

## 2019\_03\_03\_am3\_QA\_LMC.mp4

taking responsibility for our actions and seeing relation to being gift from guru, **Carrying Practice**: using slogans and mantras, our relationship with yidams

[00:08:24] Well... that particular aphorism [drive all blames into one] is, is *rich*... in a number of ways, but... if I have to add something, it is to say that... it is *always* the case that... we accomplish our own benefit and the benefit of others by taking full responsibility for *all* of our experiences and all of our actions. So, many of our actions inevitably, don't work out so well. [laughs] And so, it's important when they don't work out so well that we're prepared to take full responsibility for them all the time. And so, I think that's what we mean, 'drive all blame into one', because our tendency is to drive all blame it to anybody else who's nearby. Or somebody that we don't like or... we know the routine. We also know that it doesn't work. It never works... to drive it into others. That just defeats our relationship with the other and inevitably comes back to us again. So, I think it's *simple* in its understanding... and not so easy to do. Not because it's *difficult* to do inherently, but because it's difficult to be *willing* to do it.

**Student 2** [00:12:50] I wonder how this aphorism might relate to an aphorism from another source that... all experiences arise as gifts from the teacher, or from the Buddha?

**LMC** [00:13:19] That was predictable. [laughter] ... So... you're hiding something. I mean, I think you actually have... you actually have the answer to that. I mean, we've known each other a long time. So, without referencing your past... and mine, I think you could address that question first so that we'd have something more full to talk about. ... Don't you think? I think you do. Of course you do.

**Student 2** [00:14:29] I have a... *feeling* for it, I don't have any words yet for it. ... If 'drive all blames into one' means that I'm responsible, that I *take*... the attitude of responsibility... for meeting every experience... as inevitable in some way, because of my actions... either today, this past week, this month, this past life... whatever! Somehow this is arising because of... my continuous involvement in the world... then... everything that arises in the world and experience is a gift from the world. Or is a gift from the whole... complex... I want to say *shimmering*, always shifting reality. And behind that, we have some... sense of buddha-ness... so, therefore.

**LMC** [00:16:26] That's it? [smiling] Thank you. That's good. Yeah. So, when you say... treating all experiences as a gift. Was a gift from the guru. If you hold that view, of course, it changes your relationship to every experience. Some experiences are pleasant. Some are unpleasant. But in the context of holding all experiences as a gift from the guru, *presuming*... that your relationship with a guru... is appropriate and powerful enough, strong enough... then there's no such thing... as a gift that would be anything other than... something that would be very useful and helpful. So, then it's only an issue of... how do I make use of this? And of course, that's a whole other... discussion. Do I need to add to that? Is that okay?

**Student 3** [00:17:54] Well, all of this leads to my question. First of all... I want to speak about the Harmony Council... paper... we were talking about, where... I'll just tell you. In this document, it says... it gives all these conflict resolution steps, but there is one paragraph, I think it might be the third paragraph where it says, our hope and aspiration is that you can solve all inner conflict through your meditation practice. And so, I've had this loooong grudge against somebody here in the saga (who's not here now, so it's none of you) [laughter]

**LMC** [00:18:38] You can all come back in.

**Student 3** [00:18:44] And so, I sat with it and my insight was, I saw my *role*... in why I had a conflict. Not just what crappy stuff they'd done, but what crappy stuff I'd done. And... it was just like... I could just see it was my imagination about the whole thing... it just evaporated. And... this leads into what Peter was saying about structural things. I've taken it as a practice... to, when, I turn on the water... to take, do one-breath shamatha... because, bring gratitude... for water that we have. We don't have to go 10 miles to get our water. We have clean water. And when I turn on our light switch, I do a one-breath shamatha just. But the most *powerful* one that I've discovered... fairly recently, is when I walk into a room and can't remember why I was in there. What did I come in here for? [laughs] And so, then sometimes it's a couple of breaths. But it's very powerful because... the nature of the mind. [laughs].

[00:20:15] My question I've had about my shamatha practice is that... I kind of think this is what [he] was talking about, a gift from the guru. Sometimes I find myself, not *find* myself... it's just when my mind starts to maybe get... you know too much in the world, doing tonglen, for example. Doing tonglen. You know, breathe in... suffering, breathe out well-wishing. And the other thing is sometimes I do mantra. And... course the problem with mantra is if I say a lot of it, then sometimes I go around the house and I say, don't forget to get soy-milk. Don't forget to get soy-milk. Don't forget to get soy-milk. [laughs] I find myself saying ordinary things in kind of a mantra-like way, which is... But, so, when we're doing shamatha... bringing that in... if we find it helpful, it's not... scotching up the shamatha practice. Do you know what I mean? You know, when you're bringing these other practices into shamatha, it's kind of like in a way a break from shamatha?

**LMC** [00:21:46] What other practices?

**Student 3** [00:21:47] Like saying mantra or doing tonglen.

**LMC** [00:21:51] Oh, I see. Yeah. I think that is a little bit tricky. A little bit tricky. Not that you'll burn in hell forever. But maybe a week or two. [laughter] It's tricky in the sense that... if we start, if we start inadvertently mixing... anything... and there's a piece of it that we understand and another piece of it that we are... trying to make use of... but we're also *mixing* together and we're not really sure what it is we're doing... I think we may find ourselves moving away from the clarity that we had from *both* perspectives. And that can be a problem. So, *especially* when we're talking about, you know, the whole realm of tantra and the vajrayana. It's tricky to start mixing those things together.

**Student 3** [00:23:11] Although it is mixed at times. I mean, it's not inadvertent. I mean, my one-minute shamatha, or one breath shamatha. Not mine, *the*. ... Well, I guess it is inadvertent. It just seems natural to do tonglen... and not just... because it *is* related to the sensation of breathing.

**LMC** [00:23:58] When you talk about *mixing* things, then I find myself wanting to say... be careful about mixing things... that may actually *reduce* the clarity that you have rather than increase it. But then when you just said something else... that just seemed totally... clear. So, I'm not sure where the problem lies, if there is one or not.

**Student 3** [00:24:34] Well, I can tell when I'm... in a sense when I'm trying to *stabilize* my mind... that saying mantra, or doing tonglen is helpful.

**LMC** [00:24:45] Yeah. I think that maybe just falls into the category of... you know that rascal Chögyam Trungpa... I mean, he used to use these things as slogans. To repeat the thing over and over that is helpful so that it becomes kind of automatic in your mindstream. And if *that's* what you're talking about, then that's just seems totally easy. Like, for example, the thing of 'drive all blame into one', which *can* be... like *all* of the aphorisms in the mind training tradition, can be *radically* misunderstood.

[00:25:31] And that's kind of their point. Their point is to give us something to work with... that is not immediately clear what that thing is. So, you have to kind of *work* at it. Like 'drive all blame into one' sounds like some kind of a masochistic system. Like *you* take all the blame. They get all the credit. Right? And of course, that's *not* what it is. And so, there's a certain benefit to working with those slogans in ways that challenge us to understand that and to see the usefulness and the value of reciting them. Which is *not* necessarily obvious... in all of them.

[00:26:19] So, there is no mantra there in the sense of an ordinary mantra in the tantric tradition. It's just the recitation of... a particular phrase that carries some meaning, that has an obvious value to it. That is an obvious meaning to it. And it also has another meaning to it or other meanings that are *not* immediately obvious. So, if you recite those things gradually, your understanding can become greater. But that's also why we have like a study group on, on mind training. So, that people can share those things and the discoveries that you make, which are pretty easy... to get and to understand and share. What do you think? Well.

**Student 3** [00:27:25] What [he] said about the buddha-ness of your experience. It feels like, is that the nature of mind? When your mind is filled with more good-will and or... when it arises naturally rather than your having to... say it's my fault or it's just there's... when more good-will, bodhicitta arises more naturally where... it's not forced. Anyway.

**LMC** [00:28:06] And your point?

**Student 3** [00:28:07] I forgot what you asked me, what was your question? [laughter]

**LMC** [00:28:20] I don't think I heard a question.

**Student** [00:28:26] There was one about the... saying mantras as you walk. and one-breath shamatha. Is that kind of what you're talking about?

**Student 3** [00:28:41] Even when I'm doing like my formal shamatha practice... sometimes to stabilize my mind, I do tonglen or a mantra. And then go back to shamatha. Just... the experience of the breath. Did you hear that?

**LMC** [00:29:04] Yeah, but... what's the question?

**Student 3** [00:29:10] I mean, should I *not* do that? Stabilizing my mind during my formal shamatha session.

**LMC** [00:29:24] You should absolutely do that! You should stabilize it completely and obtain enlightenment. [laughter]

**Student 3** [00:29:32] I'll tell you when I get there. Send a postcard. [laughter]

**LMC** [00:29:39] Yeah, it's fine. Yeah. That was Trungpa's point. Like for so many years, he would say, and it's in the *text*, train using words and phrases. So, it's just another way of saying the same thing. If a phrase *captures* something and you understand it and you have this sense of... 'I wish I could understand that... in all of the circumstances that I find myself in.' Then just start reciting it! So, that it's there in all those circumstances. ... That's what I got from Trungpa anyway. It's like... he liked the word slogan because nobody liked the word slogan. [laughs] So, therefore... everybody started using the word slogan because of him. But I thought that it was really just a matter of... you train in using words. Not because *words* contain anything, but because our *relationship* with understandings through words is so strong that... using that natural relationship is powerful... in any way that you want to use it. If you say, I hate that person over and over, you get the result of that. And if you love that person over and over, you get the result of that. So, and if you continually look to see your role in things, you start to get *that* value with things.

[00:31:19] I think it's useful to... when you have a clear understanding of something that seems straightforward and it has a power that you can relate to and see and understand, then, I tend to think... don't go too far from that until you've really gotten that original thing... deep. As we have a tendency, as... Americans, and Westerners in general, that we inadvertently seem to prefer sometimes... a lot of very little meanings with being profound because I have a lot of them. And so, then it becomes mostly conceptual. The 'drive all blame into one' is a great example. It's interesting to say, to your friends [laughs] and all, but it actually doesn't do *anything* for you, if that's what it's all about, is... entertaining our friends. So, the inclination sometimes is to gather many things... and not get much of meaning out of the totality, because we're not paying enough attention to any of them. ... Is that okay? ... Say yes.

**Student 4** [00:33:07] In the prayers that I've been reading lately. I keep running into the phrase 'I render offerings' and I think it's to the yidams. And I noticed also... when I come to the Green Tara, there seems to be a similar... attitude of supplication. And I'm wondering if... I could say in a crude kind of way, I'm wondering if we need to approach the yidams on kind of hands and knees. "Oh, please notice me. Oh, please help me. I'm so sorry." or... If I'm not getting something?

**LMC** [00:34:03] What's your concern there? You have some concern. Right?

**Student 4** [00:34:13] Maybe it's do I have the right to...approach the yidams or approach... the Buddhas or... I'm really thinking in terms of the Refuge Prayer, so, to approach the yidams, to approach the lamas, to approach the Buddhas. And then when I read that you have to supplicate them and give them offerings... I'm feeling maybe the Christian overtones of, oh, you know, have mercy on me, a poor sinner like, don't you know, "I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry." Or do I have a right to interact with these... beings, energies?

**LMC** [00:34:58] I think I've heard from another person, another teacher, that actually you have a *mandate*... [laughs] to work with it. Because it isn't something other than... us. Even though it appears to be. It's not something *other than*. So, when we *relate*, in the tantric tradition, things are a little bit more animated... than they are when you're practicing shamatha. But it's not meant to make us feel alienated in some way. It's really meant to give us a deeper relationship... with that.

**Student 5** [00:40:27] I actually have a question that connects to the last question. And that is... if we are doing... offering and supplicating to deities and Buddha... are we... continuing a sense of separation? There's other and self and other and self. And that's what I see with this supplicating and so forth. It seems like that's more of a kriya tantra approach rather than something that's deeper. And is this then a kriya tantra practice that sort of enables people who don't *have* a way of connecting? Is this just especially for those people that don't have another way of connecting? So, they do the kriya tantra approach, which is honoring and... but keeping *separate*... the deities and the Buddha? That's what it *feels* like to me, is it's keeping it separate. ... That's my question.

**LMC** [00:42:10] My immediate... sense of what you said is that we actually need to... in order to understand that... we need to step into a place that I don't think we're in a position to do here... in this realm right here, where you're making a case for distinctions that actually may not be available for everybody here to understand. And it may not be easy to understand, even when we understand it. So, in the sense that it requires a level of depth and a level of experience to actually work with the... the distinctions that you're raising. So, I think that I would say bring that up in a, in a different environment, like with some place where it could be authoritatively addressed and... a conversation could be held about that in a way that I don't think we're in a position to do here.

**Student 5** [00:43:31] Okay.

**Student 3** [00:43:36] And where would that kind of... situation be available?

**LMC** [00:43:45] Well, I think it *could* be available... right here. I mean, in this room. But... I think that it's the kind of question that I hear as something that needs to be contained in a certain way. In other words, if we just open it, we'll end up having a conversation about a multitude of things and all of our ideas and projections and all. And by the time we're done with the conversation we'll be less clear than when we started. So, that's my sense of it. And I'm not saying that I'm... clear enough about it to lead that conversation also. So, it might be that we need to look into that a little more. I think the issues around tantric figures in tantric practices are... wonderful to explore. But they're also, you know, it's kind of like... different levels of understanding of things... get in there and they need to be given their full... space to do it... in order to understand the things that look more simple and the things that look more complicated. It's not always immediately clear that what looks more complicated is actually more complicated and vice versa.

**sangha** [00:51:03] *dedicating the merit*