

2018_10_28_am1_Shamatha_LMC.mp4

practice of shamatha to help recognize nature of mind in the stillness & movement and recognize the continuous play of experience is always fresh

[00:01:18] Good morning to all of you. Congratulations... for getting in here this morning after last night's... really boring exercises. [laughter] ... So first, I would like to just say... that yesterday's events were inspiring... hilarious... and really a tribute... to our ability to meld our serious interests in practice of the Dharma... with a sense of lightheartedness. And really... professional acumen and choreographing all of the things that we experienced yesterday. Really extraordinary. I hope we can do it again tomorrow. [laughter] But probably not.

[00:04:06] I have to say one short... somewhat humorous... incident that occurred many years ago... at Cloud Mountain. Had the opportunity to participate in with Ken McLeod, and we humorously challenged each other during the... teachings at that time. And afterwards, one of the participants... said that he had great resistance to coming to a Buddhist retreat. Fearing that... they were too serious. ... And that it had woken him up to the possibility that actually he was wrong. So... here we are this morning. So, we also can now prove to ourselves that... we can remain lighthearted... and practice our Dharma... with a sense of humor. And... meld that... with our serious, ever deepening understanding of what it is that we're doing together. So, we'll begin this morning with the recitation of the refuge prayer together.

sangha [00:06:08] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:08:25] So, we are... each fully endowed with... the awakened mind of the Buddha. We are inherently a Buddha. ... As many of our great teachers have said... there is nothing to add or subtract. But one thing does remain to be done. And that is that we... need to *recognize* that nature of mind. So, when we practice... shamatha, or calm abiding... it's helpful for us to recall and... very *softly* keep it in mind... that our meditation practice... no matter what the practice is, is about... recognizing that awakened nature.

[00:10:13] And of some interest... when we are engaging in the practice of shamatha... we often make a singular mistake... in assuming... even believing... that the nature of mind... is fundamentally stillness. ... This is not the case. ... All of our experiences... whether subtle and slight... or profoundly intense... whether disturbing or pleasant... all of our experiences, without exception, arise... from the nature of mind itself. So, when we settle... into our practice of *calm abiding*... it is likely... right alongside of the calmness... is also the continuous... play of experiences. ... Without any contradiction between the two. ... The stillness and the movement... are a continuous interplay. In any moment that you place your awareness there... on whatever experience is arising... you can witness that interplay. ... And all of those experiences, as you know... as you know, just by paying attention... the experiences arise and then... they also inevitably dissolve. There are no exceptions. And every one of those experiences has never occurred before. And will never occur again.

[00:13:51] So, when you settle your mind... in the practice of calm abiding... rather than trying to... *force* the mind to be still... a process that you are guaranteed to lose... instead of trying to settle the mind, to force the mind to be still... just place your awareness on the experiences that arise as they arise. Witness those experiences... arising and dissolving. ... If you find some of those experiences pleasant... witness *that* experience. And if you find some of them disturbing...

just witness that experience. *Continuously* bringing the mind back. ... So, this is a good starting place this morning. So, we'll take... a period of time now. Do your best. And later this morning, we'll have an opportunity to raise questions and clarify things.

[00:15:59] period of meditation

[00:26:37] Now, during your meditation... you may find it helpful or... pleasant... to move a bit. Especially when you're on your own... possibly to get up and walk a little bit. These things are not... a *disturbance* if you recall that... the mind itself... continuously delivers experiences. ... So, moving... is likely to... deliver an experience... in the same manner that sitting still... does not *stop* the flow of experiences. So, if you need to move or stand up, you can do that. And you can do it without interrupting your meditation... by just continuously... placing your awareness on the experience which is currently arising. ... Continue in that fashion.

[00:28:22] period of meditation

LMC [00:36:51] Now, in just a couple of minutes... we will take a break. Before coming back and as we depart, also keep in mind... as you move around... even if you cannot... rest your awareness on the experiences as they unfold... which is really *quite* important... if you *cannot* do it, then at least remind yourself as often as possible... that your experiences are *continuous*. There is always something arising in the mind that you can place your awareness on, even for a moment. ... So we'll dedicate the merit now from this session.

sangha [00:38:28] *dedicating the merit*