

October 27, 2010

Dear Sangha,

This has been a year of many changes for The Zen Studies Society. This letter is intended to update you on the developments that have occurred.

On January 23rd, 2010, at the annual ZSS Board meeting, Eido Shimano Roshi announced his intention to retire. This year marks the 50th anniversary of his arrival in the United States. As his last project, he wanted to build a Sanmon (entrance gate) for DBZ, which had been his original vision when DBZ first opened in 1976. He has raised the funds needed to fulfill his vision, and the project is scheduled to be completed next year.

Also, in February, as part of his retirement plans, Roshi retired from his role as guest professor at Shogen Junior College (of which Yamakawa Sogen Roshi is President) in Gifu Prefecture, Japan, where he has taught for the past 20 years.

On Labor Day Weekend, September 4th, several meetings were held at New York Zendo with Eido Roshi, the Board, and the Faith Trust Institute, who were enlisted to help guide The Zen Studies Society in response to a series of ethical breaches.

The meetings included lengthy discussions during which the FTI issued a series of recommendations (now posted on our website). Additionally, the Board met with a large group of sangha members and heard their input and suggestions. After an in-depth review and serious consideration of all points of view, the Board endorsed the following actions:

- After completing the 34th Anniversary Sesshin at DBZ, Eido Roshi resigned from the Board of Directors of The Zen Studies Society.
- Eido Roshi wrote and sent an open letter expressing his apology to the Sangha.
- Eido Roshi will retire as Abbot on the last day of Rohatsu Sesshin, December 8th, 2010, and will be recognized as the Founding Abbot of New York Zendo and Dai Bosatsu Zendo. In this role he will be freed from his responsibility presiding over the two zendos. It is his intention to take a brief respite from his busy lifestyle, and with renewed vigor, work on translating Chinese and Japanese Zen texts.
- On January 1, 2011, at 1 p.m., Shinge-shitsu Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi will be installed as the second Abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji.
- Shinge Roshi will take responsibility for teaching all new students, and for the spiritual guidance and direction of DBZ. Along with the Board and residents, she will be responsible for the care and management of the monastery.
- Following his retirement from the Board in July, Eido Roshi stopped receiving new students and may see and instruct only those who mutually decide to continue their established dokusan practice. This will occur primarily during sesshin at DBZ, and on selected occasions at New York Zendo Shobo-ji, as determined by the Abbot of DBZ and the Director(s) of NYZ and subject to Eido Roshi's availability.
- Eido Roshi will continue monthly Japanese Dharma classes at New York Zendo Shobo-ji.
- After 20 years of dedicated service Aiho-San Shimano will be retiring from her position as Director of the New York Zendo Shobo-ji on the last day of this training period, Saturday, December 11th, 2010. She will be recognized as Honorary Director, and as such will no longer be responsible for the direction and management of the temple. She has expressed her interest in continuing to serve the community by occasionally making flower arrangements for the altars and offering her knowledge and experience in selecting scrolls for display.
- As Interim Directors, Rev. Zuiho Myodo Matthew Perez & Board Vice-President Shoteki Chris Phelan will be sharing responsibility for Shobo-ji.

- In order to sustain the traditional and authentic Zen atmosphere at DBZ and NYZ, Eido Roshi is generously allowing both temples to use his personal collection of scrolls, sculptures, and ceremonial objects on a provisional basis until a more permanent resolution may be established.
- Four members of the ZSS Board have resigned for various reasons since July. As of Monday, October 18th, the Board nominated and approved two new members, Rev. Shinkon Peter Glynn, who completed his three years of training at DBZ, and Rev. Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz, shika (head monastic) at Hoen-ji.
- The Board is currently reviewing the organizational bylaws to best serve the members and mission of The Zen Studies Society.
- The Zen Studies Society Board is undertaking a financial review. As part of our year-end outreach we will share an updated status of our current circumstances.
- The Board is continuing to examine additional ways to ensure an open, trusting, and healthy practice for all students.
- Shinge Roshi and Genjo Osho have consulted with trusted colleagues in the American Zen Teachers Association.

We want to acknowledge our Dharma legacy, from Hakuin Zenji to Gempo Roshi, Soen Roshi, and Eido Roshi, as well as through such pioneers of Zen in America as Soyen Shaku Roshi, Nyogen Senzaki, and Dr. D.T. Suzuki. All of their efforts are manifested in our Dai Bosatsu Mandala. The Zen Studies Society's unique role in bridging East and West was affirmed by the recent Golden Wind Sesshin at DBZ, joined and in part led by Sogen Yamakawa Roshi of Shogen-ji.

When we think back to the early days, before Shobo-ji there was just a garage; before Dai Bosatsu Zendo, there was just a hunting lodge on a mountain. It is through the incomparable dedication of Eido Roshi and Aiho-San that we have these temples for authentic Rinzaï Zen practice.

We will be sending out an update at the end of this year. The 2011 schedule will be posted online by the end of this month. In closing, we want to affirm that we will continue to build on our rich heritage, and to provide a strong vision for a healthy Zen community where we can deepen our commitment to the Bodhisattva Way. Please understand that everything we are working toward takes time. Thank you for your encouragement, open communication, and continued support.

With Palms Together,

Board of The Zen Studies Society

Board of Directors October 18th, 2010

Soun Joe Dowling – President

Shoteki Chris Phelan – Vice President

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi

Genjo Marinello

Zenshin Richard Rudin

Newly Appointed Board Members (October 18th, 2010)

Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz

Shinkon Peter Glynn