

Questions for Reflection
Series 10 Talk 2

Here are some ideas for your reflection during the week:

1) First: It is important to realize how precious the teachings are and how extraordinary it is that of millions and millions of people, YOU are able to study the dharma properly and fully. That what you are doing is extraordinary is so easy to pass over. Please try to find a way to remind yourself everyday. We are a very privileged group.

2) Second: In John Daido Looi's monastery the burden is on the prospective student to show what her aspirations and motivations for practice are. In effect, each applicant needs to clarify for herself whether she IS a student; you have to BE a student before you can be formally accepted as one. If you were a prospective student at Zen Mountain Monastery what would you say your aspirations and motivations for practice are?

3) Third: Looi Roshi says that it usually takes several years for the Precepts to really saturate one's life. That ripening is called prajna or wisdom, which is realizing that there is no self, that the self is empty of any fixed definition. Why do you think this process takes so long? What is at the core of the difficulty? When you answer this question could you start working, even in small ways, at overcoming it?

4) Fourth: In trying to explain why Bodhidharma begins each precept with the statement Self nature is mysteriously profound, Kobun Chino said that It's hard to perceive the whole figure of your life. On the eve of undertaking study of the Ten Grave Precepts, how do you perceive the "whole figure of your life?" Write your answer down.

5) Fifth: If we do not pay full attention to people, to ourselves, to things, then the light of the Precepts is weak. It is when we are attempting very sincere, very serious communication that a Precept reveals itself. Where would you place yourself on this scale of weak to full attention to people, yourself and to things? Is your attempt at communication sincere or moderately sincere or careless at best? It's good to know your starting point.

