

This is the full account of my experience with this matter: by Kensei Jim Spencer

One evening this past May, Shinge Roshi called the sangha together so that she could explain what was going on with Eido and stop the rumor train before it had a chance to get a full head of steam. She told us about the most recent incident with Eido Roshi and his student and told us that there had been other incidents in the past, but did not elaborate beyond that. She also told us that she and several other female residents of Dai Bosatsu Monastery, in 1975, were trading stories and discovered that they had all been sexually involved with Eido Roshi. Most of these women then abandoned him as a teacher and left the monastery.

Shinge Roshi then asked the sangha to speak if they were so inclined. All of the people that spoke professed support for Eido, saying that their individual experiences with him during sesshin were enough for them to be sure that he was "the real deal." Many people also spoke of their unending support of Shinge Roshi. Shinge Roshi was in tears by this point, and told the attendees that she knew that Eido Roshi was her true teacher because, "He has the True Dharma Eye" and is a "fully awakened individual."

I said nothing. I left that evening and did not return to sit with my Dharma brothers and sisters for five months. I was disturbed that someone could have the True Dharma Eye and do the things that he had done. In communications with fellow sangha members over the next few months, I questioned the validity of Transmission in these circumstances, the validity of my own Jukai... everything about Zen practice was shaken to the core. I became a heretic and was told by senior students and by the ordained that I should not question these things. There was even talk among senior students that his behavior with these women was a type of deep, mystical teaching that he was giving them that we were not yet able to fully understand.

Only one other sangha member that I knew of at that time voiced opposition and left the sangha. Shinge Roshi told the sangha not to sit outside of our zendo with those that had left the sangha. I did go back to sit twice in late October and one of these occasions was for dokusan. I said that I had a small insight into Eido's motivations, having some personal experience in matters of this type. I was immediately reprimanded and told that I couldn't possibly know where Eido Roshi was coming from on this, as I had phrased it, because he has The True Dharma Eye and dwells in the absolute, so causality is different in his case. It may be true that I don't know where he was coming from, but The True Dharma Eye isn't a free pass to hurt people.

I haven't returned since this dokusan experience. Having my teacher make excuses and justifications for his heinous behavior killed all enthusiasm for studying with Shinge Roshi.

A close friend and Dharma sister was working in the Dai Bosatsu office over New Years and commented on the great volume of correspondences from the Zen community world-wide, and how moving it was to know that there was so much support for our sangha

members. She was present when the most recent victim stood up during a meal and professed her love for Eido. She has told me that Eido is not giving up his fancy suite at the monastery, and that Shinge Roshi will be living in a regular monk's room when she is at Dai Bosatsu.

The good in all of this is that I have learned that my practice is not location-dependent. My practice at home has become stronger than it ever has been. I know that finding another teacher is the right thing to do. Fear of what others will think of me and my actions, the fear of losing close Dharma friends, of becoming the heretic again is very strong, but not unbreakable. Right action is rarely easy action, but it must be done.

With great respect,

Kensei Jim Spencer