

2019_01_01_7_NYrR_LMC.mp4

chanting 17th Karmapa's First Light Prayer, the components and visualization of taking refuge, our less pleasant experiences are most profound place to rest our awareness and the tool of Dharma to work with these, benefit of short time many time

Dora & Sangha [00:05:34] Intro to Karmapa's First Light practice - sangha chants in English, then Tibetan

LMC [00:20:30] When we... begin a session of meditation... we always start with the... turning of the mind to refuge. ... Turning of the mind to refuge... as opposed... to the alternative: turning our minds to... grasping after all the things we would like to have. Alternatively, turning our minds to aversion... to all the things we wish we *didn't* have. Our illness. Our difficult relationships at times. And most important... is to turn our minds... to the place of holding the *wish*... that all of our efforts... whether it is speech, whether it is a passing thought... or some deed that we performed. The wish that all of those things would come together in such a way that all sentient beings would benefit. ... And even spontaneously become free... of the causes of suffering at *all* levels. And so, there is a visualization that we can engage in that supports that approach.

[00:23:12] And that is as we begin the... Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer, we begin by imagining... that all of our kind... parents... our kind teachers... kind friends... and all of those who are not *always* so kind... that they might be kind... we imagine them... all in front of us... extending to the limits of space itself. So, like a great oceanic cloud... immeasurable in size and scope... a cloud of all sentient beings. All of whom, now we say... who have been our mothers... over and over again. And so, we imagine with a great... interest... that through our just turning our minds to refuge and bodhicitta, the wish to benefit all others... that *just* turning our minds like that... would accomplish... all things... for all sentient beings. That they would be free now... and forward indefinitely... of all the physical... pain and mental pain... that we naturally have as sentient beings.

[00:25:43] We *add* to that one wish... which is so important... that we would be willing... to take on the suffering of all sentient beings, no matter how... difficult. No matter how often. No matter the consequences to ourselves that we might individually be responsible... for the benefit of *all* sentient beings. And thinking like that... we might also... notice... that our own benefit... is indeed accomplished... through the great wish to benefit all beings without a single exception. And with the great wish that not a *single* sentient being... anywhere, any time... not a single sentient being deserves to suffer. And so, it is our wish... to be a cause in removing suffering of all sentient beings. So, we'll begin this morning's practice by reciting again the prayer for refuge and bodhicitta three times together.

sangha [00:27:37] reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer

[00:29:48] When we practice calm abiding... it is not necessarily... meant to be... that we would... experience calm abiding. And anyone who has practiced... calm abiding, or any other meditation whatsoever, must have come to understand that... not all of our experiences are pleasant. ... But all of our experiences are useful. So, as we relax and prepare to rest our awareness with clarity... and the experience of stillness... we might also understand... that some of our less pleasant experiences are the most profound. The most profound place to rest our awareness.

So, our ordinary, everyday dealings with others and with ourselves...we tend to rest our awareness on our opinions. On our wishes, mostly for ourselves. ... And we tend to become dissatisfied as our minds drift. And the more difficult experiences we're having do not necessarily... evaporate.

[00:32:56] Oftentimes, we place our awareness... on simple things... like a stick or a stone in front of us. Or for that matter, even a... more important object such as a statue of the Buddha. But importantly... the most useful... place to rest our awareness is often... the place we would least like to rest it. Upon our experience of confusion, for example. Or our experience of anger. Or for that matter... our experience of attachment. ... In general, we often say about these things, they're all our hopes and fears. ... And we put a great deal of effort into avoiding the fears... and identifying with and hanging onto the hopes. But in this simple practice of calm abiding... one of the most profound transformations... can be witnessed by anyone, even those who have never done it before. ... *And it works best...* with the more difficult situations such as anger. Such as fear. And desire of all kinds.

[00:35:15] So, when you sit quietly and begin the practice of calm abiding, one method is... and it's a very important one... place your awareness on... *any* experience that you're having... but especially an experience... you would like to be rid of. Because if we nurture our sense of... being *rid* of certain experiences... pretty soon we figure out ways to get rid of those things, and that usually means harming someone else.

[00:36:24] So, a strong experience... is the best. And a slightly negative experience is quite good. It's an important thing to ponder and contemplate. Because we all have experiences we wish we weren't having. The Dharma will not get rid of those experiences for us. Rather, it is the *tool* by which we can... accomplish the Dharma within the very context of the Dharma itself. Which is the *actual* gift. So, rather than run from... the experiences which feel like they're just too much for me... relax. ... And put your mind right there on the very thing you most want to run from. Let your awareness *cook* there... like a cake baking in the oven. And when it's done... you will have something sweet. And if you do it over and over and it becomes even habitual, we're not really supposed to use that word as Buddhists... but in this case, habit is a great blessing. The more you place your awareness on your experiences, the more your experiences will be... directly witnessed as gifts. So, try that in this session... up until the break. But I want to add one last thing.

[00:39:01] Try to break your session up into multiple small pieces. It's always easy to put your awareness on *any* experience that you have for a short time. The difficulty is in *maintaining* that awareness for a longer period. So, it should be good news... that it's not necessary. If you can place your awareness on any experience... pleasant or unpleasant, even for... a few seconds or just a few minutes... that's plenty good enough. And when that experience is gone, you then can come back to the next experience and place your awareness there. So, for the duration of this session... do your best.

[00:40:08] *period of meditation*
sangha [00:51:11] *dedicating the merit*