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ability to relax and open to treasures of our awakened mind

[00:02:30] First, a very short... set of comments. As usual, in this practice of calm abiding... we will begin with the recitation of the refuge vow... which is the foundation of all of our practices. So, if you're ever wondering what would be worth doing, this vow is always worth doing. Placing it in our mental apparatus... and nurturing our relationship to the awakened mind... and all of the great teachers, going back millennia... that we might also accomplish what they accomplished and turn our minds 100 percent in the direction of clearly benefiting others. Benefiting others, which is the primary cause... for our own benefit. So, we'll begin by reciting the refuge prayer three times together.

sangha [00:04:27] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:06:16] In order to... effectively practice calm abiding... the foundation of refuge is important... as we said a few moments ago. ... And also important when practicing calm abiding... that we develop a clear ability... to utterly relax. Whether we're sitting up, standing up, walking or lying down. The relaxing part... is not just the physical relaxation. It's also to relax the mind. So, that we open ourselves... to the treasures which lie before us. The treasures of the awakened mind, which all of us possess... equally... as the Buddha possessed them. And our aspiration, of course... is to accomplish... that awakened mind.

[00:08:09] We may have some... conflict there. Depending upon how we hear... or relate to the idea of awakened mind. So, the best way to relate to awakened mind is the most clear... simple, direct approach. To understand... that every thought and every word... every thought... that we have and every word that we speak, every action that we do... is meant to be a step in the direction of completely... thoroughly recognizing... that awakened mind.

[00:09:24] What is important, each time that we sit down to meditate... is that some part of what we're doing is clear to us. So, if we... tend to suffer from anxiety... and other mild... mental issues... if we can let go of all of those things... and allow our body to relax... then we are in a position where we can take advantage... of that awakened mind, which we all possess... as the Buddha possessed it.

[00:10:41] One thing is... it is pretty much the case for all of us... that from a mental perspective, we are constantly... engaged in conversation with ourselves. Even if we're sitting still in this meditation hall... it is quite likely that we are also experiencing diversions, distractions. ... And we may come to have a... sense of disappointment. But there is no need to be disappointed. Those experiences, those thoughts... memories, reactions... all of it... are the things that... have always been there. And our objective is not to dispel them. Not to make an effort to get rid of them. ... Especially since it's futile.

[00:12:25] We want to bring our awareness right into the midst... of that mind, which generates all of our experiences. ... We want to move into the midst of that... and sit down... both physically and mentally... and just... remain aware... of all the things the mind is doing. Without making an effort... to change any of it. And if we practice... like this over time, all of the riches of the Dharma, the myriad teachings... the myriad paths within the Dharma... by remaining aware of the... many experiences which continuously flow from the mind... we gradually... come to

understand its nature. And the nature of the experience is.. that we have all the time... from morning to night... whether we are asleep or awake... and even... whether we are dead or alive.

[00:14:27] So, the practice of zhinay, or calm abiding, is a profound practice. That each one of us, no matter what our history has been, each one of us is capable... of stepping onto this path... and enjoying... the fruit of our efforts. And because of our relationships with... our friends and families... the goodness of that practice... will naturally carry us forward through... difficult times and joyful, easy times. Without attachment... to things being different. And without fear... that things will not change.

[00:15:33] *period of meditation*

sangha [00:44:25] *dedicating the merit*