

Practice Note: The Possibility of Ease

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsda1 on January 7, 2015

Perhaps because it is the beginning of the year, it occurs to me to emphasize that Dharma practice is meant to be very simple. A core emphasis of the Dharma, in order to keep it simple, is to focus on suffering, and freedom from suffering. Freedom from suffering is important, and encompasses feelings such as ease, happiness, freedom, well-being, and other things. The reason this is simpler is that suffering is something that is experiential – something you can be in contact with directly here and now. You don't have to know philosophy to suffer. You don't have to be very complicated to know that you are suffering. It can become complicated if you try to analyze it and understand it. But in and of itself, the experience is just stress, tension, suffering, etc. By recognizing suffering directly, there is a chance to see a direct alternative to that suffering. The idea is keep it very simple.

It is possible, when there is suffering, whether it is very small or really big, to shift your attention from the suffering itself – not to deny it, or push away from it – but to broaden the attention, in order to sense, intuit, see, and know the opposite of that suffering – to know

there is the possibility of ease. There is a possibility of happiness, of well-being, of freedom. And that possibility is much closer than you realize. It is not that far away. You don't have to focus on it, and be happy and smiling, but rather you can break or thaw the ice of suffering, and see that there is more in the picture, and understand that there is another possibility. There is the possibility of being at ease with what is. You can see that you can suffer with what is, or be at ease with what is.

As you go through this morning, you might use this very simple reference point of recognizing the suffering, stress, tension, dis-ease, or uneasiness you might have, even if it is very small, and see if there is a way of opening up the attention slightly more: to see, intuit, or feel that just beyond that, there is also a possibility of ease. See if that shifts things. You don't have to make yourself happy. Just open up to see the possibility. This instruction is meant to be very simple – simpler than being fixated on the suffering. Whatever way you are fixated, open up to see the other possibility for you, and see what happens.

I hope this instruction brings you ease as you go through this morning. Thank you.