

January 3, 2011

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

Dear Joe,

At an American Zen Teachers Association (AZTA) meeting in 1995, I met a woman who told me she was practicing with Eido-roshi. She also explained that, some years earlier, she and her husband stopped practicing with Eido-roshi when they learned of his egregious sexual relations with his female students. She went on to say, "But I went back to complete my training." I was surprised by how casually she admitted that she placed her personal ambitions above her ethical standards.

It has become apparent that too many of Eido-roshi's students felt the same way. Over the years, they continued to treat him as their spiritual teacher, while being aware of the harm he was creating for naive and vulnerable women. And by remaining silent, they encouraged his behavior.

In our daily lives, most of us make decisions we feel will be in our own best interests. It doesn't always work out, and problems arise, for a number of reasons, including: lack of information, mistaken assumptions, poor judgement, and emotional needs. But serious Zen students make their best effort to be mindful of the trap of self-orientation, guided instead by a world view that puts emphasis on the well-being of others, rather than on themselves. They aspire to live authentically, according to their true nature and to Buddhist teaching, which emphasizes a high morale standard in the conduct of daily affairs.

Eido-roshi's past behavior has now been exposed. And the notoriety can only increase in the coming months, due to media attention and social networking, such as Facebook and personal "blogs." The latter has already begun.

The ZSS board and Eido-roshi's long time students need to separate themselves completely from him, disavow themselves of his past actions, reach out to the women who have been harmed, and apologize for remaining silent. This is the only way you can start fresh and regain credibility.

Les Kaye (Keido),  
Abbot