

"From Zogen: An Open Letter to the Directors of Zen Studies Society and the Sangha"

December 26, 2010

Dear members of the Board of Directors of ZSS and members of ZSS Sangha,

This most recent revelation of Eido Shimano Roshi's attitude towards the meaning of his conduct, as reported, and his position, as expressed in his letter (to The New York Times) --all, go well beyond a mere "denial". It is a familiar (see his past expression of regret and other published communications from ZSS) set of distortions, omissions and manipulations.

I believe that Eido Shimano Roshi is incapable of seeing the true nature of his conduct, its consequences to people involved, and its broader meaning. His "reality" is so self-serving and apparently so fundamental to his view of the world and himself that he is unable to respond to other people's perception of the same facts with any degree of compassion.

He is like a machinist who brought the train to a wreck but who continues to stand on top of the ruins, clutching controls for his dear life.

The ZSS Board will make a tragic mistake if they continue to define their actions by the way it might affect Eido Shimano Roshi. His "distance" from the administration of ZSS changes absolutely nothing. These maneuvers continue to revolve around the same recalcitrant position of the Board: ZSS can derive its legitimacy and practice authority ONLY from association with Eido Shimano Roshi. For as long as that remains so, nothing will change in our stricken organization.

The Board had been appointed and received its delegated authority from their Teacher and has no other claim at legitimacy.

What was that meeting with Sangha members, referred to in the Board's documentation? How many people were present? How were they selected? Was this meeting announced in advance and how was it publicized? Why can't we have an unexpurgated list of supporters and other interested people – who are prepared to make or renew commitment to ZSS - and poll them on fundamental questions of ZSS survival? In any mainstream non-profit organization, Boards represent the avowed mission and will of its members. Members of the Board are entrusted with a fiduciary obligation to carry out this will on behalf of all the members and in a spirit of the organization's core mission.

Whose will does ZSS Board of Directors carry out? Whom do they represent, at this point? Do we have to wait for a joint legal action by people aggrieved by Eido Shimano Roshi? Should we wait for an injunction from the Court to put a stop to the unseemly maneuvers to grant Eido Shimano Roshi the spiritual status and position he clearly has forfeited? Remember Jack Welsh and the GM Board. Why do we have to live with this never-ending scandal?

I trust that we still have more than a handful of Sangha members who continue to believe in ZSS future and who have not been driven into despair of any possibility of change in our Zendo. Eido Shimano Roshi's decisive removal from power and influence, is only a necessary, but not sufficient, prerequisite for change.

The house empty of Right Practice cannot stand! We should re-enter our Zendo with full and courageous heart and fill it with Good Effort. Taking a position on these painful matters is the beginning of such effort.

Gassho,

Zogen

December 26, 2010

For my earlier letter to the Board, go to:

http://www.sanghaconvergence.org/DATA/20101216_Zogen_ZSS.pdf