



February 1, 2021

Dear Sangha,

In August, while skyping with Roshi and attempting to pass yet another koan, Roshi asked me to lead our Spring Ango period as Shuso. If I am to be honest, I was thrilled to be considered for this honor and so happy to be chosen by Roshi, while at the same time worried that I would not be a worthy role model for my cherished sangha.

For those of you that are not familiar with the word, a Shuso is a traditional role in a Zen monastery and can be translated to mean “chief seat.” In this role the Shuso is to model practice for all other students for the period of intensified practice known as Ango. It is my fervent wish to be an example for all of us and to work to deepen my own practice and understanding for the Ango period and beyond.

When choosing a theme, I found myself tearful while reading *Infinite Circle Teachings in Zen* by Bernie Glassman, in particular, Chapters 4: Letting Go and Chapter 7: Letting Go of Letting Go. I decided to let my emotions lead the way and have chosen these two chapters as our study text. Over the next 3 months we will be exploring the concept of letting go personally and on a collective level. What, if any feelings arise when you consider letting go? Do you experience any resistance to letting go and what is it that makes it easier or more challenging? Please use this Ango period to consider letting go in any way that makes sense to you. And of course in true Zen fashion.... we will also consider letting go of letting go.

Our Ango period will begin February 14th and concludes May 16th. As we continue to realize in our daily lives, we are all in this together and I am eager to serve you as we commit to deepen our practice and connection to each other.

With much gratitude for your practice and support.

With nine deep bows,

Jill Kyokugo Ripkin-Solar

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