

1 January 2011

Mr. Joe Soun Dowling,
ZSS Board President
New York Zendo Shobo-Ji
223 East 67th Street
New York, NY, 10065

Dear Joe Soun:

On this first day of the new year, I want to take a few moments to write to you as the abbot of the Zen Center of Los Angeles. I offer bows of appreciation for the good news of the installation of Roshi Shinge as Abbot of ZSS and DBZ.

I am writing to voice my support for terminating Roshi Shimano's presence and teaching at the ZSS in light of his sexually predatory and unrepentant behavior. I urge the ZSS Board to boldly and courageously recognize that Roshi Shimano needs help and to find a course of treatment for him.

I urge you to facilitate the ongoing and thorough education of everyone at ZSS and DBZ on all facets of why this behavior has been so devastatingly harmful for the women involved and frankly, for everyone in your Sangha and the Maha Sangha, and why it is not to be tolerated in any way.

I urge you all to fearlessly stand in the fire of directly looking at the organizational-and-sangha-culture structures and behaviors that have protected this dynamic and enabled it to exist for far too many years. Perhaps this will be the most painful part, but I know, from my own experience, that when you stand in the fire and are unflinching in your investigation leaving no stone unturned, a path of liberation emerges and a vista comes into view for a deep and broad maturing in the Dharma.

I implore you to work tirelessly to take care of the people in your Sangha (including those long gone from your properties because they were harmed or could no longer bear to be part of your culture) in all the ways that Zen people, who hold close the vows to end suffering and the Great Vows of Bodhisattvas, are committed to do. Please do not fear losing buildings and grounds or even your organization at the expense of taking care of the Sangha treasure.

As the abbot of the Zen Center of Los Angeles for these past 12 years, I know first hand the effort that is involved in healing a Sangha and creating a viable Zen practice place that truly serves the wholeness of human beings.

Finally, I offer my support in whatever way it may be useful to Roshi Shinge, Genjo Osho, and yourself.

Hand to heart across the miles,

Wendy Egyoku Nakao, abbot
Zen Center of Los Angeles
Month of New Beginnings