

Statement from Boards  
for 23 – 24 July Sangha Meeting at MBZC

Among other responsibilities, the boards act as agents of strategic decisions that shape policy and set priorities for action. Within the last two years, that work has taken a number of directions that support the mission to promote and provide opportunities for the practice of Rinzai Zen in the lineage of Kyozan Joshu Roshi.

We have worked to revitalize both centers in ways that encourage Practice and increase participation at Rinzai-ji and Mount Baldy. We have worked, first of all, to define the roles and development opportunities of ordained staff. On this account, we have profound appreciation for their dedication and close cooperation with the boards.

The centers also have benefited from physical improvements, in some cases made possible by generous donations. These are quite visible at Rinzai-ji in new kitchen and zendo floors, new deck, new Butsudon, and (not to be overlooked) a new dumpster. At Mount Baldy, along with the new toilets now that stand opposite the shower house, there is much work of the sort that you would notice if it had not been done.

We are moving closer to a time when a merger of Rinzai-ji and Mount Baldy will facilitate common and complementary objectives as well as reduce overall costs. Under the umbrella of a single organization, both zen centers will retain their current respective names. Details of the merger are shaped by a strategic planning and multi-year budget process that coordinates our efforts and ensures that both temples will continue to operate on a firm financial foundation.

We have a vital and developing relationship Myoshin-ji, as well as with other temples in Japan, both within and distinct from the lineage of Myoshin-ji. Most notably, we have accepted the offer of Shunan Noritake Roshi to serve as *Kenmu Jûshoku*, or Acting Abbot. This appointment enables Rinzai-ji to maintain its status as an International Branch Temple (Japanese: *Betsuin*) of Myoshin-ji. Among the benefits of this relationship are the resuming of sanzen practice and the opportunity to practice with friends in and from Japan. This relationship is also affirmed in the "Spiritual Principle" (Japanese: *Shûshi*) document that we have as part of the written legacy of Jôshu Rôshi. (Please see [www.rinzaiji.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Spiritual-Principle-Shu%CC%84shi.pdf](http://www.rinzaiji.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Spiritual-Principle-Shu%CC%84shi.pdf).)

After a hiatus of several years, we are working to redevelop the training schedule at Mount Baldy Zen Center. In addition to continuing inquiries about training opportunities from long-time students, this effort is motivated by a commitment to making this Practice available to the next generation. This stands as an essential component of our mission.

We have published a set of Right Conduct Guidelines together with a Statement that affirms the Boards' ongoing commitment to reconciliation. Both documents are posted to the websites of Rinzai-ji and Mount Baldy Zen Centers and represent an extension of work begun by members of what we now know as the Ethics and Reconciliation Council, formerly known as the Bearing Witness Group. This is an occasion to thank those individuals for their dedicated work. (Please see [www.rinzaiji.org/rinzai-ji/right-conduct/](http://www.rinzaiji.org/rinzai-ji/right-conduct/) and [www.rinzaiji.org/statement-from-the-boards-of-rinzai-ji-and-mount-baldy-zen-centers/](http://www.rinzaiji.org/statement-from-the-boards-of-rinzai-ji-and-mount-baldy-zen-centers/))

We are exploring ways to improve communications with and within the extended Sangha. This finds expression in formal communications from the boards, a newly revived quarterly newsletter, and in the hosting of events such as sangha meetings in July of this and last year. We also are looking at the possibility of an online link for posting of board documents and gathering of ideas and feedback.

We are working with the publication committee to make Roshi's teaching more widely available in print with next July as the date projected for a second publication. In addition, we are working with a recommendation to revitalize the Sutra Seminars with a new committee.

Things are very different than a decade ago. We now share in the legacy of a great teacher who no longer walks among us. New circumstances call for a more participatory and responsive board. We are dedicated to meeting these new challenges and gratefully acknowledge the many people who are helping in many ways. We depend on and greatly appreciate your support.