

Toronto, August 17th 2011

The Zen Studies Society
c/o Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji
223 Beecher Lake Road
Livingston Manor, NY 12758
U.S.A.

Dear Society,

Further to my letter to you dated September 4th 2010, and to the recent appeal by Ms. Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi, Abbot for submissions to the upcoming facilitated meeting at your monastery, here is my opinion on the current Shimano situation. I would appreciate it if you could read this letter aloud at the meeting and enter it into the minutes.

To move straight to the point, I no longer find the situation unfathomable. Though I still cannot imagine any other charitable organization continuing to associate with a man such as Eido Shimano, I have recently begun to make sense of your handling of the scandal. In particular, the revelation that apparently sixty students have pleaded for Shimano's return to teaching has made it clear to me that the Zen Studies Society is no longer entirely composed of emotionally healthy people.

On the contrary, please consider the possibility that, over the course of his tenure as abbot, Eido Shimano has been able to corrupt his remaining students into becoming pathologically dependent on him and his teachings. Indeed, though Zen is ostensibly a practice of personal emancipation, Shimano's devotees are evidently willing to reconcile his transgressions with their consciences in order to ensure that he will remain in their lives for as long as possible - even at the expense of the greater good, e.g. restitution for his many victims. Since both the Society and Ms. Chayat Roshi still have not, even one year later, been able to squarely address his wrongdoing by name, let alone issue a formal apology, some irrational element must be involved. Whether this stems from some pseudo-Buddhist teaching of "not dwelling in the past", gratitude for any perceived good Shimano may otherwise have done, or some other dependency is irrelevant. The point is that a pathological situation has come into being which no amount of discussion, however well-intentioned or expertly mediated, will remedy.

As a result, instead of continuing with your current plans, I urge you to consult with an authority on cults and other irrational religious groups immediately. I believe that until this is done and corresponding recommendations implemented - presumably including the removal of long-time Shimano followers from positions of leadership - the Zen Studies Society cannot be considered a legitimate place for spiritual development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher Hamacher". The ink is dark and the writing is fluid, with some loops and flourishes.

Christopher Hamacher