

From Hosen Christiane Ranger, Director and Board Member, BMZC, 11/11/14.

Dear Dick,

I would like to express my deep gratitude for your thoughtful, caring letter. You raise many excellent points which will be essential for the Healing & Envisioning Retreat. I hope that you will be able to come in person to participate. I certainly agree that so many in the Sangha have suffered greatly, and that it is indeed time for a new start. Thank you for expressing your perspective and concerns.

May we all experience Peace in this difficult process of healing.

Two Hands Together, with respect,

Hosen

From Dick Boyle, 11/11/14

Dear Hosen,

Thank you for your warm response to my letter. I assume from your kind remarks that you implicitly agree with the main substantive points I made in my letter, such that discussion can proceed from them. However, there are some things, particularly having to do with the Envisioning portion of the agenda, which really need to be made explicit. If a majority of the present BMZC Board agree that elections for a new board should be held in, say, three months (probably more, because establishing a clearly defined voting membership will take awhile), then that is a sincere step forward. Such an arrangement would leave open the possibility of you continuing to be Director/Abbot, but would provide legitimacy to the position. I personally would support this.

That is certainly, for myself and others I have talked with, the most important condition. I hope I heard you correctly as being in agreement with this condition. It will certainly be essential to have the agreement of the BMZC Board out on the table from the start, if the retreat is to be worth attending.

**Yes, with much respect also,
Dick**

From Hosen Christiane Ranger, Director and Board Member, BMZC, 11/13/14.

Dear Dick,

I am grateful for your deep concern as to the future of the Bodhi. The upcoming Healing and Envisioning Retreat is exactly the right forum to bring forth your concerns, such as your suggestion of Board resignations. While I appreciate your

thoughts, I have *not* agreed that this is the "only" option to make the Retreat worth attending, or that I agree the Board should resign. When people come together to share in the healing spirit of the retreat, surely only the best outcomes for all involved will arise and manifest. This is exactly why your input, along with everyone else's voice, is so important, and why the Retreat is being offered by the Board and myself. Your input is welcomed wholeheartedly.

I personally believe that this Retreat, led by a non-biased facilitator, will create healing and help us all to move forward. It is my hope that our shared history and practice, our shared concern for the Bodhi and our deep respect and compassion for one another will lead to a deep resolution for us all.

Please join us next week, Dick. It will be wonderful to see you, continue this dialogue and have you enjoy the Bodhi once again. You are always welcome here.

Thank you for your emails.

Sincerely, with Great Respect,

Hosen

Director, Bodhi Manda Zen Center

From Dick Boyle, 11/13/14

Dear Hosen,

How good to hear from you – I was not sure what to expect. I'm glad that we can continue discussing our mutual concern for the future of Bodhi.

A few things in your first paragraph should be clarified. First, I am not asking for Board resignations. I am asking that the Board pass, or a majority of the Board declare their intention to pass, a resolution calling for the membership of Bodhi to be defined and listed, and then for election of a new Board to be held within some reasonable number of months.

It is not exactly surprising that you have a different perspective on the election of a new Board, given that you are a member of the present Board in addition to being the Director/Abbot of Bodhi. That gets right to the heart of the problem. You think that if the Retreat is held without this prior action by the Board, "surely only the best outcomes for all involved will arise and manifest." I have been working in close communication with five other people, all pillars of the Zen sangha of northern New Mexico for the past 40 years (well, some for less time than that – we are not all old). The unanimous opinion is that we don't trust you at all. We think that you will do whatever you can do to stay in power, and that that is what you really care about. If you trusted us, then you would be happy to allow us to show that we trust you by re-electing you. That would clarify a very ambiguous situation, give the Director and the new Board legitimacy (of which it presently has zero - not to confuse that term with its Zen meaning), and open wide the gates of opportunity for the "healing spirit of the retreat" to take place. Believe me, that is really necessary and would be wonderful. If not miraculous.

There is a basic confusion here between "healing," which implies pain, wounds, and suffering, and "trust" which implies the removal of distrust. Trust is not built on talking but on actions. When we talk about holding elections in which a new Board is elected by the sangha, this is not exactly a radical, revolutionary, or off-wall idea. It is actually obvious and common-place, at least to anyone who can look at the world free of the distorting lenses of the Rinzai-ji tradition.

So, show us that we can trust you, by calling for open elections. And then let the healing begin.

Dick Boyle

From Hosen, 11/15/14

Dearest Dick,

I am grateful for our continued dialogue. You should know, however, that my Board asked me, in November 2013 to step down from the position of Abbess, just last year, exactly in an attempt to make way for healing. I agreed out of respect for the community, not as an admission of complicit behavior. I am completely willing to

move from this position of Director of the Bodhi. I am not attached to this. On the other hand, I am completely willing and would be grateful to be reappointed as the Abbess. I have given the past 34 years to service for the Bodhi. Why have you and others not considered asking me what it is that I may want, or what I may be able to see from this position?

I have offered my service here out of love, and as a nun in the Buddhist order and the Rinzai Zen tradition, without drawing neither salary nor retirement. As a mother, I have dependents, without anything to leave to them, and yet I am being targeted as being 'power hungry'? You must be joking?

If you, and others, feel I am here for any sort of 'power' or standing, you are so mistaken, and you are forgetting basic Buddhist principles and that I am a Buddhist nun. For example, this is a description of my normal day:

I hold the daily practice here, of early morning zazen and weekend programs for beginners. I greet all guests who come and give tours (we have had 4-36 guests per day this past summer) and make relationship to the best of my ability to welcome all here. I embrace all the work of the Bodhi with minimal staff, all of whom are intermittent volunteers. I cook and clean the kitchen daily for meals, clean and care for the Zendo, Sutra Hall, Conference room and long house, take reservations answer calls, run and clean the hotel, take care of our resident elder nun, arrange maintenance on the grounds, do the books, pay the bills, answer all correspondence, wash and hang the laundry, feed and care for the chickens, bring recycling to the center, shop and make the weekly food donation run (Takuhatsu), drive our guests to and from the airport, and maintain the grounds and hot springs. This is just the beginning of my responsibilities at the Bodhi. A typical day starts at 5am and ends about 9:00pm, when I go to bed.

I do not have much in the way of 'personal time'.

Therefore, if this is the sort of life to which others wish to replace me, so be it. My life is about practice, and making relationship, following the teachings of Buddhism. I am most sincerely grateful to my Board and you, the Sangha, for my stay here at the Bodhi. It has been my home for 34 years.

Again, I invite you, and all those of whom you speak, to please come and participate in the Healing and Envisioning Retreat. We are better as a whole, and I respect your concerns. I would be grateful if you would also care to understand mine. That

is the purpose of the retreat.... to come together, hear and understand one another, and heal from the abuses of the past. I sincerely wish that you, and others, will come to participate in this important gathering.

With Two Hands Together,

Jiun Hosen, Osho

Director, Bodhi Manda Zen Center

From Dick Boyle to Hosen, 11/16/14

Dear Hosen,

I do appreciate the time you have taken to continue this dialogue. But it saddens me that we just seem to be talking past each other. I have been asking for only one thing – structural change in the form of open election of the Board by the sangha. You seem to take that simply as an attempt to throw you out of your job. Actually, I specifically said at least twice that I personally would support your being chosen, by the sangha this time, to remain as Abbot. I am very aware of all that you have done and how hard you have worked all these years to keep Bodhi running as a successful operation. Right now, let me thank you for that.

But you are taking this all so personally. My effort is only to correct a critical, and very likely fatal, flaw in the way Bodhi (and Albuquerque Zen Center) operate. For all the good hard work that you and Seiju did at Bodhi those many years, your loyalties were with Sasaki Roshi and not with the sangha. That was built into the structure. Roshi appointed you (and the Board), and could let you go at any time if you did not do what he wanted. So you acted in his interests – covered up his sexual abuse, allowed it to continue, and never said anything to the sangha about what was going on. That is what has blown apart the New Mexico sangha. It was awful. It hurt very deeply. Do you (all of you on the Board) really understand what you have done?

So now you are talking about healing. Certainly a needed thing, but my position is that you can't have real healing until you correct the problems that caused the wounds in the first place. The problem is in the structure. Any organization that operates with a structure in which all the power is concentrated at the top is going to have problems. Religious organizations are particularly vulnerable. I used to teach a course on the Sociology of Organizations, and this is textbook stuff. If we don't change now it's going to happen again, sometime in the future. I saw that potential when I was on the Board of Rinzai-ji, before I came to New Mexico. I agreed to serve on the first Bodhi Board because they had to set one up to meet legal requirements, but I told Michele that until the Board was elected by the sangha my tenure was strictly temporary.

Since this may be read by people other than you, let me expound on it a bit, as old professors do. New religious organizations are usually started by one teacher, who if successful in attracting followers/students creates the organization and runs it, formally and informally. That's a good structure for a small group. But if the organization is successful and grows, the greater size begins to require an intermediate level of authority.

It may also begin to spin off satellite organizations, with leaders of their own probably appointed by the founder.

What kind of religious teachers are likely to be successful enough to develop organizations that large? Obviously, a lot of people must think that he or she is a really good teacher. But look at the qualities that can impress people seeking a new religion. Most important, being a good teacher – but how are potential recruits to know that, with no accrediting agency or outside authorities to evaluate performance. Being a good, perhaps great, speaker. Being charismatic – a difficult quality to define but tremendously powerful in its effects. Etc. – the list could be extended.

The point is that there are so many possibilities for situations to arise in which the founding teacher has some “character flaws” which the followers/students might disapprove of strongly. The intermediate leadership level, being much closer to the founding teacher, is much more likely to know about these flaws. But if they depend on the founding teacher for their jobs, and have no similar ties to the followers, then they obviously will feel strong pressures to rationalize their motivations, cover up for the founder, and keep the followers/students in the dark.

Happens all the time, not just in our particular organization. And that is why I am so insistent on structural reform. I’ve put in a fair amount of time on these exchanges with you, and I don’t feel they have had any effect at all. The people I’ve been consulting with in the sangha-in-exile feel reinforced in their determination not to have anything to do with the present leadership of Bodhi or AZC. You are upset because I don’t empathize with what you are feeling. My hopes to bring people closer together seem to have failed miserably. So I guess now is the time to end this exchange.

I do respect your work and your intentions, but in this case you should keep in mind the old adage: you can put lipstick on a bad structure but it still oinks.

Dick