

## 2019\_04\_14\_pm2\_QA\_LMC.mp4

*some discussion of shamatha, lhatong and nature of mind*

**LMC** [00:00:41] So, for those of you who are not familiar with the format... at this stage in the evening, we have an open... conversation amongst ourselves. So, if you have comments or questions about... the practices or... any piece or an issue of... embracing some of the Dharma in your lives and... perhaps finding it useful... or not, then... this is an opportunity to raise them and we'll have a chat about them... or not. [laughter]

**Student 1** [00:02:06] It seems like usually when we have shamatha or zhinay, we spend lots of time talking about shamatha or zhinay. I would like to hear... more insight and lhatong. ... Almost anything you have to offer.

**LMC** [00:02:47] Well, we're going to have to blindfold you. You know that! ... Let's just take... a couple of minutes and think about that. ... So, first of all, let me just say that... anything we say about shamatha and lhatong... in the short time that we have this evening... that it will be very cursory. ... I'm going to say just a little bit and then maybe there'll be others who have something to add.

[00:04:18] So, when we sit down with shamatha... the focus... the focus is stillness. Stillness at the level... of the body, of course. We're not up and around. Though one could practice shamatha moving around, of course. ... Stillness in the sense that we are not engaged in discursive conversations... about... a meal we had yesterday or next week. Or any of a myriad of things that we normally engage in... without giving a second thought to it. So, here we want to... put all of that aside. And commit our... energies in the period of practicing shamatha... to relaxing the body and relaxing the mind.

[00:05:33] And the *object* of that... is, ultimately, that we want to... *witness* the mind. We want to see... what the mind is. We want to *recognize* its nature. The fact that we don't just start there with the shamatha is... a not so hidden... secret that recognizing the nature of mind is quite... unusual. We have many obstacles in front of us to actually recognize it and to recognize it in a *stable* way is even more... difficult. We tend to trick ourselves and think we've recognized it sometimes. Other times you may have recognized it and written it off as... we don't know what we saw really. But to recognize the nature of mind is really... in essence... much of what our practices are all about. That's an interesting puzzle. It doesn't take very much curiosity to lead us to a place where we wonder why we would *not* be able to recognize the nature of mind *since*... it's hard to find anything... that is closer to us.

[00:07:34] But when we get involved in all sorts of discursive thoughts... perhaps in our disappointments, our anger, our greed, our hopes and fears in general... we tend to completely lose sight of any break that we've had. So, from that perspective, if we understand that much, we can then understand why it's necessary to engage in our practices of meditation... so diligently and so carefully and so consistently... that we might... perhaps inadvertently... stumble into recognizing that nature. ... And then we have to go somewhere to find out whether or not we actually recognized it.

[00:08:48] So, especially in the Zen tradition, there's a big piece around all of that. How you... go to someone who you have some confidence in, that they actually know what recognizing

looks like. And then maybe they query you a bit to see whether or not... what you say you recognized isn't just something that you read out of a good book. And there are many good books that can make you think you did it. Because that's how you sell books. [laughter] So, but it is not necessarily how you come to recognize the nature of mind.... So, that's enough, I think. Shall we go home? [laughter]

[00:10:11] It's helpful in the context of things which are difficult to talk about and think about to make an effort. And at the same time, when it's done to just put it aside. So, I think any, every any one of us could make some suggestion that could be enlightening, in a kind of worldly sense. And then the other side of the practice is, even if we recognize the nature of mind, the worst thing we can do is hang on to that recognition. Because then we will sort of have a rubber stamp, you know. [pounds fist on table] We think that that was it. Now we have it. That's best, that you look, you have the means to look, you look, and then you let go of it. You can kind of see it in the rear-view mirror or not. But beyond that... kind of risky to imagine that you saw it or to describe it yourself. Which is why, again, people go to somebody else to find out. Because that person has no ego investment in what *you* did. So, therefore, the information perhaps is a little more reliable.

*[00:11:40] omitted the responses from Sally and Dora  
sangha [00:20:51] dedicating the merit*