 minutes later you realize you've just been yappin' to yourself for 20 minutes. That is not so useful, except in one way. You'd have to stop for a moment and go... hmmm. That wasn't so good. And maybe by virtue of just *that* much, you would just move enough to like, I'm going to do that again and we're gonna try... a little different approach. And little by little... you can get

good at that. And getting good at putting your awareness... on things that you have an aversion to... really has... an extraordinary impact.

[00:22:28] Like, you're really angry. And not only are you really angry, you're *righteously* really angry. [laughter] Which means... unlike the broken leg you had an aversion to, you have the same kind of intensity, but it's an attachment. I will not give that anger up. Because *I* am right. And *you* are wrong. And I'm... and so this thing is pulsating like that. *That...* is a profound thing to put your awareness on. Not to stop it. Not to have any other relationship then, then *I* see *what's going on*. That's all. That's a profound instruction. Easy to get that instruction in so many places. It's easy to understand. It doesn't have some big cultural, or conceptual overlay, so, easy to get. And the test is... when you are really... in an emotional bind. Can you remember? And the answer is almost surely... unh-unh. Can't remember that. [laughter]

[00:23:38] So, knowing *that...* now we see... what the entire Dharma is about. If we train ourselves to just be able to work with easy, comfortable things... when the really big stuff comes... we won't even remember what the possible... antidote would be. Just completely... miss us. Days later, maybe after we've killed the offender, we'll remember. And even then, it'll be difficult to see it except in a flash. So really trying to raise these things on a daily basis, really even better on a minute-by-minute basis, as often as we can raise it every day... is really helpful. ... Okay?

Student 5 [00:24:44] Lama Michael. I had a follow up on the thinking. You made a little comment but moved on about... you try and get a little more subtle... when you're talking to yourself about that gross level of thinking. And you mentioned getting a little more subtle. Can you talk any more on that?

LMC [00:25:07] The subtlety that I'm referring to is when... [turns to Student 3 to clarify] your niece is that what ... she's 8? Okay. So, we have an 8-year-old. Now, the subtlety here is likely to be so subtle that it can't be... gotten. But it might be. So, the test for us is... can you place your awareness on a difficult emotional state? And the answer is almost not. Because... it's just too much. But if all it is, is just kind of an irritating level of... thinking, thinking, talking to myself, remembering a conversation. Reliving the conversation in a way that benefits me and not them. [laughter] And, you know, just kind of going back and forth like we just do automatically... the really precious instruction around that is... do *not* change that. Add *one* thing... awareness of what is occurring. Do not think that you are practicing the Dharma by deciding... not to have that opinion about someone. That's better than nothing. But that's just what it is. It's just better than nothing. You're moving in the direction of, you know, being a nicer person. At least... if you feel venomous towards a person, maybe you don't spread it. You just kind of poison yourself. That's better than nothing.

[00:26:57] But that's not what we're shooting for. We're shooting for... amongst human beings, there is nothing extraordinarily unique about disliking someone, about wishing people ill, about trying to relive a conversation in a different way that would be better from my perspective. There's nothing... strange about that. That just goes on all the time. Our job... is not to make it better. It's to see it. And when seeing it, give up the idea that... because you can see it and you don't like it, you're going to change it. That's just moving back to... I take refuge in distraction. We want no distraction. Just see it like it is. And if you can see it for... one second... and then just let go of it... that's the best. Because the likelihood that in one second... it's gone. And if you go for three seconds, you'll be re-creating it again. So, we have to find... we have to find this

place... where what is continuously happening, we can see. Which is... the emotional state, it's like the ocean... again. Like we were talking about the other day.

[00:28:36] Sometimes the ocean is *very* still. So, sometimes our emotional state is *very* still, right? Other times... it's not so still. So, our problem is... when it's very still, we feel like... nothing I need to do. Nothing I need to do. Everything's okay. It's fine. That doesn't give us any... indication as to what we might do when things are *not*... fine. So the issue comes down to when things are *not* fine, how do I practice so that when they're not fine, I don't have to have this sense of like... I know there was some instruction about this, but I can't remember what it is. That never works. That *never* works. We have to do the practice... enough consistently that when the situation arises, we already are *in* the place of engaging it. Then we're ready to ride, you know. You looked at the bicycle for months. You never learned how to ride. When it gets [to be] really a necessity for you to go somewhere, that's the wrong time to get on the bike. You will fall off. So, you have to keep doing it... until it just feels automatic. And then an interesting thing occurs.

[00:30:01] And the interesting thing that occurs is... I'm using a personal experience here, of riding a bicycle when I was a kid a lot. And then we took our bikes kind of back into rough country. You know, our parents drove us somewhere and we can take our bikes and go on a path. And of course, there were potholes and all sorts of things. So, we immediately found... hmm, we fall off our bikes all the time. And skin our knees and do everything else. And so, you had to go slower. You had to be mindful. You had to stop looking at the scenery while... all your attention had to come to... how do you stay on this bike. And is there a pothole in front of me or a cliff, or what? And when you got *that*, then... the awareness didn't go away.

[00:30:57] We have that situation with our emotional states the same way. We need to honor the emotional state. Like I don't recall ever saying, you know what, this was a bad idea to ride bicycles in rough areas. No, it never seemed like a bad idea. It seemed like it was great. All the time. Even falling down, skinning your knees. It was like, this is fun! I mean, when you're 12 years old, it hurts your knee, but you get on the bike and you go some more. You know, it's just... we need to have that relationship with our kleshas, with the conflicted emotional states. Like *that* is the best. Not that the kleshas are best, but there are many teachings, not secret teachings, just good teachings, that the kleshas are your friend.] You're conflicted emotional states are your *best* friend. Because... when you are under the sway of conflicted emotions, there's nothing you want to be rid of more. So therefore, you are willing to try things that you otherwise would have thought... eh, boring. *This is not boring*. So, therefore, because it causes conflict with yourself and with others... and it's not boring, and you have a method to deal with it, we are interested. You know, the Dharma is like everything else. If it's boring and you're putting your awareness on a nickel, it isn't too long before you actually don't care about the nickel. Nor do you care about putting your awareness on it. It's like, you know, okay, I get it. I'm training for something, but for what?

[00:32:47] We, I think it's kind of a piece of our culture. We don't stick with things that we don't get a result from, generally speaking. And one might very well say... that's what smart people do. They don't stick with things that they don't get anything back from. So, when we find ourselves in difficult situations and we want to bring our practice to bear on that, either to... assuage our sense of fear or too much attachment, too much conflict... and then we see that we are actually part of a cause of the conflict. We're not just a victim of it. We need to have our Dharma practice ready to go. So that we can have a sense of... I know what to do about this. And it's often like so simple. Like you just need to see it. You need to see it and stop *feeding* it.

And just keep seeing it, not just stop feeding it. Keep seeing it. Just keep seeing it. This is an ongoing experience. This is important to put your awareness on.

[00:34:00] This is a small example of the most interesting stories of great beings. If you hear a story... the Tibetans love these stories of great beings... when you hear a story of a great being, it almost always comes down to exactly what we're talking about. But when we hear this story, we're listening to it often through... our habitual patterns. Which is fine, but at some point, we have to turn the awareness to the habitual pattern. Which is *my* pattern, which is... causing myself problems because it's causing other people problems and so on. And this web is not turning out so good. It's not as simple as just you hope everybody has a good day. [laughter]

Student 5 [00:34:57] So, Lama Michael, thank you for re-juicing... my courage and confidence in this. And as I'm facing my kleshas, may... that seed you planted keep growing. The image of being a 12-year-old... *delighted* to keep... skinning my knees. Thank you.

LMC [00:35:21] Yeah. Yeah. [laughs]

Student 6 [00:35:31] So I have a question about... when your experience is a painful part of your body and following that experience... and if the experience becomes so intense, I do one of two things. I either stop... following it or I end up trying to do lhatong with it. So, how would I just stick with it... with this technique, without giving up?

LMC [00:36:42] You know, I don't feel like it's very useful to tell somebody... to not give up. I think, in order for that to be functional, you have to find... the reason why you wouldn't give up. [something off mic] Oh, that's not you, is it? Where is Steve? We can ask him. You know, when we have a difficult thing that we would like to be rid of... and that's all we would like... is to just be rid of it... that's one thing. And if you can be rid of it, most of us would say that's good enough. But here, we're trying to find the means to go deeper into our practice.

[00:37:46] To go deeper into the practice requires two things. One is... consistency. We might call that not giving up, but I think it's really about consistent practice, not about dealing with really difficult things so much as... just continuously doing it. Continuously doing it. Like if you have a practice that you do every day... like maybe you have a practice that you do every five minutes. So, you really want to stabilize your awareness... and you're using your breath. And so, maybe you... try to stop, at least once every five minutes, and just for one breath, hold your awareness very clear. And then just let it go and then move on... with whatever you're doing. If you could do that every five minutes... for a month... you would have very stable awareness.

[00:38:52] So, how come we're not doing it? [laughs] There's something not compelling about it. But if you have... pain... all the time. You see, the breath, we just take it for granted that our breath is going to be there. When it isn't there, we are not ready to work with that because it's been so consistent. I think that's one of the big problems with all of the... the issues of our mortality, is that... we may not have prepared by virtue of... working with those things... all along the way... consistently enough... to actually have the habit of relating to difficult physical situations and difficult mental situations in a way which is actually helpful. So, if you know that that's the case... and you also know that *consistent* work with these things, whether it's pain, take pain! I think the teaching would be... do not for a moment think that your meditation is going to get rid of your pain. That's an important thing. Do *not* think that is going to get rid of your pain. And of course, you'll trick yourself. I'm not thinking that it's going to get rid of the pain, but really

inside you thinking it will. I'm thinking, not thinking that it's going to get rid of the pain, is part of the way I get rid of the pain. So, we trick ourselves like that. And then we finally say... it's not working!

[00:40:49] Actually, if you get rid of the pain, you've lost your best friend. The pain... is the gold. So, I don't know... of any of the most respectable teachers that I know... I don't think a single one would say, if you do this, the pain will go away. And if I hear them say that, I'll probably feel like, hmm, I was wrong about them. The pain may not go away. But your *relationship* with that pain can radically change. You're dying. You feel miserable. You feel sick. You feel filled with pain. You feel abandoned. Like add on all of the possible weights and difficulties that you can imagine... and then think, now... what do I do with that? You know, if you think about that enough, you start thinking like, maybe I should just end my life. But now you're *really* giving up your best friend. So, we have to *know* that it's our best friend in order to work with that situation. So, starting with *really* difficult pain... is probably... the most difficult path.

[00:42:20] A couple of days ago, I got like really, really bad charley horse. So, it's a great, it's a great case. A really bad charley horse. So, there's nothing in me that says you're gonna die. It's just really... a very strong experience. If I remove the word pain, half of it's already... in another category, by just removing the word pain. "Oh, it's so painful." If I just say, "It's so strong," it doesn't have any value now. I still have the pain. But now I can do something different with it because it's not chewing at me... in the same way. We have to kind of become friends with the totality of our experience. And then I think the teachings on... the most profound experience to have, is the experiences you never wanted. You are always afraid you'd have, even like, you really didn't want it. So, you start with the little stuff.

[00:43:28] We've had millions of opportunities, literally, I think millions. I mean, when you were a kid and you fell off your bike and you really skinned your leg up bad, it was really painful. And then we cry and all these things. But... your parents put some bandages on. A few days later, you're back on your bike again. And we forget... that it actually wasn't what it appeared to be, like the end of... life, you know. [laughs]

[00:43:57] Look for them. Look for the discomfort. Embrace it. You overeat. Feel indigestion. Look for the discomfort. Just embrace it like this is an experience... that almost certainly will not kill me. And the next thing, the same thing. The next thing, the same thing. The next thing, the same. Just that, you just keep working at it. The idea is, again, it's that generic formula. You see the experience. The judgment... is just kind of frosting on the cake. If that's there... that's fine. Because you immediately can see... that doesn't get me anything. There's nothing there to be gotten... but the experience itself, having the ability to actually see it clearly, see the aversion clearly. And just keep your awareness on the actual experience, which is very deep meditation. And... on... your consciousness of the experience occurring.

LMC [00:45:06] It gradually, just has its own life. It's again, like the wave on the sea. The wave on the sea arises. Now, you know what I'm going to say. The other side of this is... the reason that we're not good at this is... we continually tell ourselves.... I still have that pain in my leg. We have to move to the place, which has to move beyond a philosophical proposition that the pain in your leg today is not yesterday's pain... re-occurring. That is not the case. In fact, the pain that you have this moment is not the same pain that you had a moment ago. Think of it like the ocean. Waves rise and waves fall. There's big waves and there's small waves. But how many times does a wave repeat itself? ... So, we were laughing about this a couple of days ago, or a week ago, I think. We never say, "Hey, there's that wave that we saw yesterday. Remember?"

We *never* say that. We totally understand the nature of a wave... is that it is utterly dependent. Comes and goes. Never occurs twice. Never! Ever.

[00:46:35] We have *that* relationship with our pain and we put our awareness on the pain. The pain comes. The pain goes. And we're very clear. The experience is... it's like a wave. It comes and goes. Sometimes intense. Sometimes not intense. Sometimes it's gone for days. Then it's like really strong again. See what I'm saying? We're saying *'it'*. We double-cross ourselves. There is no 'it' there. So, the pain becomes... a force for direct realization. Understanding of the experience itself. It has no inherent... value. It's just pain. It's just an experience. You can even throw away the adjective pain.

Student 6 [00:47:28] So if I'm sitting... with my experience and I see that the... you know, it's intensifying, intensifying. And I'm seeing my reaction to that. That's the experience. And at the point... it just becomes unbearable. That's the experience. And...

LMC [00:47:50] Well, now... I think you're confusing it just a little bit. At the point where it becomes unbearable... is that your awareness of the pain or is that your judgment?

Student 6 [00:48:05] I don't know, I guess I have to get that far to experience it!

LMC [00:48:08] Yeah, the judgment is not helpful. It's just a judgment. It doesn't add or subtract anything to it at all. The pain may get worse. The pain may get less. The value is... if you have pain, and you engage in putting your awareness on that experience... you'll find... that sometimes it gets less painful. Other times it gets more painful. There's no certainty as to what will happen. But that truth was there before you ever came to look at it. So, what you *get* out of it, though, is something much more profound than the elimination of pain. Which you can do with drugs. As you know, anyway. You don't get anything out of that except... the thing that actually held the promise of insight has been removed.

[00:49:14] The insight... sometimes comes easy and sometimes it doesn't. Because we're used to tricking ourselves. Aha! That pain is gone. The pain was gone, the moment it occurs. Like, already it was gone. Kind of like the wave on the ocean. You saw it. It was gone. But we *understand* the wave on the ocean. Which is why we never say, hey, there's that wave again. Because we understand... every wave is fresh. Never occurs again. Ever. ... You could ask, where does it go? It doesn't go anywhere. It wasn't anything in the first place. So, we're going to have that relationship with the pain. The pain may be just as intense as it ever was, but we may find ourselves not putting that... judgment on it. Like, "Oh, it's so painful. Will I ever be free of this?" All of those things are add-ons. And we lose our ability to put the awareness... on that, also. So, I think that... there's a lot to be gained... by bringing awareness to our experiences as they unfold. And a lot to be gained from the ones that are the least pleasant.

Student 6 [00:50:57] Thank you.

LMC [00:50:57] Thank you.

sangha [00:50:58] *dedicating the merit*