

Questions for Reflection
Talk 8, Series 11

Three ideas for your reflection during the week:

1) First: "When we disciples teach, no matter how elementary or profound the topic, so long as we are able to adapt to the listener's ability and accord with the Dharma, we must rely upon the Buddha's majestic powers." What do these words of Subhuti (of the Buddha's disciples he was Foremost in Wisdom) mean to you personally? At some time or another you too will be asked to explain something about Buddhism to another person. These lines tell you how to do it.

2) Second: Sekkei Harada Roshi says Zazen of the body, speech, and thought all take place separately from the consciousness of the ego-self. Many students judge their zazen by the sense of how many thoughts they had while sitting. "Oh it was terrible" they say. "All I did was think the whole time." But according to Sekkei Harada the "thought body" of zazen takes place separately from the consciousness of the ego-self. Still, the same students who hear this go right ahead with their harsh negative evaluations and as a consequence of feeling bad, they cut back on their time or stop doing zazen altogether. What exactly does Sekkei Harada's statement mean? Please write down your answer and read it over every time you sit.

3) Third: Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Each person practicing zazen, truly forgetting his self and settling into his position, working at eliminating delusion, will surely succeed," then he gave the following example to indicate how certain this is: "If you hold a stick in your hand and aim for the ground below you, no matter which way you strike the ground, it is impossible to miss it. In the same way, it is impossible not to come to an understanding of the true Self if you seek the Dharma and Zen." Many students hear this and go "Oh yes," but in their hearts they really are quite certain that they will never attain enlightenment. Describe what happens for you when you hear these certain words of the Buddha.