



Dear Sangha;

When Sensei informed me that I was going to be Shuso my stomach immediately dropped to the floor. My first thought was I'm not qualified to hold such an honorable position. Being scared, humbled and nervous I promise to practice hard and I'm asking you to join me in this time of intense practice.

The study text for this Ango period is *Everyday Zen Love and Work* by Charlotte Joko Beck. "Successful living means functioning well in love and work," declared Sigmund Freud. Most Zen teachings derive from a monastic tradition that is far removed from the ordinary world. Few Western students of Zen live apart in traditionally structured monastic communities. Most are preoccupied with the same tasks as everyone else. The Zen centers that serve such students often retain an aura of esoteric specialness and separateness. Black robes, shaved heads, and traditional monastic rituals may reinforce the impression of Zen as an exotic alternative to ordinary life.

The theme of our Ango is "*Step Forward from the Top of a Pole*". It is easy to get comfortable in our practice and want to remain right where we are. We usually push or keep our emotions, thoughts, sensations and feelings away with our mind like an iron wall, or bore through them with our concentration power. Let's open ourselves up to working with everything. Develop our awareness of what is occurring moment by moment, what thoughts are arising and passing, what emotions are we experiencing. Let's become more awake to what is occurring "inside" and "outside". The more clearly we see the nature of our sensations, emotions and thoughts the more we are able to see through them naturally.

*From the withered tree a flower blooms.*

Shoyo Roku

With nine bows,

*Linda Shoki Bundick*