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## A CRACK IN EVERYTHING

Posted by: Eshu Martin January 10, 2014 Leave a comment



Bell at Bodhi Manda Zen Center. Photo by Peter Burr via Flickr under a CC-BY license.

Recently there have been some articles about Rinzai-ji and Joshu Sasaki Roshi posted [here](#) on Sweeping Zen, and some new documents that have been leaked and posted to [sasakiarchive.com](#), that are cause for significant concern with regards to what is happening (and not happening) within the Rinzai-ji organization, as well as in the broader Western Zen sangha.

Since writing "Everybody Knows" in November 2012, I have been following the responses of Joshu Sasaki, the Rinzai-ji Oshos, the Rinzai-ji organization, the involvement of An Olive Branch (AOB) in the discernment and healing process, as well as trying to address the concerns and advocate for people who have been affected and who have reached out to me with questions. I recently began participating in the conversation with other Zen teachers in the [American Zen Teachers Association](#), and have had the opportunity to ask questions and to share information with the Sangha at large there.

For me, the single most disturbing fact that these recent documents reveal is that in spite of all of the public outcry, in spite of the Rinzai-ji organization [publicly acknowledging](#) the veracity of Joshu Sasaki's misconduct, and in spite of assurances that Sasaki Roshi is not teaching anymore...

“ *It is our deepest and sincerest intention that in directly addressing the issue here, we can begin to contribute in some small way to the larger discussion in American Buddhism about how to manifest the dharma without deceit, dysfunction, unhealthy power imbalances, inappropriate sexual relationships, and, ultimately, the heartbreak that results from all of the above.*

...**Joshu Sasaki, at present, is still absolutely in command of Rinzai-ji.** In a [document recently posted to the sasakiarchive.com](#), dated October 18, 2013, Sasaki unequivocally declares that:

“ *I will remain as the spiritual head of the Rinzai-ji temples until the succeeding Zen Master can be confirmed, and I will remain as the Chief Abbot of Rinzai-ji and Abbot of the main Zen Training Centers, until the directives below are fully implemented.*

It now seems that Eshin Godfrey, who was appointed "Abbot designate" effective July 21, 2013 <http://sweepingzen.com/eshin-godfrey-to-be-abbot-of-rinzai-ji/>, had by October become "Administrative Abbot", presumably charged with administering the execution and implementation of the rather long list of Joshu Sasaki's edicts. By November 30, Eshin had posted on [his website](#) that he had resigned his role as "Administrative Abbot", and would be returning to Vancouver permanently in January 2014. Eshin writes:

“ *At Rinzai-ji I found circumstances limited for what I could offer. There were difficulties in moving on a permanent basis. Visa, health, and marriage among them.*

Eshin has always been very diplomatic, but my personal suspicion is that he didn't want to be responsible or known for directly supporting Sasaki's leadership. I should add a disclaimer stating that this is only my opinion.

No matter, it seems clear that there are several Oshos, clergy, board directors, and members who are more than willing to rally around Joshu Sasaki and follow his command.

What first brought my attention to these recent developments was a report I received that Hosen Christiane Ranger, Osho (who has been Abbot of [Bodhi Manda Zen Center](#) for more than 30 years) had been "de-oshod", "de-monked", and excommunicated. Although I have experienced this process myself first-hand, at first I didn't think it possible, as Hosen has always been a devout Sasaki advocate and defender. As I investigated further, however, I confirmed for myself what has now been made clear through documents made public ([here](#) and [here](#)) that Joshu Sasaki has indeed made these demands, and that a group of 18 individuals — clergy and members — drafted a petition demanding that Hosen comply with "Roshi's directives".



Bodhi Manda Zen Center at night. Photo by Peter Burr via Flickr under a CC-BY license.

It would be very easy for myself or anyone else to get lost in the whys and wherefores of all of this information. I have [already commented](#) on my feelings about the inadequacies of the process and relationship that An Olive Branch and Rinzai-ji have established.

All of this, however, is made insignificant by the reality that Joshu Sasaki immediately and easily reestablished control of Rinzai-ji (if his power had ever actually been compromised), and that he is currently engaged in centralizing power, information, and resources around himself at Rinzai-ji.

**This has been going on since October at the latest, and there hasn't been a peep, nor a single flag raised, by anyone.**

There hasn't been a whiff within the AZTA, not publicly, and nothing from Kyoki Roberts and An Olive Branch. Even after I began asking direct questions within the AZTA, Eshin's response was basically that there is "nothing to see here".

Joshu Sasaki continues to be sheltered and enabled by the members, directors, and clergy of the Rinzai-ji organization, and through them he continues to abuse, isolate, and dislocate anyone he considers disloyal or disobedient.

I hope that all members, clergy, and board members who are still involved with Rinzai-ji understand that nobody is safe in Rinzai-ji as long as Joshu Sasaki is in command. What is happening to Hosen, who has been absolutely loyal and dedicated, and who has given more than 30 years of her life to Sasaki and Rinzai-ji (including enabling much of the abuse herself), can certainly happen to anyone. By continuing to support and obey Sasaki's "directives", anyone still involved in the organization is directly responsible for the suffering that continues to be caused by Sasaki and Rinzai-ji.

All I can do is continue to shine a light on this, and I will do so. If you have information about what is happening within Rinzai-ji, I encourage you to make it public. It seems clear that Rinzai-ji is absolutely committed to operating in the shadows. Please send your information to [sasaki.archive@gmail.com](mailto:sasaki.archive@gmail.com), or you can contact me directly.