

Dear Sangha,

[Fall 2018 Ango](#) is approaching. The arrival of autumn, with its shorter days and signs of the coming winter, is a poignant reminder of just how swiftly life passes. None of us knows what the future will bring—especially these days, as our country and our world seem increasingly unstable. Given all of this, it seems that Ango (which literally means “Peaceful Dwelling”) is arriving right on time.

The theme for Fall Ango is “Buddha Ancestors.” We will be reading selections from the *Therigatha*, or *Verses of the Elder Nuns*; several Jataka Tales (traditional stories of the Buddha’s past lives); and excerpts from *Great Disciples of the Buddha* by Nyanaponika Thera and Hellmuth Hecker, all available on the website. Teishos, dharma encounter, art practice, liturgy and monthly study sessions will enrich our exploration.

Ango begins with the [Peaceful Dwelling retreat](#), which starts on Thursday, August 30th. On Sunday, September 2nd, the sangha will formally begin the training period and Shugen Roshi will offer some opening words. This opening talk is important to framing the theme, so please make an effort to attend, to participate via livestream, or to listen to the recording. Those who will be here in person, please bring your hiking shoes for the traditional climb up the mountain. A week later, on Sunday, September 9th, Hojin Sensei and Hogen Sensei will open the angu at the Temple with remarks in the zendo, a community lunch and a sangha discussion.

You can [register for angu](#) and fill out your commitment sheet on the Monastery website. Please complete this by August 28th. The perennial challenge people have with angu is fulfilling their commitments, so this fall we are building in a personal check-in. You’ll receive a note from the training office in early October asking you to look back at your commitments and reflect on how it’s going. This will be a chance to make any adjustments, reach out to your teacher or training advisor, and if needed, shift your angu practice to something truly nourishing. Shugen Roshi will be offering a video mondo to address any questions and offer new inspiration on Sunday, October 7; an invitation and link to this will be sent prior to that date.

Shugen Roshi has asked Kerstin Seishin Maile to serve as our Chief Disciple for the training period. Seishin will step into this role as part of the Angu Opening Ceremony, and you’ll find her [letter to the sangha](#) on the Angu website. This is a chance for all of us to benefit from Seishin’s depth and breadth of practice and study, not to mention her wise and loving heart.

Finally, let me also acknowledge that both Shugen Roshi and Hojin Sensei will be traveling to India on a Buddhist pilgrimage for three weeks during October. The trip is led by a longtime MRO student in the New Zealand sangha who has been guiding such trips for many years, and includes 16 sangha members from both the United States and New Zealand. Zusei Sensei and Hogen Sensei will be holding things down stateside while they are overseas, and we look forward to hearing about the land of our Buddha Ancestors when they return.

Each of us has different karma that brought us to Zen practice, but all of us are utterly dependent on all the women and men who have practiced and realized the dharma across space and time. As Roshi puts in the art practice assignment, we are each a “living link in a wisdom tradition.” This fall, as we study and practice Buddha Ancestors together, let us take inspiration from all the lives that have been transformed by this path, and vow to transform our own lives in turn. May this Fall 2018 Angu be a true offering of peace for the benefit of all beings.

Yours in the dharma,

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