

Shuso Hossen – Jinryu Janna Allgood – 3/17/2024

This ceremony takes place at the end of a training term and marks the end of the shuso's (chief junior's) term in office. It is a combination examination and graduation ceremony. The shuso selects a verse of teaching to present and those attending test the shuso's understanding of the verse. This is a public ceremony, with teachers and monks from other temples specifically invited.

All assemble in the Hall, seated. An explanation is given.

Teacher's Procession:

Doan leads with inkin, followed by the shuso who is holding a fan with the silver side facing out, then the teacher, and jisha. All proceed to their places.

Teacher & Jisha make offering at main altar

Three Bows

Chanting: *The Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra (p20).*

Teacher makes another offering at main altar, and then is seated at a small altar behind the haishiki (bowing mat).

Presentation of Teaching Verse:

While chanting is still happening: *Jisha gets sambo (offering tray) with shuso's selected verse from small altar and brings it to the shuso, who holds it up above eye level. All movements during ceremony avoid walking between teacher's altar and the main altar.*

As soon as the chanting is over, shuso recites their verse:

After a period of studying with Seppo, Gensa figured it was time to go meet some other teachers so that he could get a well-rounded practice. He packed his bags and started walking toward the temple gate.

Just then he stubbed his toe on a big rock. There was

blood all over the place and his toe hurt like nobody's business. Gensa thought, "Some say the physical body doesn't exist, so where, then, is this pain coming from?" He returned to the temple.

Seppo, his teacher, saw him and said, "What's up Mr. Hard Practice?"

Gensa said, "My trouble is I can't be fooled."

Seppo said, "Who doesn't know this deep down? But who else besides you can say it out loud?" After waiting a beat Seppo said, "So how come you decided not to leave the temple and further your education?"

Gensa replied, "Bodhidharma didn't come to China. The second patriarch (*Huike, Bodhidharma's successor*) didn't go to India.

Returning the Verse, Bows, Receiving the Shippei (led by jisha, shuso does the following):

- *Hands sambo + verse to the shokki (a former shuso or practice leader, seated next to shuso)*
- *Stands up, takes back the sambo, then takes it to the teacher and sets it on the altar*
- *Does three full bows to the teacher*
- *Does three full bows to any other teacher present.*
- *Returns to the teacher, does a standing bow, then receives the shippei (ceremonial staff).*
- *Returns to sitting place, but before being seated:*
- *Hands shippei to the shokki*
- *Sits, puts down bowing mat and fan*
- *Retrieves shippei from shokki*
- *Lapel mic is turned on*

Mondo (ceremonial question and answer):

*Shuso strikes the ground with the shippei and asks in a loud, clear voice, “**What say you?**”*

*A designated person begins the questioning, calling out “**Jinryu, Hear!**”, then asks a question that was prepared ahead of time.*

The shuso gives an answer. The person may accept that answer, or ask for clarification. Additional questions often begin with “unclear,” or “explain,” and should be very short. Typically, there should be no more than three exchanges.

*When satisfied, the person says, “**Thank you for your answer.**”*

*Shuso replies, “**May your life go well.**”*

Shuso then strikes the floor again with the staff. The striking of the floor is the call for the next question.

Questioning continues in the same manner with the shokki, teachers (excluding the main teacher), and former shusos. Next, all attending are invited to ask questions in a designated order (row by row, and then in the Cloud Zendo). Questions should challenge the shuso, but also allow them to demonstrate the teaching they have chosen to present.

Capping Verse:

When all the questions have been asked, the shuso offers a capping verse on the teaching presented. This summarizes what the teaching means to the shuso personally.

Returning the Shippei (led by jisha, shuso does the following):

- *Hands shippei to shokki.*
- *Rises with bowing mat and fan*
- *Retrieves shippei from shokki*
- *Returns shippei to teacher. If the shuso has passed, the teacher pronounces, “You have done well.”*
- *If shuso has passed, they turn their fan gold side out*
- *Does three more bows to the teacher*
- *Does three more bows to any visiting teachers*
- *Returns to seat, holding the fan upright*

Congratulatory Verses:

When shuso is seated, people offer statements in response to what has happened, going in the same order in which questioning began. The teacher ends with their own verse/statement.

Dedication:

Teacher goes to the altar and doan recites:

We offer the merit of this Shuso Hossen ceremony to all, so that they may be able to obtain the Truth.

Closing Invocation (*All recite together*):

- All Buddhas throughout space and time,
- All Honored Ones, Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
- Wisdom beyond wisdom, Maha Prajna Paramita.

Three Bows

Doshi does three standing bows (main altar, doan, then at the back of hall, to Sangha).

Ceremony ends, cheers and congratulations.