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A Message from Eido Shimano

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Reply by Harold Weisberg alias Rodo-San on September 27, 2010, 5:00 pm

It was the fall of 1975, Eido Roshi was mysteriously missing and Soen Roshi was giving, Teisho, Dokusan and Sesshin (- see Larry Shainberg's book "Ambivalent Zen"). It was a most important time in my spiritual practice and the New York's zendo's soul. It culminated in the Rohatsu of Dec. 1975. Jinta and me sat every night competing on how long and how great our samadhi was, or how we were both crazy. The morning of the last night, (Buddha's enlightenment against MARA), Eido Roshi takes the high seat and to our amazement disbanded the New York Zendo sangha and retreated to the DEEP mountains of the Catskills, called Daibosatsu mountain. During the Christmas/New Year break, there was lots of speculation, nevertheless the ZSS schedule had a winter Rohatsu at Daibosatsu. Since I was in the Zen Zone of zen practice, I signed up. After all it was a sesshin with both Soen Roshi and Eido Roshi. It was not a disappointing sesshin as the zendo was full but not overcrowded. There was a blizzard on the second day. Eido Roshi and Soen Roshi were battling over the translation of "on opening "the" dharma or "this" dharma... We can now see "it" or "this". I think Soen Roshi won this argument. " On opening this Dharma". Suddenly a stomach flu hit, and almost the entire participants were in the bathroom and not the zendo. On the last morning, the wind stopped, the flu left and the sun came out. The sky was blue and somehow there was some kind of purification or understanding of the dharmakaya. The upheaval in the sangha, left me homeless as Nensho, whose apartment I was subletting returned to the city, and took back his apartment that I was subletting. Since there was a vacancy at the the New York Zendo I applied for residency. Eido Roshi objected, as he wanted Roy, but somehow the Board gave me the residency. After awhile Eido Roshi admitted that I was the best resident director up to that time. All I wanted to do was, chant the Heart Sutra, scream Kanzeon, and make my 4 Great Vows and Zazen, Zazen and more Zazen. Somehow this was infectious to other people and New York Zendo began filling up with new aspirants. One day Eido Roshi called me to Daibusatsu in order to discuss the schedule. What was planned for Nirvana day, Gempo's memorial and Buddha's birthday. I had no idea. So I invited him to New York, for a one day sitting, an evening memorial and a weekend Sesshin. I knew I couldn't conduct services but maybe he should? It could be said, that I was the most influential person in the Rebirth of the New York sangha in 1976! I have no regrets and was always honest with every new student. After all, following morning service, a breakfast special at Kasey's reveals all, Eido Roshi was the teacher and I was the student. After two years I decided to leave New York Zendo and head toward Jerusalem and participate with the Dead Sea Sangha and study with Kyudo Roshi. Eido Roshi was furious but in the end wished me the best. After all i Think all Buddhist are jealous of Jews and viceversa. It just might be respect. I met Kyudo Roshi, a disciple of Soen, and wanted to study with him on the Mt. Of Olives. He is the exact opposite of

Eido . How could two zen masters from the same teacher be so different? One is into power and attachment and the other has no corners and no attachments? It's all in Larry Shainberg's book. So here I'm writing a defense of Eido Roshi and don' t mention his teachings. He is my Zen Teacher. He gave me Zen practice and turned it into exquisite Zazen. He taught me life and death! 32 years later, I have a wife, two kids grown up and I still practice every morning, more or less, the 4 great vows. Thank you Eido Roshi, as "what more do we seek as the truth is reveaveales" .I hope you retire in peace and give great lectures. I hope you command the same fees as Bill Clinton a great president that is being reevaluated forhis great works!

Rodo San