

Rinzai-ji Oshos

Zen Teachers in the lineage of Kyozan Joshu, Roshi

HOME

ABOUT

March 12, 2013

Meeting of Ordained Sangha of Rinzai-ji
Mount Baldy Zen Center 2, 3 March 2013

Summary Report

Planners: Eshin John Godfrey, Gento Steve Krieger, Myosho Virginia Matthews.

Facilitator: Egyoku Wendy Nakao (Zen Center of Los Angeles).

Also in attendance: Eko Cheryl Schnabel, Dokan Charles Martin, Gendo (Vermont), Genkai Dan MacKinnon, Genshin (Colorado), Gido Richard Schnabel, Ginsei Ginger Calloway, Hosen Christiane Ranger, Jundo Steve Slusher, Kendo (Rinzai-ji), Koshin Chris Cain, Koshin Susan Crozier, Koyo Charles Engennach, Myokyo Judith McClean, Myorei Corinne Zeraffa, Myoren Kumiko Yasukawa, Myosen Julie Sprott, Oren Beth Schaefer, Seido Larry Clark, Seiju Bob Mammoser, Seiun Steve Quintero, Seisen Anne Marie Quintero, Shinkai Marie Barrett, Sohan Noah Youngleson (Saturday), Sokai Geoff Barrett, Soko Paul Humphreys.

Observer: Rev. Kyoki Roberts (An Olive Branch).

Special thanks to Mount Baldy staff for actively supporting the meeting.

Day One

[The procedure for Day One was the same as for the 5, 6 January meeting. Please refer to that Summary Report for details.]

Day Two

Facilitator reads a list of Guiding Questions compiled in response to what has arisen on Day One. These will be distributed to all those present to use or not use as we wish.

Agreement: Soko Paul Humphreys will write report for the weekend in consultation with others and follow through on communication with Roshi, with Sangha, and rinzaijoshos.org.

Report of Retirement Planning Committee for Kyozan Joshu Roshi: Gento, Myoren, Myoyu, Koshin Susan Crozier, and Soko Paul Humphreys (presenter).

The work of this committee is described as helping the Roshi to communicate his wishes to the sangha. Thus far, the Roshi has made clear that he has no successor and that Rinzaï-ji, as the mother temple, shall not be guided by a single abbot.

Report of Planning Group for the meeting: Eshin (presenter), Gento, and Myosho.

A delegation of two from the planning group, two from the retirement group and Seiju met with Roshi before the meeting, as we felt it was essential that his view be available during our discussions. First Roshi was informed that the purpose of the meeting was to form an entity to carry the greater Rinzaï-ji Sangha forward. Second, that significant funds would be needed for the Bearing Witness process. Roshi replied by thanking us for our efforts to help deal with the situation and to continue with what those present at the upcoming meeting felt was best to do. He also made clear he authorizes the funds that are needed.

Report of Bearing Witness Group (BWG): Ginsei (presenter), Hosen, Myokyo, Myosho, Seido, Seiju.

The BWG has determined that 1) a neutral third party "first responder" is essential for those coming forward to report harm, 2) a mediating, consensus-building approach is the best response, and 3) a "family systems" framework is best for analyzing problems involving hurt and harm.

An Olive Branch (AOB) has developed an Assessment Proposal on the basis of interviews with some oshos and one board member. The AOB proposal offers a "cafeteria-style" range of interventions that include governance counseling, grievance procedures and education, as well as first receivership. The recommendation of the BWG is for an initial agreement with the AOB for first receivership.

Facilitator next calls upon three individuals to present reports that describe possible organizational models for a greater Rinzaï-ji sangha.

Ordained Sangha of Rinzaï-ji. Presenters: Jundo and Seiju.

Summary of history leading up to efforts by Seiju, Jundo, and Jeff Creek, in consultation with Joshu Roshi, to develop articles of incorporation for an organization intended to complement rather than replace the role of the Roshi. Functions of the organization correspond with specific roles within an Executive Committee.

Senmon Dojo. Presenter: Gido.

A senmon dojo is needed to produce a Roshi. Mt Cobb has the requirements of 1) adequate land 2) several oshos 3) adjacent land that can be bought for additional temples. Training for women is equally important, though different and separate from training for men.

Transitional Leadership Council. Presenters: Eshin and Myosho.

This is a proposal to carry the work of the current and previous meetings forward. Its size would be most workable with five individuals, 2 – 3 women, 2 – 3 men selected from Oshos, monks, nuns, and lay practitioners. Its roles would be to facilitate communication and sharing of information within the sangha; be a “container” for the BWG; public relations; oversee care of the Roshi; and to work toward a structure with shared leadership that is both durable and responsive.

Facilitator next calls for discussion of the above three proposal which results in:

- Agreement One. There is a clear need for better communication within the ordained sangha and for establishing the mechanisms for this to happen.
- Agreement Two. The ordained sangha wants to convene another meeting.
- Agreement Three. Some kind of formal leadership is necessary to organize another meeting and to hold the process at this time.

A decision to go forward for a year with a Transitional Leadership Team (TLT) was arrived at by a Yes vote of 90+% of those present. The five initial members were chosen by a two-stage ballot resulting in:

Myosho Virginia Matthews, Eshin John Godfrey, Gento Steve Krieger, Oren Beth Schaefer, Koshin Susan Crozier.

The primary tasks of the Transitional Leadership Team will be 1) facilitating communication within the sangha, 2) holding the ongoing work of the Bearing Witness Group, 3) identifying and prioritizing additional areas that need attention, and 4) organizing one or more subsequent sangha listening circles.

Seiju, Gento, and Soko Paul Humphreys are called upon to meet with Joshu Roshi to present a report of the meeting. [This report was presented to the Roshi on Wednesday 8 March.]

The facilitator thanks all present, including Rev. Kyoki Roberts, then leads chanting of the Four Vows to close.

Submitted with nine bows,
Soko Paul Humphreys
8 March 2013