

# News of Rinzai-ji

Winter 2017

## The Ultimate Way Is Without Difficulty

by Noritake Shūnan Rōshi

EXCERPTS FROM TEISHO ON THE BLUE CLIFF RECORD, CASE 2, GIVEN DURING NOVEMBER 2016 ROHATSU Ō-SESSHIN AT MOUNT BALDY ZEN CENTER. TRANSLATION BY THOMAS KIRCHNER.

Let us examine Bodhidharma's notion of "no merit." Upon meeting Bodhidharma, Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty said, "I have dedicated myself body and mind to the teachings of the Buddha, I have built temples and supported the sangha, I have lectured widely on the sutras and am known as the Buddha Mind Emperor. What merit have I earned from this?" In Bodhidharma's reply, "No merit," we can sense the refreshing spirit of the master, clear as an autumn sky. Answering in this way was the true act of a Buddhist.

All of us have the desire to see some value accorded to our acts; this is the reality of the ordinary person. Bodhidharma, however, answered "No merit" to the emperor's question. As I explained in my teisho during the July sesshin, this position of "no merit" comprises the very root of the Buddhadharma. No merit is sought in good deeds or in any other deeds.

Thus in practicing zazen we may seek such benefits as improving our health, eliminating desires, bettering society, acquiring marvelous spiritual powers, or experiencing kenshō, but in fact there are no benefits. This is the fundamental nature of Zen—nothing is sought in zazen, zazen is just done. Herein lies Zen's true value. All of you, please—as followers of the Way, take this firmly to heart! However, if you practice zazen you will naturally become healthier and receive the wonderful power of the Dharma. The causes and conditions for your attainment of enlightenment, too, will naturally ripen. All we ourselves need do is devote ourselves to zazen, maintaining faith in the Buddha, faith in Bodhidharma, and faith in the Dharma...

Get up in the morning and wash your face, chant the sutras, do zazen, and eat breakfast. When you're finished eating wash your bowls and put them away. In the morning do samu and zazen, and then it's lunchtime. There's no room for any discrimination. Day after day, it's no different—just do ordinary things in an ordinary state of mind. "These words are the truth itself." Every word, every sentence is the Ultimate Way. "Good morning!" "Good afternoon!" "It's hot today!" "It's cold today!" "Was your meal good?" "Let's call it a day." There's no need for any difficult philosophical talk. Everyday conversation, just as it is, is the Buddha Way...

"In One there are many kinds; in Two there is no duality." In the absolute equality of the One there are the relative distinctions of the Two. Just as there is the multiplicity of waves in the oneness of the sea, the Buddha Mind is one and the same in all humanity but every individual has a different personality, a different face, a different physique, and a different lifestyle. In the relative distinctions of the Two there is the oneness of equality. Men are men and women are women and the two are distinct, but, male or female, everyone is equal in their possession of Buddha-nature. People live in different places, some in the south and others in the north, but with regard to Buddha-nature there is no south or north. In the Buddha's compassion there is no discrimination between young and old, good and evil. The great compassion of the Buddha shines equally upon the entire universe...

"On the horizon the sun rises and the moon sets. Beyond the railing the mountains are deep and the waters cold." Here once again the essence of the Ultimate Way is extolled. Each day the sun rises in the east and the moon sinks in the west. The eternal cycles of Nature revolve within the heart of the Ultimate Way. Life, to be sure, involves the suffering of birth, aging, sickness, and death, but the great magnanimous mind that allows us to accept this, just as it is, is the Buddha-mind, the Ultimate Way itself. When we're practicing zazen in a mountain temple,

the mountains we see through the window are rugged and the flowing waters are cold. If, sitting here on Mount Baldy, we do not enter zazen samadhi and become one with nature and the entire universe, if we do not realize that there is no separation between us and the ten-thousand things, then we cannot know the state where “beyond the railing the mountains are deep and the waters cold.” Everyone, please focus on your zazen and do your best...

We’re told to die the Great Death, but that is not easily done. There’s nothing harder than becoming selfless. If one does become selfless it’s fine to be “just as one is,” but getting there is not a simple matter. “Picking and choosing or clarity? See for yourself!” Are you picking and choosing or are you clear? Are you discriminating or not? I can’t tell you. You must taste deeply and know for yourself whether the water is cold or warm. Practice zazen, regulate your body and your breath. Then try focusing your consciousness on one thing. Don’t concern yourself with whether or not deluded thoughts are arising, but just focus your awareness on your breathing. Or imagine that you are in a wonderful environment—have, for example, a solid sense of sitting right now in these beautiful surroundings of Mount Baldy—and recall close family members, good friends, or other pleasant things. Focus your consciousness on these, and from there explore yourself ever more deeply. After the sesshin ends, each of you cultivate this peace of mind as you practice with your Zen group or at your home or in the mountains. The Buddha Way is everywhere. It is not difficult. With this we come to the end of Rōhatsu O-sesshin. Tomorrow is the Jōdō-e. Let us celebrate together the Buddha’s enlightenment.



## Memorial Service for Jikan Leonard Cohen at Rinzai-ji

EXCERPTS FROM FOUR ENCOMIA (IN ORDER PRESENTED) SHARED ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2016

### Noritake Shūnan Rōshi

Your life was fulfilled as a singer. Your voice touched countless hearts, all over the world. I am certain that the sound of our voices, grieving your passing, must be reaching you.

Your departure to the Buddha world is accompanied by our lamentations.

Meeting Jōshū Sasaki Rōshi changed your life. Embraced by Jōshū Rōshi’s eternal and great compassion and with the strength received from this relationship, you completed 82 years of living.

Over the Thanksgiving week, I conducted this year’s Rohatsu Ō Sesshin retreat commemorating Shakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment at Mt. Baldy Zen Center, where many memories of you live on.

During the Rohatsu retreat, cold weather moved in and four inches of snow fell. Everywhere, between heaven and earth, there was pristine whiteness, snow covered Mt. Baldy, clear atmosphere, and serene stillness in the mountains. This is what the real Buddha land is like.

The next morning, after the snowfall, the rising sun shone as pink light on the summit of the snow-covered mountain — that was the essence of the Buddha. At that moment, something wonderful happened in my mind. It was you, Jikan, illuminated by the Buddha’s light, entering the Zendo. You then sat down for Zazen in the Zendo, in the complete silence of samadhi. When I looked even closer I saw that you were sitting right by Jōshū Rōshi. The true relationship between teacher and disciple was clearly manifest.

After all, Mt. Baldy is the place where you attained peace of mind.

Please keep on sitting for ever and ever.

Gassho, with palms together.

## Yoshin David Radin

Our dear friend Leonard made it easy for us all these years. He arranged words and music with such elegance, he could express emotion with such utter sincerity, that minds and hearts stopped to listen. He could even mesmerize 600,000 cold, angry, nearly rioting people, in the middle of the night, on a small island off the coast of England, into calming down and listening to him — simply by the power of his authentic humility and the purity of his heart. And 40 years later, he could skip and sing and fall to his knees and fall into the hearts of fans around the world, turning crowds of concert-goers into a spiritual community and music into prayer and worship. Worship of what? Worship of the deep bond we all share — crossing the sea of life in our fragile little boats. Even as a performer, he was a monk. He had the confidence and humor to expose the real nakedness of life and emotion.

When Leonard was only a few months away from death, I asked him why he was using the last ounces of his energy to produce yet another CD. He said, there are hundreds of thousands of people in this world who have been so kind as to listen to my music, and this is my last chance to thank them. Who says something like that? Only someone who had himself poured his heart into countless poems and songs and was so touched that his heart had been received — and that was at the core of the Leonard Cohen sangha, the community of those who could laugh and cry together with him.

In Buddhism, it is taught that if a monk wishes to gather a community, he or she should manifest lovingkindness that naturally attracts people — the irresistible warm heart, perhaps tinged with the softness of melancholy, gathers people together who are ready to open that part of themselves. And when that kindness happens to combine with poetic genius, with a golden voice and with a perfect touch of *chutzpah*, a vast community manifests. And so it was.

Leonard was my dear dharma brother, a dear friend. We had made many of the same mistakes. We grew up in similar Jewish communities. He was a comrade in the world of words and music and a comrade in the world of silence. I felt as close to him as perhaps to anyone in my life, and, at the same time, I hardly knew him. He was

probably the most extraordinary and the most ordinary person I ever met. I felt he was my brother, and, at the same time, while there is sadness at his passing, there is also a deep, poignant, sweet memory. A gentle crack — that's how the light gets in. And he is walking only a few steps ahead.

I am sure each of us had a moment with him when we experienced his generosity, his acknowledgment and his candidness. When I was dipping my toes into the world of poetry and song, he said he would produce my work. When I went to see him last year, he told me I looked worse than he did. I said, The race isn't over yet. He said, I still have some tricks up my sleeve. He was comfortable, as far as I could tell, with his own demise. What greater gift can a friend or parent give than a graceful exit?

There is a teaching that says that one of the blessings of love is that when you love someone, you experience what your beloved experiences. And when your beloved departs, you have a foretaste of your own departure. And if you love widely, you will experience many foretastes and you will know, in the end, that death too is another form of love. May we all be blessed by the tragic kindness of existence and by the passing of this noble man, this noble Zen monk.

## Kendo Hal Roth

LC: OCT 11, 2016

*dear Hal*

*always so good to hear your voice*

*thank you for all you've done out of love for our ever-present Rōshi, and for the righteous man you are in this landscape of thickening shadows*

*I have deeply cherished our friendship. you know that may the medications and therapies continue to sustain you for the sake of your family and the completion of your important work*

*this old body seems to linger on against my will, acute pain to a degree mercifully dissolved, but comically weakened and nearly immobilized by -----(your eyes only)*

*nothing to do at last, I know that you are among the few  
who will understand when I say, I have never felt better  
countless bows to the immutable kindness of our teachers!  
much love to you, old friend  
see you down the road*

Oct 14

to COHEN

Dear Jikan,

*Oh!. That must be painful.*

*Your information is safe with me.*

*Thank you for your kind and generous comments. Your  
supportive and wise words at key times in my life have been  
so helpful.....*

*When I read your message yesterday I missed the wonderful  
photo (of you doing Zazen next to a sleeping Rōshi on his  
last day at home). Please now imagine that me --and all the  
young students sitting here with me at this moment --are  
there with you in your room, surrounding you with just a  
fraction of the love and affection your generous soul has  
given to others over the course of your life. We practiced  
metta yesterday in class, 10 bright young people who will  
go out into this "world of darkening shadows," as you so  
rightly say, and throw some light into it. May much of that  
--and for a long time --come to you.*

*And thank you for all you did for our compassionate and  
mischievous teacher. You were such a friend to him and  
brought him much comfort. I will never forget the email  
you sent when he passed: "Weren't we lucky?"*

*Indeed, old friend: the same can be said of those of us who  
knew you.....*

*"Weren't we lucky!"*

## Pico Iyer

I think the reason that Leonard really taught the world to sing was that he was Jikan and he lived with and within the silence between two thoughts. I've lived in Japan now for half my lifetime. I can honestly say that nobody brought Zen practice closer to me and made it seem like my unacknowledged home than did Leonard.

And so, when he was singing his great songs in the last 35 or 40 years, I think, as part of what was going on, was that he was bringing Zen practice into the lives and beings of people around the world, and making it seem like their second nature or their secret self or non-self. On every continent people would be singing along to "If it be Your Will," or they'd recite the words to "In my Secret Life" and whether they knew or cared or not they were speaking for and from this center and the truth that lives deeper than any self. When they would go to hear him in concert and Leonard would be delivering "Hallelujah," say, I think really, the passion, the intimacy and the deep purpose of this zendo was coming through into the great concert halls of the world.



Only last summer, it took an abess from the zen center to point out to me that Leonard's celebrated song "I'm Your Man," actually is more or less a version of the Bodhisattva vow. I'd always just taken it to be another love song. I think, because I was lucky enough to meet Leonard at Mt. Baldy during Rohatsu, winter sesshin, I always saw him as a monk. A really serious, disciplined, determined Jikan, who had been formed essentially by his 40 years of unwavering devotion to Sasaki Rōshi. I'll confess, when I heard many of Leonard's love songs, whether it was "Coming Back to You," or "You've Got Me Singing," it was actually Sasaki Rōshi's unlined face that I saw behind them. "You were my ground, my safe and sound," Leonard sang on his final album and it was hard for me to not to imagine those words were addressed to Sasaki Rōshi.

The very last time I saw Leonard, as every time I saw him, I came away profoundly moved by his humility, his natural courtesies, his years with silence, his lack of interest in anything to do with the fixed self. I think, in teaching all of us how to live, he was really, also, teaching us how to die. But most of all, when I came away from that last meeting, as every time, I thought, life offers no greater pleasure than listening to this man speak with such unembarrassed warmth and eloquence about his heart's companion, this great old friend of 40 years. When I was with him, Leonard never lit up as when he was talking about his old friend from Japan. So, thank heaven, or thank something, that Leonard will be singing and speaking and sharing his constant love, his unflinching honesty, his hard-earned wisdom and his very droll sense of humor to the end of love and far, far beyond.

## Fall and Early Winter Events

by Gento Steve Krieger

On October 1, Rinzai-ji held a memorial service for our beloved dharma sister Teishin Eunice Tropper. Friends and family gathered in the zendo to honor this strong, devoted, one-of-a-kind nun. The weekend before Teishin passed away, Myoren, Dokan, and I took a road trip to Albuquerque to visit Teishin at the hospital. She was feisty and entertaining, and regaled her visitors with a running commentary on the pictures she was being showed of her dharma brothers and sisters.

On October 18-22 Rinzai-ji held a Daruma-ki retreat in honor of Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism. Yoshin David Radin joined us from the Ithaca Zen Center to lead the retreat, bringing us his wisdom, energy, sense of humor, and even his students. Then, October 23, we opened our doors to the local sangha and held a Daruma-ki memorial service, complete with our customary post-ceremony curry rice lunch. (Yes, we still do this!)

On November 24-28, Noritake Shūnan Rōshi traveled from Japan to the Mt. Baldy Zen Center and led us in our Rohatsu retreat. We did Dokusan/koan practice with Noritake Rōshi, and we had the opportunity to meet with him privately to ask questions about Zen practice. Noritake Rōshi gave teisho every day on the Blue Cliff

Record, Case 2, and offered a couple of spirited dharma talks. On November 29, Noritake Rōshi led us in our Jodo-e ceremony, in honor of the Buddha's enlightenment, and took the time to explain what the ceremony means and how to execute it. Noritake Rōshi is committed to leading three retreats a year, and we look forward to his wisdom, guidance, and kind example again this February.

On December 11, Rinzai-ji held a memorial service for our dharma brother, lay monk, and dear friend Jikan Leonard Cohen. Friends, fans, monks, and nuns gathered in large numbers to pay tribute to this special sangha member. Fellow musicians Perla Batalla and Julie Christenson offered heartfelt performances during the service. There was a catered lunch in the courtyard afterwards, and Kim Free, Kai Mammoser and Zach Roth (band name: The Future), later joined by Julianna Raye, provided powerful renditions of some of Jikan's songs.

We closed the year off with our annual New Year's program, which began with a temple cleaning on New Year's Eve, followed by a festive dinner. Then we repaired to the Zendo and sat zazen until midnight. With LA's fireworks (and the occasional gunshot) accompanying, we rang in the New Year with 108 gongs and a sake and tea sarei. The following morning we had our traditional root soup, mochi pounded rice cakes, natto fermented bean, and adzuki bean soup breakfast.

## What is behind these bookends of love and friendship?

by Len Pinto

Maybe the first time I met Leonard he made the offhand remark that Jōshū advised him to "Sing sadder songs." Forty years later Leonard named his last album, "You Want it Darker." Were the two statements part of the same conversation? Was Leonard making it darker for his teacher? Couldn't help but believe the two statements spanning the distance of forty years were uttered by the same breath.

Later the first time I was in the presence of both Jōshū and Leonard was one of the most memorable of my life. I was over at Jōshū's having a cup of tea and Leonard

arrived. All of a sudden the whole atmosphere in the room metamorphosed. I was engulfed in silence and stillness. I was embraced by the love of two people that permeated the whole space it took up. I had never experienced the pure palpable love of two people for each other. Was this what filled the forty-five year space between "sadder songs" and "darker?"

## DANA PARAMITA

We acknowledge the contributions of the following institutions and individuals that have arrived since publication of the summer issue. Zen asks us to donate ourselves in the practice of no-self. We deeply appreciate the support that enables that essential practice to continue at Rinzai-ji and Mount Baldy Zen Centers. Hail the donor!

Alastair MacLennan	Dona Monterrelli
Agnes Lin	Dokuro Jaeckel
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Andreas Zunker	Elisa Atwill
Barbara Ro	Gary Shapiro
Bill Flynn	Honkō-ji
Bill Womack	Jackie Farley
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David Phillips	Jeremy Cahill
Diane Divelbess	Jodo John Candy
Doan Schabarum	John Watts
Don Farber	John Sullivan

John Iier	Peter Pyrko
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Myoyuu Okazaki	Walter Pharr
Oren Schaefer	Wayne Rice
Paul Humphreys	Wen Hsin
Paul Scranton	Wilfred Reyes
Patrick Lavey	Zack Roth

## Cliff Swallow

by Carol Forsberg

The round brown bird,  
his face wreathed  
in blue and red feathers,  
a few bits of down  
at his feet,  
stood still between bushes.

Was he stunned?  
The gray cat,  
spitting fluff,  
lurked behind me.  
I lifted the swallow in my hands,  
looked for a safe place  
to put him.

He thrust his feet  
into my palm,  
sprang up  
into the air,  
flew above the garden wall,  
into the arms of the giant  
eucalyptus.

*Little bird, I keep  
feeling your feet  
push off my hand.  
In that moment  
you saved me.*

### TO CONTACT US

We welcome comments and proposed submissions.  
Please address these to [editor@rinzaiji.org](mailto:editor@rinzaiji.org).

Many thanks!

## Upcoming events

### O-SESSHIN LED BY NORITAKE ROSHI

At Mt. Baldy Zen Center

#### Nirvana Sesshin

Hashinkyūji: Saturday, February 15 | Banka 4pm

Sesshin: February 16 - 20

Nirvana Ceremony: Sunday, February 21

#### Anniversary Sesshin

Hashinkyūji: Monday, July 24

Sesshin: July 25 - 29

Anniversary Ceremony: Sunday, July 30

#### Rōhatsu Sesshin

Hashinkyūji: Thursday, November 16

Sesshin: November 17 - 21

Jodo-e Ceremony: Wednesday, November 22

### SERVICES & CEREMONY LED BY NORITAKE ROSHI

#### Jukai Ceremony

Wednesday, February 22 | 2pm

#### Memorial Service

#### for recently departed members of the sangha

Wednesday, February 22 | 4pm

A *Jukai* ceremony is a public declaration of intention to follow the Dharma and undertake the precepts as a disciple of the Buddha. During the ceremony the preceptor asks if the *Jukai* recipient is willing to maintain the Sixteen Great Bodhisattva precepts: the Three Devotions (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), the Three Universal Precepts, and the Ten Fundamental Precepts. Recipients are then given a *rakasu* (different styles according to their length of practice), and they are given a Dharma name.

Both ceremonies will be led by Noritake Roshi.

Please contact the office by email

<[office@rinzaiji.org](mailto:office@rinzaiji.org)> for more information.

# Hakuin Zenji Japan Pilgrimage



## Commemorating Jōshū Rōshi & Hakuin Zenji

**Dates: April 26, 2017 – May 12, 2017**

2017 marks the 250th memorial anniversary of Hakuin Zenji. With the encouragement of Noritake Rōshi, Rinzai-ji has organized a tour of heritage sites to honor our ancestral teachers once again. The next opportunity will not come until 2067!

The itinerary for Part A (April 26 - May 4) includes a memorial weekend sesshin at Myoshin-ji in Kyoto to honor Hakuin Zenji. Time in Kyoto also includes a visit to Reiun-in—where we will be welcomed by Noritake Rōshi—as well as visits to world heritage sites in Kyoto: Ryoan-ji, Shokoku-ji, Tofuku-ji and Tenryu-ji, etc.

The itinerary for Part B (May 3 - May 12) includes Shojuan in Nagano (central Honshu), DT Suzuki Museum in Kanazawa and Zuigan-ji (Sendai coastal region of Honshu, northeast of Tokyo). Hakuin Zenji trained at Shojuan not quite two centuries before Jōshū Rōshi became abbot of this same temple. Zuigan-ji, which is registered as a National Treasure and Important Cultural Property of Japan, is the site of the Zuigan-sodo (Yotoku-in), a famous monastery where Jōshū Rōshi trained for

over ten years with Miura Joten Rōshi and later served as abbot. The balance of the Part B itinerary includes Myokan-ji (Shiga Prefecture) and a return to Kyoto for Hakuin's 250th memorial ceremony at Myoshin-ji.

During this part of the tour, we will also visit some of Japan's well-known hot springs (onsen).

A deadline for the registration is March 1, 2017. Please contact the office by email <office@rinzaiji.org> for more information.

## From the ordained staff

### Leave of absence and practice in Japan

During our recent pilgrimage to Japan, Minakawa Roshi explained to Dokan, Myoren and me the importance of training at the Zuiganji monastery in Matsushima. He said, "You learn the foundation, then you create your own world." I took this to mean that you learn the principles and practice in an intense monastic setting, then you manifest them in an authentic way suitable for your culture and sangha. This is something he has done at his city temple, which in many ways resembles the lay practitioner-oriented temples that make up our broader Rinzai-ji community.

His statement resonated with me, and at Rohatsu this past November I communicated to Noritake Roshi that I would like to train for six months at Zuigan-ji in 2017. He supports this idea. Training starts at Zuigan-ji in April, 2017, and Noritake Roshi invited me to his temple in Kyoto for the month of March so that I can learn the necessary customs, rituals, etc.

I'm deeply grateful to Myoren, Alex Piner, and the Rinzai-ji board for supporting this endeavor, as well as the Rinzai-ji community (our devoted local practitioners and our broader community). Through their combined efforts Rinzai-ji will be well cared for in my absence. Meanwhile, I've been taking a crash-course in the Japanese language and have mastered such phrases as "I am a spoon" and "That is a toilet." Rest assured, I am fully prepared for this journey.

Gassho,

Gento Steve Krieger



## From the Rinzai-ji Board President

Dear Sangha Friends,

Greetings in a Rooster Year. A lot has happened since the last one in 2005. Nor do we need to look that far back to see changes that profoundly affect our lives and our practice. We've seen plenty of change just since the last issue, not only on the world and national stage, but at Rinzai-ji.

In November, the boards met via phone conference with the Osho Council. It was the first time in almost two years that any such meeting had occurred. The exchange was productive and ended in a spirit of renewed future collaboration.

Also in November, as Gento details elsewhere in this issue, Noritake Roshi has led our sangha in Rohatsu for a first time. This follows from his stated intention after the Ho-on sesshin in July to lead three ô-sesshin a year.

With deep gratitude for their service, we note the resignations of Mark Byers and Stanley Weinstein. As friends and fellow members of the boards, we will miss both of them for their steady compass and insightful contributions to our mission and practice.

As of January, Rinzai-ji welcomes two new members to its Board of Directors. Bill Womack brings a long-standing commitment to zen practice as a student of Joshu Roshi as well as a knowledge of spoken Japanese, professional credentials in graphic design, and a sense of humor that leavens even the most serious of deliberations. Bill currently lives in Charlottesville, NC. Myoren Kumiko Yasukawa served as inji for Joshu Roshi from 2008 until 2014. Since 2013, she serves as resident Administrative Vice Abbot as well as a member of the Publication Review Committee and Coordinator for international affairs, in particular with Japan.

Also in January, we have learned of Gento's plan to practice in Japan from March – September of this year. We wish Gento well and a hearty iterasshai (Japanese: "Go and come back").

In this issue, we mark the passing of three dear and long-time members of the Rinzai-ji sangha — Teishin Eunice Tropper, Jikan Leonard Cohen, and Len Pinto. (See "Events," "Encomia" and "Bookends" in this issue).

## Practice Schedule at Rinzai-ji

### DAILY ZEN PRACTICE

Wednesday - Saturday Morning 6:00 - 7:30 AM

Choka (chanting), Zazen & Kinhin

Wednesday - Saturday Evening 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Zazen & Kinhin

Wednesday - Saturday

10:00 - 11:30 AM & 2:00 - 4:30 PM

Samu work practice

### WEEKLY PRACTICE

Thursday Evening 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Sutra Study, Sutra Copying, Movie etc.

Sunday Program 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Rinzai-ji offers Zazenkai on a regular basis and also hosts classes and workshops by special arrangement. Please check the [Rinzai-ji online calendar](#) for details and dates as these are announced.

We find consolation in the recollection of our kinship through shared practice with each of them.

It remains to thank the generous donors and dedicated practitioners who sustain and enliven the community that is Rinzai-ji. Please consider joining us if we haven't seen you recently and do continue coming if we have!

Gassho and best wishes for 2017,

Paul Humphreys

## Zen is not a noun

by Denkyo Kyozan Jōshu Rōshi

The Butsu (Bus-) of Bussho means Buddha. When I say Buddha, probably everyone thinks it is a noun. When I say bird, it is a noun. But a bird is a living thing and therefore using a noun and calling it “bird” isn’t enough for its real name. Since the bird is living, we need a name which indicates that the bird is living. So we say Bird-sho.

In the same way, Buddha is simply a noun that means an enlightened person. But the Buddha is not dead, he is enlightened, he is existing in the condition of enlightenment. We have to describe the fact that his eyes are open, he’s enlightened. This is the word Bussho.

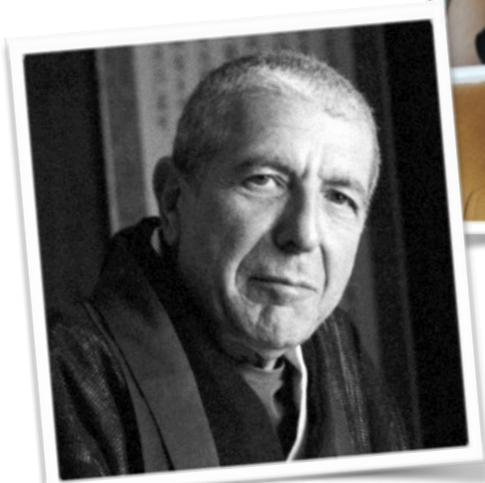
When we use Bussho in this sense [of existing in the condition of enlightenment] and we say that zen is bussho, zen also is not a noun. So, zen has two



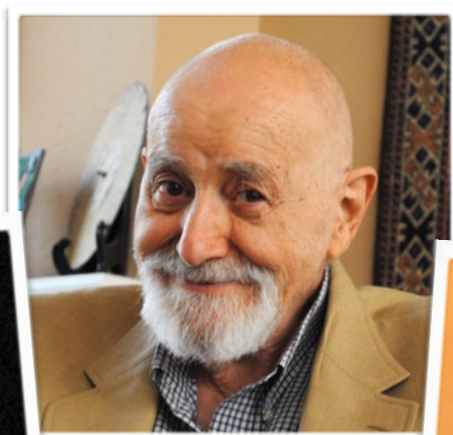
meanings: one says, “zen, zen,” taking zen simply as a noun, but this is no good. Zen is moving. Buddha is doing the motion called Buddha: that is Bussho.

Excerpt from a teisho at Rinzai-ji (then Cimarron) Zen Center, 22 August 1972. George Stanicci, translator.

## In Memory of our beloved dharma sister and brothers



Jikan Leonard Cohen  
1934 - 2016



John Pinto  
1935 - 2017



Teishin Eunice Tropper  
1929 - 2016