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January 30, 1965

*Phillips*

Dear Bernard:

I am writing to you to ask your assistance in an important matter. Soen Roshi is recommending the layman Katsuki Sekida as a replacement for Tai San here at Koko An. We know Sekida San; you may also, -- he is an older Ryutakuji habitue, speaks very good English, very helpful to Dan, Pauline, and other Americans. He wants to come on a professional visa, similar to the one arranged for Fukui.

I am in the process of collecting affidavits for this visa, and have written Sekida asking that he collect three indicating his insight into Zen, his skill as a translator, his ability to write good English prose, etc. I am preparing the usual financial statement here.

In addition to these papers, I need something indicating the status of people that Koko An is currently sponsoring. According to Immigration records here in Honolulu, we are sponsors of Yasutani Roshi and Satomi San, whose arrival (so far as they have been informed) is pending, and Tai San. Tai San probably notified Immigration in New York of his change of address, but this does not change the sponsorship status. For all the authorities here know, he may simply be on a trip.

Yasutani Roshi has not yet informed me just what he wants to do about his permanent visa. He wrote to me telling me to cancel it, but this, of course, I have no authority to do; it is his visa, after all. I advised him that if he had already turned in his DSP form to the American Embassy that he should make cancellation arrangements there. Otherwise he could send the form to me, and I would turn it in here. I think, however, that the Embassy already has it. I told him I thought it would be a shame to cancel it, since only health clearance in June is required for final approval, and that if he wanted me to transfer sponsorship to a New York group, I would do so. I have not heard from him about this yet, but I believe he will let me know soon. If I had known that you were active in planning for his coming to the East Coast, I would have kept you informed in detail about this, but I just heard about this indirectly this week. From the beginning of this change of plans, I have wanted to be in touch with the responsible people at the New York end, but the only name I had was Fischman, and he simply doesn't answer letters. I have been anxious to effect this transfer smoothly, since the transfer itself cannot be avoided.

It will not be possible for me to begin visa application proceedings until we are officially no longer ~~imm~~ sponsors of Yasutani and Satomi, as we are a small group, and it was difficult to persuade the Immigration officers that we needed two people in addition to Tai San in the first place. If I seek to sponsor a fourth person, I will get nowhere, I am sure. Likewise, I want to clear up Tai San's sponsorship status, so that



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it will be completely clear to the authorities that Tai San has transferred to another group, and that we are without any monk at all.

All this takes written evidence, spelled out in specific language which the police mentality of these immigration characters can understand. I will try to get by with ordinary letters, not affidavits, but it may be that even affidavits will be necessary. It will depend very largely upon what the interviewing officer had for breakfast that morning, and other intangibles.

When Tai San stopped at Koko An in October, on his way to Japan, I asked him to have his New York sponsors write me indicating their willingness to accept transfer of his sponsorship. He agreed to have this done. However, when he stopped by again on his way back in December, he said the only notification of change of address was necessary. From his point of view this is correct. Immigration people just want the address. The legal sponsor can be clear across the country, -- they don't care. But when sponsorship is changed, then something to that effect must be in the files of all concerned parties. At this point, Diamond Sangha is Tai San's sponsor.

I want to make our attitude completely clear. If we at Koko An had no intention of sponsoring anybody else, we would have no objection to continuing to be Tai San's sponsor. Our anxiety to transfer him officially is simply so that our status as a group without a monk may be plain to the immigration authorities, and our chances for success in a new visa application will be stronger.

I wrote to Fischman explaining all this in a polite way in mid-December. I enclosed a stamped self-addressed envelope for his convenience in replying. Tai San used that envelope to answer me, repeating what he had said during his last visit, that he had gone to the New York Immigration Office, and they had told him that he only needed to change his address. I wrote to him Tai San twice more trying to explain that his legal status was clear as far as his residence goes, but that I needed to tidy up the sponsorship thing in order to make a new visa application. My last letter was January 12, to which he has not replied.

It may be that a letter is now being prepared, and that I will receive it soon. If so, very good, and I will be very grateful. You see, I am scheduled to take a swing through Asia for six or eight weeks this spring for the East-West Center on an alumni evaluation project, and I'd like to get a good start on all this visa business before I go. If possible, I would want to get all the application papers filed with Immigration, so that only interviews remained, and Anne could handle them.

Bernard, could I ask that you help in this matter? You see, we don't even have a letter of resignation from Tai San. We would like to have a statement from the chairman or president of his group, or secretary or whatever, that Tai San is now monk of such and such group. It should be typed on the group's letterhead, and signed, and in every way look official. The old Zen Buddhist Association of Hawaii had all of twelve members when we first sponsored Tai San, just a one page constitution and one business meeting behind us; almost completely a paper organization. But we looked like for real, and we got by. Of course, no incorporation is necessary. We are still not incorporated.

Thanks very much. I'm sorry to bother you with such a long letter. Mr. Yorke tells me that you will be working on the Mumonkan with Tai San. This is very good. I would hope that it would be your project, and that



you would ~~you~~ go over even these small portions of the book which I had a part in preparing, and that the final product would be a unified collaboration between you and Tai San, and my part would appear nowhere, and there would be no acknowledgement to me. Both Tai San and Yasutani Roshi have chosen to disassociate with Koko An, so I would prefer that this disassociation be complete, so far as ~~possible~~ go. Of course, I would still welcome them both here for sesshin or other visits; I don't mean that we should be on unfriendly terms.

Anne and I wish you lots of luck in all these new Zen projects. I realize that Hawaii did not offer enough scope for the ambitions of either monk, and that the ~~situation~~ which came to light here last July might have been an indirect result of Tai San's frustration at not being more effective according to his ~~rights~~. These words are written confidentially to you, Bernard, in the friendliest possible spirit; I trust that you will use them with the utmost discretion. It is important to keep the machinery well oiled, in all of its parts.

Do you have any connections in Thailand? Wat connections I mean. I want to visit one or two, and perhaps try a little Theravada zazen on my trip. I would be grateful if you could supply me with a couple of addresses.

With love from us both,