

## Statement from CSSF (Committee for Sangha Stepping Forth)



This is a statement by sixteen former and current members of the ZSS Sangha who met together for a meeting on Sunday March 20, 2011, facilitated by [Grace Schireson](#) and [Barry Magid](#) (pictured).

While acknowledging the many positive and beneficial experiences of practice we have taken a first step toward healing from fifty years of trauma caused by misconduct by Eido Shimano and have begun the process of recognizing and assessing our own sense of responsibility for the silence and inaction that allowed this to continue for so long.

We all shared our love for Zen practice and the acute sense of pain and loss of community. We wish to extend our compassion to all those who have suffered and were deeply damaged by this ongoing trauma.

Some of the topics we explored during the day were:

- The difference between submission and surrender
- The mystery of enlightenment coinciding with misconduct
- The mystique and idealization of a teacher and practice
- What fantasies might have brought us to Zen practice and how we might better activate our bullshit detectors in the future
- Power dynamics
- Sexual dynamics in unequal power situations
- Spiritual bypassing – when our practice disconnects us from our emotional life and psychological needs

We expressed concern about how the process of reconstruction of the ZSS will unfold and the need for a democratic Sangha-driven process moving forward that is not principally controlled by the existing hierarchy.

All of us who participated feel that we benefitted a great deal from discussing these issues openly and honestly. And we invite others to join us in the next meeting, date to be determined.

We ask the greater Buddhist community for its continuing support and compassion as we move through this painful process.

Participants of the Sangha Stepping Forth Meeting

Our website: <http://sanghasteppingforth.com>

For questions or comments you can email us at: [cssf@sanghasteppingforth.com](mailto:cssf@sanghasteppingforth.com)