

# The Two Women

..... Buddhist Parable (adapted and modified by Amy Fox)

Once, a well-dressed woman visited a house. The master of the house asked her who she was and she replied that she was the goddess of wealth.

The master of the house was delighted and treated her nicely.

Soon another woman appeared at his door and she was ugly and poorly dressed. The master asked who she was and the woman replied that she was the goddess of poverty.

The master was frightened and tried to get her out of the house, but the woman refused to leave.

"The goddess of wealth is my sister," she said. "We have an agreement to never live separately. If you chase me out, she goes with me."

The master was so afraid of the goddess of poverty that he put her out and when he returned the goddess of wealth had disappeared as well.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

### OPENING CLASS

"Praise and blame, gain and loss, pleasure and pain come and go like the wind. To be happy, rest like a giant tree in the midst of them all." –The Buddha

One of the greatest axioms or universal truths is that nothing in life is permanent. Not praise or blame, Not gain or loss. Nor pleasure or pain.

Notice where your mind is in this moment. Is it grasping for something? Trying to hold onto something? See if you can notice your breath and arrive in this moment...

### DURING CLASS

#### *Before Telling the Story*

The Buddha taught that nothing in life is permanent. Not praise or blame, Not gain or loss. Nor pleasure or pain. And it's our attachment to things or aversion of things that creates suffering.

What are you pushing away in this moment?

What are you clinging to?

See if you can just notice these fluctuations of your mind. See if you can rest like a giant tree in the midst of all your desires and aversions.

#### *After Telling the Story*

Fortune goes with misfortune; birth goes with death; bad things follow good things. Foolish people dread misfortune and strive after good fortune, but wise people ignore differences of fortune and thus are not disturbed by their coming and going.

### CLOSING CLASS

To know pleasure, we must also know pain. To appreciate the things we have in life, we must also know loss.

To be with things as they are, to know that nothing in life lasts forever, that is where true happiness is found.

### EXTRAS

A key to accepting the impermanence of life is an appreciation of the present moment in all its fullness. Life is a succession of moments, a chain of births and deaths, which is magnified in the cycle of life and death that Buddhists call samsara.

One of the best ways to lean into an acceptance of impermanence is through mindful breathing.

Time permitting, or if it works for your group, you can choose to end practice with Anapanasati, or mindfulness of breath:

- Pay particular attention to the breath coming in.
- Notice the physical sensations of breathing.
- Continue to pay attention to the 'in-breath.' Notice yourself being here, right now.
- Shift your attention to the sensation of the breath leaving the body.

In this basic act of breathing in and out, we have the experience of impermanence. Our breath comes in, our breath goes out. If we try to hold on to either, we die.