

Joe Soun Dowling  
Zen Studies Society Board President  
New York Zendo, Shobo-Ji  
223 West 67th Street  
New York, NY 10065

30 December 2010

Dear Mr. Dowling, ZSS Board and sangha members,

As a Zen teacher and practitioner I have been taught that the dharma is our refuge; that each of us must make the practice we love safe for all who wish to share it. For more than sixteen years, dating back to my tenure as director of Buddhist Peace Fellowship, I have been hearing from women who were sexually victimized and emotionally harmed by Eido Shimano. Over the years I have also spoken with numerous other members of the ZSS community concerned about Eido's depredations. Sadly, most of them left the community in frustration and dismay. Some of them turned away from Zen practice entirely.

In August of 1995 I was a signatory on a private letter from Robert Aitken Roshi and a group of western Zen teachers to the ZSS board, strongly raising our concerns about sexual abuse and manipulation in your community. At the heart of that letter was this concern: "Our deepest wish is for a healing on all sides: for those who have suffered abuse, for your Sangha, and for Shimano Roshi." That is still my concern, but look how many years have passed, and how many women and men continue to suffer from Eido Shimano's sexual addiction, misuse of authority, and inability to take responsibility for his actions? Irrespective of so-called insight and "Samadhi power," I would say that his behavior has nothing to do with Zen or Buddhism, where the Bodhisattva's precepts are the lifeblood of practice.

I truly support Shinge Roko Chayat, along with Genjo Marinello, as they strive to provide principled leadership for the Zen Studies Society. But at last it is time for the ZSS board to step up to its responsibilities. I urge you to remove Eido Shimano Roshi from all positions of teaching and authority at ZSS immediately. He needs help. Strongly and skillfully, the board must make this clear to him. It is also essential for the board to let the wider Buddhist community know that you understand your responsibility to uphold the dharma. Please, no more half-truths, no more painful public idealizations of Eido. If you fail to take decisive and public action, as each successive board over the last thirty years has failed, then I fear for the future of Zen Studies Society, Shobo-ji, and Dai Bosatsu. Please take care of your community so the flame of dharma can at last burn clear and bright.

Sincerely,

Hozan Alan Senauke