



VILLAGE ZENDO

Dear Sangha,

Nearly eight years ago I was one of the fortunate people who unknowingly walk into the Village Zendo on a Thursday night to find themselves in the middle of a strange ceremony called Fusatsu. Bowing and bowing and bowing, seemingly endless, and finally hearing our teacher, then Sensei, speak for the first time, left me with a feeling that I would similarly feel stronger in my first dokusan; a frightened yet liberating sense of not being able to 'hide' anymore.

This new environment encouraged and supported looking at oneself directly and seeing exactly who you are. Looking at all of it; the good the bad the awkward, *all of it.*

Originally having come to this practice with the promise of 'enlightenment' and the wish to finally rid myself of all the stuff that 'wasn't mine' and didn't want anymore, I slowly came to realize that all of this stuff *was* mine, and that that which I wanted to be free from was in fact my very freedom... What!?!?

It's the practical joke of enlightenment that we all come to realize sooner or later.

Being asked to be Shuso has once again stirred up a host of awkward feelings; those of unworthiness, unconfidence, doubt and fear. What this practice has showed me is that these very feelings can be passageways, doors that can lead us to making an inner shift, wiping the mirror a little more clean to see who we are more clearly. And also that

I have a community; teachers and friends who I love and whom continue to encourage and challenge me in being exactly who I am. We all need each other.

May we use this Ango period to wipe all of our mirrors a little more clean, however we see fit, and open and soften to the trust in our teachers and encouragement to and from our sangha as we make the vow to deepen our practice.

It is my great joy to serve as Shuso to this sangha that I love and cherish so...

in Gassho,

Jeremy Tokuyu Manasia