

A letter from Shuso Musho

Dear Sangha,

Joy and honor have been themes of my practice since I started my Zen training only six years ago. Joy to be able to learn to sit still in the style of the thousands of Zen ancestors that have come before, and honor to be nurtured by the fine teachers and caring, supportive community of the Village Zendo.

Uncertainty has been a basic undercurrent of my career as a visual artist. Although my years in the arts have included many successes, it is easy for me to be stressed by doubt, and caught in loops of second guessing. Zen training is offering me a new way to look at uncertainty: as an invitation to learn, instead of being afraid. As I begin my Shuso practice I feel under-qualified and off balance in my new role, yet as one of my teachers has said, that is the perfect state for the practice leader.

Togetherness has been the biggest surprise for me as my practice grows. I initially thought deep contemplation had to be done by oneself, as a solitary pursuit, but I've discovered a truly contemplative environment is only possible while surrounded by a dedicated and like-minded community. Perhaps the Shuso's job is not only organizing work practice and handling logistics, but also maintaining the togetherness of the group.

Gratitude is due to all those who have made the Village Zendo the sanctuary that it is, and even more gratitude must be offered to those that will join our sangha for the first time. Being truly grateful is a sublime practice in itself, one that I often overlook.

So it is with joy, honor, uncertainty and gratitude that I accept Roshi's invitation to be the Shuso practice leader for the Village Zendo's 2013 winter retreat. There are many ways to express the Dharma with our lives, but I can not think of one that is more direct than being Shuso of our winter Sesshin.

Musho

