

From Nonin Chowaney, Roshi

Joe Soun Dowling, ZSS Board President, and the Dai Bosatsu Zendo monks

I am writing in regard to the current situation at Zen Studies Society and Dai Bosatsu Zendo. I am a Zen Buddhist teacher and have known Roko Chayat, Shinge-roshi, for many years. I was much pleased and relieved to hear that she has been named your next abbot. I have the utmost confidence that she has the ability to guide your organization during and through these difficult times.

I have also known Genjo Marinello for quite some time. I have the utmost confidence in his ability, also, and I am hopeful that he can take a leading role on your Board of Directors.

I have been privately offering my support to Roko and Geno since the latest sexual scandal involving Eido-roshi broke a few months ago. I felt that the ZSS Board addressed the issue positively and productively, especially by engaging the services of the Faith/Trust Institute and following most of their recommendations. However, I was dismayed that Eido-roshi was still allowed to teach at your practice places. For if the allegations of his sexual misconduct and his abuse of authority are true, he should not be allowed to teach anywhere.

I was further dismayed to read the letter that Eido-roshi has written to the New York Times, for it shows that he is unrepentant and cancels out the letter of apology that he wrote earlier. His offenses have been ongoing, and if he is left in any position of any authority whatsoever, he presents an ongoing risk not only to students but also to ZSS and DBZ as a whole.

The general Zen Buddhist mahasangha in North America, Europe, and in Japan is quite aware of Eido-roshi's transgressions and has been for some time. Lately, as a result of the NY Times article and letter and increased activity on the internet, more Zen Buddhist practitioners and the general public at large have also become quite aware. If this situation is allowed to continue, the institutional integrity of ZSS, DBZ, and all of its affiliates will continue to be undermined and harmed, perhaps irreparably.

I ask that you please remove Eido-roshi from all positions of authority at ZSS and DBZ so that true healing can begin for all those who have suffered and are suffering and that Shinge-roshi, Genjo, and all others involved can get ZSS and DBZ pointed in the right direction, for the good of your sangha, for the mahasangha, and for the Zen Buddhist Dharma.

With hands palm-to-palm,

Rev Nonin Chowaney, Abbot, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple

Cc: American Zen Teachers Association listerv group