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Subject: journal entry 1976
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Kobutsu -- The following is, I hope, relatively self explanatory. I have not changed anything including the names, which you may feel the need to be redact. You have my permission to post it in the Shimanoarchive if you choose.

adam

On Friday, Dec., 12, 1975, there was a closing ceremony held at Sho Bo Ji temple in New York. The ceremony, marked in the past by the acceptance of provisional students as full-fledged members, was top-heavy with an unspoken concern about Eido Shimano's lately-revealed liaisons with and mistreatment of female students. The provisional students got scant notice. Noting the month-long closure, Shimano let it be known that none of us should consort with each other during the break. Previously it had been announced that all members would no longer be members but would have to reapply for membership before returning to the zendo in January. The atmosphere around the zendo was full of confused, wounded and angry consultation and speculation. During the break, there was even talk of finding a way to throw Shimano out.

On Jan. 8, 1976, a postcard was sent from the zendo. It read:

Dear Sangha Member,

New York Zendo, Shoboji, will reopen for regular zazen meetings on Wednesday evening, January 14th. Doors open at 6 p.m. Soen Roshi will perform at Great Purification ceremony. All members, without exception, are invited to return.

Gassho, [no signature]

Rohatsu sesshin will be held at Daibosatsu Zendo, Kongoji, January 17 - 25, Apply directly: (914) 439-4566

The following journal entry, dated Thursday, Jan. 15, 1976, is offered not so much for its depiction of the fiery and tear-stained tableau that had preceded it, but rather for its small reminders of all the difficulties and machinations and anger and confusion that would follow in the decades ahead. At that time, many of us fervently hoped that Eido Shimano's lying and manipulations might somehow be 'solved.' Our hopes, as the future proved over and over again,

were misplaced. Obviously, what follows is just one, somewhat disjointed, point of view.

Thursday, Jan. 15, 1976

The "Great Purification" at last night's reopening of the zendo was nothing particular. Elihu Smith sat at the mokugyo, but never struck a beat. The place was jammed again, but with a lot of old-timers one seldom sees. "Probably they got cards and wonder what was going on," HWE speculated.

ER [Eido Roshi] talked first. His tone at first was apologetic, though he never said "I'm sorry" aloud. The "matter" had caused dissention. The "matter" had diverted some from the practice of zazen, the central importance at the zendo. Just this morning he had been able to talk to Soen Roshi for 2 or 3 hours and clarify many issues. He said some of the stories were "not true." He said that some facets of "the matter" were "quite frankly none of your business." He said he would be away more in future -- at Dai Bosatsu. He said he was leaving matters at Sho Bo Ji to Sylvan, Jochi, Margot Wilkie, Dogo and Wado. -- "though of course, I am still abbot and will be consulted on larger problems." He implied he and Aiho were airing issues a little.

Soen Rosh spoke, beginning with "togetherness." He said he'd been to Calif. with Soshu, Bruce Williams, to sesshin in a Vietnamese temple. He asked us to chant Namu Dai Bosa clapping hands. He said there was a 'bosats,' "the almighty," in each of us and there was also a devil ... I forget the word. He said he had both too. We were students and each of us was master of the world.

When ER said he'd go away and leave Sho Bo Ji in our hands -- "take good care of your zendo!" -- I felt a great relief. Yes, I thought, if he will go away, we will be able to sit less his interruptions. It seemed a fine solution, a middle ground in which sangha was preserved.

Later at Kasey's [a diner up the street from Sho Bo Ji], Pete did not agree. "I've seen him do it before. He hasn't given up a thing." Carlos said he wanted a teacher. Bernie Schwartzburg said it was a problem, treating someone as god, then seeing him, the god, tumble. Yes, I said, but that's human nature.

For me, the crux of the difficulty lies in this area. Sangha is important. Teacher is important. If ER goes away, who will teach? For me, the question is not so bothersome: Better sangha than this teacher. But for others, I can imagine this in not so. If ER really went away, say back to Japan, then maybe we could prevail on one of the free-lance or traveling roshis -- Sasaki maybe -- to come now and then. ER isn't around much anyhow.

At Kasey's, HWE said she thought she had to let the karma unwind -- go until it was time to

leave. Yes.

For me, to say that ER is a punk apple in the bucket does not address itself to the question of sangha. If I dismiss ER as 'teacher,' I cannot simultaneously dismiss the sangha. It is in this respect that I feel I must keep going -- until the question of my attachment to sangha is resolved.

Cleve Stewart (d?) left. Back to Montana.

Saw Bruce Williams. He's unsure if he'll travel with Soen or not. "I probably won't know until 24 hours before," he said.

This morning, Pete was in high dudgeon. I called to say that if someone really wanted to know corporate structure, it should be public record.

He felt ER had sowed confusion by saying some of the stories weren't true. "People just hearing about it for the first time will probably dismiss it all," he said. (Jean Bankier commented last night that if some of the stories were untrue, some were true.) Pete felt ER had given up nothing. He was also angry with Soen. "He just talked to him (ER) yesterday when he promised to do it two months ago. He said that if ER didn't confess everything he (ER) wasn't a man. Now he talks about California sesshin. Who cares about sesshin?! It's irrelevant. It doesn't address itself to the issue at all!"

Anger.

At Kasey's last night, I looked around the table. For the moment, everyone was silent. "We're all back where we were," I said, "everyone figuring out for himself what he wants to do."

"It doesn't clear the air at all," Pete went on today. "Nothing's really resolved."

Looking back at those faces, I think he's right. The top of the boil was scratched, a move to bring a reaction, but the pus has not yet flowed.

Last night, before the meeting, Sylvan asked if I'd be doorman tonight, Thursday.

"Yes," I said.