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Long Island City, NY 11101

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Rev. Eido T. Shimano, Roshi  
Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji  
HCR 1 Box 171  
Livingston Manor, NY 12758

Dear Eido,

I am deeply troubled over our meeting this past weekend, specifically the interaction we had concerning the Dharma Ring I was preparing for my brother Junpo's Inka ceremony. I intended to ask you to do a calligraphy on the ring or tell me in confidence his Inka name so that I could record it on the ring as a gift for presentation to Junpo on his ceremony day. I was dumbfounded and quite speechless when you took the ring, stating that it was "too good for Junpo". Not wishing to create disharmony between us I let the matter go and continued on with our other business, the ring being just a wooden ring after all.

After further reflection, it is apparent that this matter cannot be "let go of" so easily. It has become a Koan for me that gnaws at my guts.

Over the years we have exchanged many gifts of fine quality between us. Always it has given me great joy to experience your appreciation and gratitude for my workmanship. With me the full expression of Zazen is single-minded craftsmanship. When the fruit of this practice is freely given, it is a gift of selfless Buddha Nature.

The theft of a manifestation of Dharma by one who purports to have realized the quintessential selfless nature of existence presents quite a dilemma.

Aside from student/teacher relationship, or friend/friend relationship, rather, man to man.... Who is it that intervenes to steal the gift of one man intended for another man? This is my Koan for you.

I have great love for you and always will. I would lay down my life for you if it was required, you know this. I love you enough to stand up to "call" your shit as I trust you would do for me. Please keep the ring, bury it at Soen's grave, solve both our koans. It is just a wooden ring after all. Isn't it?

Kobutsu