

December 30, 2010

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Dear Mr. Dowling and Zen Studies Society Board:

I know that many of my colleagues are writing and faxing you regarding the transition at ZSS, specifically Eido Roshi's role there in the future. I share the views of my colleagues with regard to this, and I don't feel the need to repeat or rephrase what has already been said very eloquently. I would, however, like to add a few points of my own.

First, how this is handled will affect not just Eido Roshi and Zen Studies Society. It will affect how the whole Zen tradition is viewed in this country. That is why so many of us are compelled to address this. Buddhism has gained too high a profile for things like this to go unnoticed.

Next, I realize that Eido Roshi and other Japanese teachers view matters from a "public face" and "private face" perspective. While we can respect this and personally work with our teachers allowing for this, the Zen tradition must adapt to the American cultural landscape. That means bringing the public and private into harmony. Anything else will not do. That will be difficult for Eido Roshi, but the transition from west to east demands sacrifices from all who take up the work.

Finally, I believe Eido Roshi's Dharma legacy is in very capable hands with Rev. Shinge Chayat and with Rev. Genjo Marinello. Because of this his Dharma will continue through them, and perhaps others. The question, then, is about Zen Studies Society. Will ZSS come through this in a way that it can play a significant role in American Dharma in the years to come? I believe that how this matter is handled is critical to that question.

Sincerely,

Kyogen Carlson, abbot  
Dharma Rain Zen Center