

NOTES FROM MANY HANDS AND EYES MEETING
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2008

Prepared by Katherine Senshin Griffith

In attendance: Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao, Penelope Luminous-Heart Thompson, , Concetta Getsuren Alfano, John Heart-Mirror Trotter, Deb Faith-Mind Thoreson, Lynda Golan, DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass, Margaret Jifu Gower, Katherine Senshin Griffith and Sensei John Daishin Buksbazen (partial). Guest Speaker: Betsy Brown. Not present: Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Ellen Reigen Ledley,

Summary of discussion

The meeting consisted of:

1. Hearing a report from Betsy Brown about her experience with Jimyo
2. Plans for the Sangha Council on Sun. October 19.

1. Report from Betsy Brown.

Betsy gave a lengthy moving report, detailing her efforts and experience of helping Jimyo find a place to live. What started as a simple offer to let him stay in an extra room in her house while she was on vacation for 3 weeks, ended up in the situation of Jimyo living with her for five months, until just recently when Jimyo moved out of her house and into a place of his own that he is very happy with.

Some of the key points Betsy made were:

- Her taking this on was totally voluntary. She was not asked to do it. It came out of her hearing Koan share about what difficulty he was having finding a place for Jimyo.
- When she volunteered her place, she did not know he was a sex offender but only after Jimyo told her he had to re-register if he went to live with her. She then looked up his offences online and could have backed out but decided to go ahead with her offer.
- She was also really surprised to find out how many issues there were with Jimyo's lack of basic life skills due to his lengthy incarceration etc. She pointed out her former roommate was invaluable in her support and in her help working with Jimyo on budgets, managing money, shopping, eating healthy, taking his insulin, etc.
- The whole experience was terrific for her practice. It brought up issues involving various areas of her personal history, yet she was willing to face all aspects of herself, including issues involving:

- subtle layers of racism and discomfort with cultural difference,
 - sharing personal space – negotiating household rules
 - the ongoing day-to-day experience and facing her own reactions
 - overcoming her tendency to be judgmental
- How important honesty was throughout it all. She was always very upfront with Jimyo about what she was dealing with and setting her boundaries.
 - How you can't heal in isolation and that in difficult situations, "isolation will kill you."
 - Jimyo does improve and learns once told how to do things and "works harder at things than most people do." (Roshi added that he is very open, continues to learn and feels gratitude.)
 - Betsy and her roommate Marrisra went to every apartment Jimyo looked at. Betsy shared all the various factors that made it harder to find an apartment than was initially expected (especially by Koan). These reasons included: cost, the need to register, some perfect places had kids coming on the weekends, some places had bad energy and were potentially dangerous for Jimyo, transportation access etc. She pointed out that "you don't know what you don't know until you know it."
 - Our council in the spring was one of the first times Jimyo got a real sense of the harm he had caused.
 - The harrowing background Jimyo himself has had.
 - The beauty and sense of wholeness experienced at a "day at the beach" with friends of Betsy's. The families were very welcoming of Jimyo and she witnessed a beautiful moment of healing. Betsy shared Jimyo's history with one of the parents and decided not to tell the rest of the group. She pointed out how difficult it must be if every time you met someone, you had to tell them about the worst thing you had ever done and that can keep people from seeing who you really are and your own personal growth. And yet, the need for safety and disclosure is still important.
 - Betsy now considers Jimyo a true friend and he has even been helpful in giving advice to other people. She & Jimyo now have a sitting group together on Monday nights and even helped each other with their Ango practice commitments.
 - Re: expectations of the Zen Center. Betsy did not reach out to members of the Zen Center because she was relatively new and she was very sensitive to the strong emotional reaction to Jimyo after the spring Sangha Council. Koan & Nagy did not meet with Jimyo monthly as originally promised.

- She would do it again, felt she benefited.

Preparation for Sangha Council, Sunday, October 19, 2008

The Sangha Council will be informational in nature, reporting on the work MHAЕ has done (and will continue doing) and on the progress of APP (Angulimal Prison Project) It was decided that the two hour meeting would be divided in half, with approximately the first hour be devoted to reports from MHAЕ and the second half open to discussion with the Sangha.

Succinct reports at the Council will be made by:

- **OVERVIEW:** Jifu will give an overview of what the MHAЕ has been doing.
- **EDUCATION REPORT:** Daishin will give a report on what we have learned and the research the group has done regarding other prison programs, services available to prisoners once outside, sexual abuse issues, etc. Tell about the March 15, 2009 workshop.
- **ANGULIMALA PRISON PROJECT:** Luminous Heart will report on the status of the APP.
- **JIMYO EXPERIENCE:** Betsy Brown will give a condensed report of her experience and practice of working with Jimyo.
- **CONSIDERATION FOR JIMYO'S ACCESS TO ZCLA:** Roshi will present the several protocol options for considering Jimyo's access to ZCLA and open a discussion with the Sangha on the possible paths we could take.

(Attached is Roshi's Jimyo Access Protocol notes)

Sangha Council will be Sunday, October 19th, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.