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**To:** kobutsu@engaged-zen.org

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Aug. 14, 2011

Kobutsu -- Appended below, please find a copy of a post I just made to the "Eido Tai Shimano (continued)" blog (<http://genkaku-again.blogspot.com/2011/02/eido-tai-shimano-continued.html>). It consists of my far-from-seamless reasoning for wishing to be disassociated from the Aug. 26-28 meeting planned at Dai Bosatsu Zendo under the auspices of Zen Studies Society.

Besides that reasoning, the post also contains an email I sent to Katheryn Wiedman, one of the moderators from An Olive Branch who will help 'facilitate' the upcoming meeting.

I thought you might want to attach all this to the shimanoarchive.

adam

Dear Friends -- For all I know, the future of Zen in America is destined to be little more than a squishy circle-jerk. I honestly don't know but I do know that such a destiny, if true, leaves me sad ... and a bit cranky.

In the lead-up to the Aug. 26-28 meeting planned at Dai Bosatsu, I and others have been in contact with members of An Olive Branch, the agency hired by Zen Studies Society to help 'facilitate' that meeting. Since I cannot be at that meeting, I had thought such contact was a hopeful sign that serious/multiple points of view about the difficulties at ZSS would be considered. My contacts were pleasant, if dutifully non-committal.

But a little at a time, as the brief of An Olive Branch grew clearer in my mind, I came to regret my participation. As I understand it, there is to be no recording of the meeting, no after-action report except that which ZSS may choose to cherry-pick, and An Olive Branch sees its role as purely one of 'facilitator' -- a 'facilitator' unwilling to inform itself of a decades-long history (and who could blame them?) ZSS will have to do the actual work, I was told. And what is not resolved during the Aug. 26-28 meeting in a venue that does not favor open discussion by a wider constituency can easily be addressed at "future meetings," I was told.

The Faith Trust Institute made very specific recommendations in the past -- recommendations that went largely ignored by ZSS. The Aug. 26-28 meeting is thus a "future meeting." And I suspect its outcome and fruit will be much the same as that which befell the Faith Trust recommendations ... little or no transparency, little or no straight-forward addressing of honest issues ... just a mad, if 'compassionate,' scramble to preserve and maintain the organization and property under ZSS control. However ill-founded my suspicions may be, still I suspect the intentions of the Aug. 26-28 meeting and prefer not to think that a compromised organization might represent my opinions at that meeting.

For that reason, I have written to An Olive Branch and asked them to keep my name and the views I hold out of any presentation they might choose to make at DBZ. I am appending the letter I wrote below not because I think I'm 'right' but because I think transparency (however badly expressed) is better than the whispering and gossiping that is one of the hallmarks of Buddhism in America. I realize that those taking part in the meeting

may consider such a withdrawal the action of a spoilsport, someone who could not see the matter through. No doubt they will find a 'compassionate' way to paper such a withdrawal over and claim the high ground. Certainly this is their right, but I do think that ZSS is on-course to commit suicide with its inability and unwillingness to face issues squarely. Frankly, I do not want to add my voice to a squishy blood-letting and needless demise.

Anyway, please excuse this lengthy note. I am not trying to justify what I have done. I just feel that transparency -- even when wrong-headed and badly formed -- is better than the alternative.

"Dear Katheryn -- After reflecting for several days in the wake of our communications and after becoming somewhat better informed of the brief and intentions of An Olive Branch members at the Aug. 26-28 meeting at Dai Bosatsu, I would like to request that you keep my name and the ideas I expressed freely to you out of the weekend discussions.

I can live with the notion that if I were present at the meeting, my ideas might be set aside or dismissed. But I would prefer not to have them presented in a manner that would allow those addressing those ideas to gloss them over in a make-nice 'healing' hug.

I can appreciate that An Olive Branch would not want to involve itself in a long, intricate and distasteful history. An Olive Branch was hired, as I understand it, by Zen Studies Society and so if Zen Studies Society feels that reunification without honest and transparent examination is the job at hand, well, that's their choice. I can well imagine that ZSS would not see (or at least present) things in this way. From my point of view, any unpalatable or difficult matters that might be brought to the fore ... well, if you can't solve it with a group hug, there's the escape hatch of "future meetings." Right ... first the Faith Trust Institute whose suggestions were pointedly not adopted; and now An Olive Branch.

Obviously, this is just my point of view. I would prefer it if you shared neither it nor my name nor any of my ideas at the meeting. As I say, I am sorry I cannot be present in person, but since I cannot, I would prefer, assuming my ideas were put forth at all, that the agency reporting them were less, through no particular fault of its own, compromised.

Thank you for honoring my request."

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