

*Questions for Reflection*  
*Talk 5 Series 13*

Choose one of the following two ideas for deep reflection during the week:

1) How can we transform our consciousness and go beyond a sense of separation from other human beings? As a result of developments in science, technology, transportation and communication, the world of human beings have the potential to become one community. Thus people from different racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds must communicate and interact with each other. Unless we find some common ground, one on which people can live knowing they are connected to each other, human beings will not be able to live together peacefully. Our resources are diminished. Even our planet may not last.

Reviewing your own life from this perspective, write about one event in which finding common ground has been a struggle. For example, Okumura Roshi has written about learning to like and trust Americans after the Hiroshima bombs destroyed the whole of his family's wealth in one night (in addition, of course, to causing massive other damage). Yet the United States had brought democracy to Japan and other things like electronics, science, technology, movies and music; it seemed like a paradise of materialistic culture. So his view of the US became confused. The monk in the story today likewise was convinced that there was no place for a dog in his monastery until his heart made an unexpected turn toward compassion. We have so much to learn from this kind of inner battle. Good to go over all the details.

2) In Buddhism, our ability to love our enemies determines our ability to be bodhisattvas. And Dogen Zenji taught in the Shishobo that we should act in accordance with what is best for the sake of all beings. Please choose from among the many disastrous conditions going on in our world right now one that you would like to address with a heartfelt letter to the universe. Writing your thoughts and feelings down will help you both to clarify and preserve them for even further clarification. Perhaps you will find a place to publish and share your views with others. Maybe it will make a difference.