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Dear Aitken Roshi:

I am immensely grateful for your letter of October 8 concerning the dreadful situation at the Zen Studies Society. By now you will have heard from Dr. Ogura that Sylvan Busch and Taisan vetoed Dr. Ogura's idea to form a committee to investigate the charges brought against Taisan over these many years. It is a great pity, but I suppose it was to be expected.

You were quite right in thinking that the emotional health of many people is involved in all this and not just now, of course, but over the many years Taisan has been working in this country. But he, obviously, thinks only of himself. Looking back over it all now, I see that his principal aim has been to discredit Soen Roshi in every way that he can so as to undercut any censure of Taisan's activities that Soen Roshi might make. Many Sangha members over the years have come to me and asked why Soen Roshi does not "defrock" Taisan. That is a question that I cannot answer. My feeling is that once you are a Roshi you are pretty much your own man. One of the elements that has been used by Taisan to deflect everyone from the real problem at hand--namely, his sexual activities with his women students and (for some, even more important) his lying about it--is the introduction of Myoshinji into the situation. Soen Roshi and Ryutakuji, of course, belong to the Myoshinji system, but Taisan was ordained by the Reverend Goto, who belongs to the Nanzenji system. As you will see from my enclosed letter to Taisan, his paranoia has now extended so far as to charge the Venerable Yamada Mumon Roshi with an attempt to add Dai Bosatsu to Myoshinji territory. I am told that at the last meeting of the Board of Trustees a motion was introduced and passed to disavow any connection with any monastery any place in the world. Remarkable! This further insulates Taisan from any control by any other person or organization. He is an extraordinarily clever man.

Another question that has been asked many, many times over the years is why the other Roshis and Zen teachers in this country continue to support Taisan, to participate in seminars with him, in fact, never to express any concern or disapproval about his behavior. I am so glad that you have come forward to question his behavior. I do hope that other Roshis and Zen teachers, several of whom have received "refugees" from Dai Bosatsu and Shoboji, will one day join you in your stand.

Soen Roshi's statement that Eido's shame is Soen's shame, the shame of Dai Bosatsu is the shame of Ryutakuji and every Zen Buddhist monastery in the world, seems to have stung Taisan. It appears to me a very profound truth but also a truism that any beginning Zen student should recognize and accept early on.

Robert Aitken Roshi

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Mrs. Robin Westen called me yesterday to say that she has now finished her article and that it has been accepted for publication, not by the Village Voice but by a national magazine, within the next couple of months. Taisan is now so well insulated that I wonder if anything other than his own unfortunate karma can shake him.

I am sending you copies of Taisan's letters to me and to the Sangha and my reply, along with Peggy Crawford's letter of resignation, since this is addressed to "any other concerned persons." I will let you know as things develop here. Again, thank you so many times for your letter. It was a real manifestation of Kanzeon and comforted me enormously.

Gassho,


George Zoumas