

Questions for Reflection
Series 6 Talk 6

Here are some ideas for reflection during the week:

- 1) First: Regarding 'Have a nice day'-- "In the smallest of ways we have acknowledged the reality of one another's presence and this is a tiny exchange of kind speech, however formulaic." Do you agree? Have you thought consciously about this aspect of your life? How do your casual words and how you say them stack up with how you would like to speak to others?
- 2) Second: For Ryokan as a poet and an expert on language, loving speech is his most important bodhisattva practice. He wrote several long lists of admonitions regarding speech for himself and for others. Might you write your own several lists? What IS loving speech for YOU? You also might list how you could use loving speech in ways other than the ways you already use it. You might also list words that you don't like to hear and that you would like to eliminate from your communications, and also of ways that you use words that you would like to eliminate.
- 3) Third: Once you have a certain insight, you have to put it into words. Otherwise your practice is not complete. The finger or verbal expression is not simply "expedient means" (or a good tactic) but part of the moon. If you haven't already, begin to experiment with this. It is useful to have a journal to record your insights in words. Getting your words right will help you get your insight, not only right, but more integrated with your self.
- 4) Fourth: There's no separation between language and reality. Both are important, because the finger is part of the moon. This is how Dogen and Ryokan understand reality. There is neither finger nor moon because they are one thing. What do YOU think? Do you agree? How does your own experience support your stand on this?
- 5) Fifth: Instead of "Have a nice day" or "How are you?" make up your own stock phrases. Even though they're "stock," they are yours, and may be more meaningful.