

October 15, 1982

Dear Robin Westen,

Following up our telephone conversation yesterday, here is a copy of my new book, Taking the Path of Zen, which includes an autobiographical section, "Willy-Nilly Zen," that details how Eido Tai Shimano came to Hawaii, though not how he departed. See page 115.

Here also is a copy of Blind Donkey, Vol. 6 No. 3, 1980, which includes my teishō, "No Misuse of Sex." Note particularly my remarks on page 27.

I want to amplify my response to your question about Zen Buddhism as a possibly unique nexus for sexual exploitation. The Zen teacher must be trusted if he or she is to be effective. This trust must go very deep as the experience sought is also deep, and the student is encouraged to forget the self. If the teacher is exploitive, then of course the setting is the chance for some nasty work. However there are similar chances in many other settings; psychologist and client, academic teacher and student, priest and follower in most any religion.

In my letters to George Zournas and others, I suggested that members of the Zen Studies Society continue to gather for zazen, and also for sharing meetings with a skilled facilitator by way of therapy. It must be a painful time for everyone. And even though Sōen Rōshi has spoken out against the Shimanos, I am sure that he is concerned about what will become of them and all that negative energy. I think this should be on our minds also. Some good channel must be found.

Hang in there!

Gasshō,

Robert Aitken

P.S. Use my words if you like, but please quote or summarize paragraph 3 above in full, if you use any of it. Thanks.

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Library — Archives