

Rinzai-ji Oshos

Zen Teachers in the lineage of Kyozan Joshu, Roshi

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Announcement, 8 January 2013

Meeting of Oshos, Representatives of Ordained Sangha, and Members of Board of Directors of Rinzai-ji | 5, 6 January 2013

Summary Report

Organizers: Eshin John Godfrey, Gento Steve Krieger, Myosho Virginia Matthews

Facilitator: Egyoku Wendy Nakao

Also in attendance: Eko Cheryl Schnabel, Gido Richard Schnabel, Giko David Rubin, Hosen Christiane Ranger, Kigen William Ekeson, Koshin Chris Cain, Koyo Charles Engennach, Myokyo Judith McClean, Seido Larry Clark, Seiju Bob Mammoser, Sokai Geoff Barrett, Ginsei Ginger Calloway, Sohan Noah Youngleson, Soko Paul Humphreys, Jack Williamson (Saturday morning), Bill Flynn (Saturday).

Mount Baldy ordained staff (actively supporting, though not in attendance at the meeting): Dokan Charles Martin and Genkai Dan MacKinnon.

Day One

Facilitator introduces the three principles for Council Circle: 1) not knowing / no-self—being open to all that arises, thereby giving up fixed ideas about myself, others, and the world; 2) bearing witness by listening and speaking from the heart—deep listening to all that arises within the circle without judgment or blame, thereby becoming one with what is shared; and 3) healing action (also called liberating action, or loving action)—allowing an action that serves the whole to arise from the practice of not-knowing and bearing witness.

Convening of the circle is preceded by a short period of silent meditation. Both morning and afternoon sessions begin with a brief check-in, a witnessing by each member of the circle as a way of “taking the temperature” of the group.

The facilitator introduces the guidelines for Council practice. These include: return to not-knowing (being open); bearing witness by speaking leanly and, at the same time, saying what is important for one to say; listening without judgment; speaking only from one's own experience using “I” statements; holding silence as an option; no preparing of one's sharing, simply plunging.

We used a talking piece (held by each person while speaking) and had an agreement of confidentiality.

Both morning and afternoon sessions end with a brief witnessing reflection by each member of the circle; many remark on the value and effectiveness of the Council circle.

Day Two

Facilitator offers her list of Guiding Questions based on what has arisen on Day One. These will be distributed to all those present to use/or not use as we wish.

Facilitator communicates specific objectives for action suggested by the planning committee: 1) create a Bearing Witness Council which can design and execute a process by which those who have been hurt may come forward; 2) create a Statement of Response to the current situation about concerns about sexual conduct that has brought about harm; and 3) draft a report of the meeting to Kyozan Joshu Roshi, oshos not present, ordained sangha, and members of boards of directors of the Rinzai-ji sangha.

Before addressing these objectives, the circle hears three letters that had been submitted to the planning committee with the request that they be read during the meeting.

The facilitator invites individuals to choose one of three objectives and work with others in the group so-formed. From recommendations arrived at through small group discussions and discussion within the larger circle that follows, the circle arrives at the agreements that are given below.

Agreement One. Establish a “Council for Bearing Witness for Those Harmed” with members of the planning circle as follows: Ginsei (steward of the task), Hosen, Myokyo, Myosho, Seido, Seiju, Sokai. It is the responsibility of this circle to define the parameters of outreach, define and execute a plan for carrying this forward, including a Listening Circle for those harmed, and to recommend permanent members of the Bearing Witness Council, if those currently on it decide not to continue on the BWC.

Agreement Two. Establish a writing circle to revise and disseminate a statement of response from the Oshos with members as follows: Koshin (steward of the task), Gento, and Kigen. Koshin will contact Marie Fortune of the Faith Trust Institute for her expert feedback of the current draft. Target date for posting and distribution is January 11, 2013. This Circle will determine how and where the statement is posted, on which sites, etc., having received input from the group.

Agreement Three. Draft a one-size-fits-all report of the weekend. Soko Paul H. will draft the report and, together with Seiju, present it to the Roshi on or before 9 January 2013. The report will also be disseminated to the Oshos (including those not present), presidents of the Boards of Directors, and all ordained members of the larger Rinzai-ji Sangha.

Agreement Four. Contact members of the Witness Council to 1) thank them for their work, 2) request that an invitation to dialog with the Bearing Witness Council be conveyed to individuals who have reported first-hand experience of harm, and 3) request delay of posting of the summary report until the statement of response from the Rinzai-ji Oshos is posted on January 11. Myosho is designated person for this task. (Note: Myosho has done this and the Witness Council has agreed to this request.)

Agreement Five. Contact Kobutsu Malone to request that he change the name of the “Sasaki Roku” website to “Sasaki Archive.” Giko will do this. (Note: this is Giko's personal action; the group did not object.)

Agreement Six. Begin planning for a second meeting. The Planning Committee of Eshin, Gento, and Myosho agreed to plan a second meeting to convene within two months to continue the momentum of the weekend. The primary focus will be reviewing the culture of our organization with a commitment to constructive change.

A brief witnessing is offered by each member of the circle; many remark with thanks on the skill of Egyoku Roshi as facilitator for the meeting.

The meeting ends with all present chanting the Four Vows of a Bodhisattva.

Submitted with nine bows by Soko Paul Humphreys

with additional bows to Egyoku Nakao for edits and corrections

7 January 2013