

Week 5

Dharma talk on the Four Noble Truths

Reading assignments:

The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching Ch. 1, 2, & 3

What the Buddha Taught, Ch. 4

Topics for discussion:

We have now read the Buddha's teaching on dukkha – sometimes called suffering, ill-being, dissatisfaction or angst. Please review Ch. 1 - 8 in Thay's book and discuss ways that Thay teaches us to understand and transform dukkha in relationship to your own life. How can you apply these teachings in your practice?

Practice commitments:

1. During your sitting meditation, be aware of patterns of thinking that keep interfering with your ability to stay present to your breath or one-pointed concentration. Be aware of these patterns, touch a softness or compassion for them and let them go, coming back to your breath.
2. Each day, contemplate the impermanence of one thing that's in front of you. For example, a seed grows into a plant which flowers and produces fruit that holds seeds of a plant-to-be. Practice awareness of the impermanence of a thought or feeling – the seed, the arising and the falling away.
3. Continue with your practice of waking to your intention, daily sitting meditation, and stopping to touch the moment at least 5 times a day, and embracing what you find.

Journal:

1. Your journal is for you to record your reflections of practice each day. Please include any joys or fruits of your practice.
2. Reflect on times when you feel dissatisfied during the day? Explore the roots of this dissatisfaction. What are ways to understand it?