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THE ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY

October 19, 1982

Dear Sangha Member,

After many years of Dharma association with George Zournas, Frank LoCicero, and Adam Fisher, I was shocked at their recent actions directed towards me. They have helped The Zen Studies Society over the years, and I hope that during those years, I have been able to help them though it is difficult for me to articulate what I feel I have done for them.

All of a sudden, without discussing any of the allegations they have made against me, they address malicious letters to the Sangha, instead of confronting me directly, although I am the object of their allegations.

On Friday evening, the 17th of September, Frank LoCicero and Adam Fisher wrote a letter and had copies of this letter distributed to provisional students and other students at Shobo-Ji. This despite the fact that Frank had not yet discussed his allegations against me as we had agreed to do so on Monday, the 20th. Bear in mind that provisional students are not yet full members of the Sangha.

According to George Zournas, Soen Roshi told him that he had sent a telegram to me which read: "Eido's shame is Soen's shame. The shame of Dai Bosatsu Zendo is the shame of Ryutakuji and every zendo in the world." I never received such a telegram, and I challenge George to prove that Soen Roshi ever made such a statement. I did receive a telegram from Soen Roshi on September 9, after his return to Japan. The telegram reads:

Ima wa tada Namu Dai Bosa arunomi ("Right now just Namu Dai Bosa")  
from dead end here. To dead end Namu bravely march on Butsu.

The telegram is in fact an encouragement from Soen Roshi to "bravely march on".

On October 5th, Kogen Mike Rafferty, Shobo-Ji's resident, found the word "SHAME" painted on the front doors and walk of Shobo-Ji. That same day, Aiho returned to New

York City from Dai Bosatsu Zendo to find the same word, "SHAME", had been painted on the steps of our home.

These incidents are just examples of a series of cruel actions directed towards Aiho and myself in the past few months. Due to my cultural background, it is extremely difficult for me to speak out in a public manner. However, it is unfair to conclude that my silence implies that I must be what the letters say I am. Indeed, in Japan, to protest too much against an accusation is considered a sign of guilt.

According to George, Frank, and Adam, I am evil, unethical, dishonest, unfit to lead The Zen Studies Society. The Shimanos must be expelled from this country! They claim, 1) I told a woman she had a Kensho experience to seduce her, 2) there has been no public accounting of Zen Studies finances, and 3), I was not a good host to my teacher, Soen Roshi, during his visit here.

So many letters, from people who have been long associated with The Zen Studies Society. For them to express this intense personal hatred towards Aiho and myself, I must have been a terrible teacher and administrator all these years. So much sitting , so many Sesshins, so many Dokusan's, to come to this!

We all have much to learn from this situation. I only ask from you what you would give to a stranger respect for my privacy, as well as Aiho's, skepticism regarding rumor, and fairness. You will find here no secrets about what happens during Dokusan. Many of you have experienced Dokusan and know what it is. As for my long relationship with Soen Roshi, my teacher, those who have read Namu Dai Bosa and Golden Wind know that I speak of him with respect and love. I have trained with him and I am his Dharma Heir. I am the only person who has worked closely with Soen Roshi both in Japan and in the United States, and I know that I know him better than anyone. Bear in mind that this special relationship has a thirty year history. It is presumptuous of George Zournas or anyone to think that they understand this relationship or can judge it.

It is important that even if we have our differences, we share in the sincere effort to make Shobo-Ji and Dai Bosatsu Zendos become complete. It is my sincere wish that my letter addressed to George Zournas, here enclosed, will clarify this unfortunate situation.

Gassho,

[signature]

Eido Tai Shimano  
Abbot, The Zen Studies Society