

From Barry Magid, Sensei

Dear Joe Soun Dowling, ZSS Board, and Dai Bosatsu monks:

In light of Eido Shimano's letter to the NY Times denying any cause and effect relation between the accusations of misconduct and his stepping down as Abbot, it is clear to me that he is unrepentant and heedless of the reactions of his fellow teachers of the wider Buddhist community. The burden of truth is now on the new Abbot and the Board not to permit a whitewashing of the history of ZSS to occur in the service of allowing Eido Shimano to save face and go gracefully into retirement.

In addition to making clear that Eido's misconduct is the direct cause of his stepping down, I would hope that both the Board and the new Abbot would now do what Eido Shimano has never done - take personal responsibility. This should include publicly acknowledging their own past reluctance to recognize the legitimacy of the charges repeatedly brought against their teacher by so many women and that their own failure to act has made them complicit in Eido's misconduct. Like the parent who refuses to recognize their partner or relative has been abusing their child, the Dai Bosatsu community - as well as the larger Zen Buddhist community of which I am a part - must accept that they have been "failed witnesses," guilty bystanders who through their own denial have enabled a pattern of abuse to continue unchecked.

I hope the new Abbot of Dai Bosatsu will give voice to her own personal and our collective sense of failure to have acted in a way that might have prevented so many women from being harmed in the name of the Dharma.

gassho

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