

SUMMARY OF GROUP COMMENTS AT SANGHA COUNCIL OCTOBER 19, 2008

A total of 30 people attended the Sangha Council. In addition to the presentations by Roshi, Jifu as steward, Luminous Heart for APP, Betsy regarding her involvement with Jimyo, and Sensei Daishin regarding MHAE's on-going Sangha educational plans, Jifu asked participants to address their own comments specifically to the issue of Jimyo's continued involvement/future presence at the Center. The results are summarized below. Because most people made a series of comments, the numbers don't add up to 30.

Approximately 25 of the 30 participants want to see Jimyo come back to the Center. Two of the 25 would require no conditions; 23 would require some protocol or conditions. At least two of the 30 expressed ambivalence about his returning; two did not want him to return under any circumstances.

Possible conditions included: A prescribed schedule for him to come to the Center, and no other times. Announcing when he would be present (objected to by one participant, as sending the message "unsafe to sit"). Only if the parents of children generally at the Center are comfortable with it. Only if the survivors are comfortable with it. A "buddy", shadow, constant companion. Unitarian-Universalist type protocols. It is our responsibility to assess the risk, take proper precautions. Several people pointed out that there is no safe space, no guarantees, but we can and must do our best to create a safe space. "Compassion and carefulness" said one practitioner.

One person pointed out that the decision must just arise, another said it could not be arrived at "democratically".

Of the people who do not want Jimyo to return, one said that he found Jimyo manipulative, and pointed to how much energy and effort around him the Sangha has had to make already; another said she didn't want Jimyo to be the occasion of anyone "disappearing from the Sangha".

A few people commented that people withdraw from the Sangha from time to time anyway, often not for the reasons they think, and that the "victims" (survivors) must make their own decisions.

Several other people commented that they "do not want to be part of a Sangha that would throw anyone away"; "my vows won't let me exclude a person on the basis of one characteristic"; that "I could not go into prison and teach zazen, teach Dharma, and then tell someone that they couldn't come here to practice"; that "we want to do good, but only where it's safe"; that "I want to hold him equal in consideration, along with parents, children, survivors"; that "it's not good guys here, bad guys there".

Two people said that while they did not want anyone to leave over this issue, that might be part of a particular survivor's process, and that Jimyo might present the opportunity to the Sangha for teaching and learning.

Many people commented on Jimyo's own practice. Some felt that at the previous Sangha Council he seemed "cavalier" as if he did not understand the weight of what he had done. Someone else said he didn't care so much about what Jimyo was like at the Sangha Council, but what he had done since. And many people were struck by what they perceived to be the sincerity of his practice and his jukai.