

Questions for Reflection, Series 6, Talk 4

Here are some ideas to reflect on and write about during the week:

1) First: Experiment with Ryokan's "strolling without a care" which means that we don't care about small discriminations among things, but see reality as just one. Seeing these two sides is a kind of Zen practice. See if you can arouse this mind as you go through your day. Mix it more with who you are.

2) Second: Experiment with Myoan Grace Schireson's idea of "What" ("What is this?") "What just happened?" and "What's next?" when you find yourself in a relational tangle where, for all of us, habitual responses tend to rule the way we think and decide to act. Afterwards, identify, if you can, the difference in the outcome of this event from your usual outcomes in difficult relational situations.

3) Third: Remembering the line "Thank you very much. I have no complaints whatsoever." -- which is an embodiment of today's teaching -- **moving from a mind of complaint to a mind of gratitude** -- make a point this week of trying this on. Describe the situation and then how you got to a "mind of gratitude."

4) Fourth: "When viewing the world from up high, there are no different colors or discriminations, only blue. It's only one world with one color." This is the verdict of the bird Peng's story. What does this say to you? If you believe that this is true, how might it change your behavior and your feelings?

5) Fifth: Given that wisdom serves us by penetrating through our behavior, e.g., that the whole purpose of practice is to align our action with our understanding, can you take the three bases -- wisdom, concentration and ethics -- with their respective contents and begin using them as checkpoints in your everyday life? The Buddha intended these eight limbs as a Path to freedom from suffering. Please take them seriously and work with them intimately, constantly checking your actions against each of these eight teachings.

