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We partially answer, in terms of monodromy, Murty's question: given an absolutely simple abelian variety over a number field, does it specialize to simple abelian varieties at a set of places of positive Dirichlet density? The answer is based on the classification of pairs  $(G, V)$ , consisting of a semi-simple algebraic group  $G$  over a  $p$ -adic local field, and an absolutely irreducible representation  $V$  of  $G$ , such that  $G$  admits some maximal torus irreducible on  $V$ . (Received February 18, 2013)