

One bright pearl

I've been thinking about the idea of "to settle the self on the self" that I first read in one of Uchiyama's books. Pat Phelan is saying the same thing in the interesting article Eliza posted, but how long it takes for the message to get through to me! Or to realize or practice.

"For me, it all comes down to, if we are going to practice, we have to give up all hope that we will ever be any better, that our experience will ever be any more satisfying than it is now, and we have to accept ourselves just as we are as our total field of practice."

So if I feel a bit depressed some days, that's all right. I might decide to stay with and examine this in meditation and I might then see the cause, which of itself will often dispel it. But otherwise I just accept things as they are. Hard for a resolute self-improver like me. Or am I usually too passive? Who can say if I am too this or that? It's just the way I am.

I make discriminations in my life. This is good, this is bad....If someone asks 'How are you?' what do I say without discriminating? Like in the koan, 'sun-faced Buddha, moon-faced Buddha', Baso was non-discriminating about his health. Accepting 'things as it is' as Suzuki said.

I go to an art club largely populated by older, retired people. Since they are all traditional painters I often get remarks I don't like when I am painting my abstracts. They show me their palette and ask if they should put it in a frame. Or that their 7 year old grandson produces work like mine. I feel resentful...after all I don't criticize their method (copying from photos)...

But they probably won't change. They can't help having a certain view of what good painting is any more than I feel driven to try new techniques and experiment. So I just notice my feelings of annoyance and create a space around them.

<http://www.berkeleyzencenter.org/Lectures/april2000.shtml>