

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: A Letter For Shinge Roshi From DaiAn For August 26-28 Discussion
Date: August 25, 2011 10:44:46 PM EDT
To: kobutsu.malone@gmail.com

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From: [REDACTED]
Date: Thu, Aug 25, 2011 at 10:41 PM
Subject: A Letter For Shinge Roshi From DaiAn For August 26-28 Discussion
To: Barbara Gray <b9g@psu.edu>, Katie Wiedman <kdw@centerpointinstitute.com>

DaiAn *

August 25, 2011

Shinge Roshi
c/o An Olive Branch

Dear Shinge Roshi:

I write in response to your recent announcements inviting those of us who have been a part of the Zen Studies Society and associated sanghas to provide input for your discussion on August 26-28.

Since I have been unable to return to the Zen Center of Syracuse after learning of Eido Shimano's long history of misconduct, and because I am not a direct victim of his abuse, I am not entirely certain whether my input is invited or relevant. One might ask, how is it my place to comment on these matters? After much thought, I have concluded that as a survivor myself, and as a long-time legal advocate for the abused,

"I cannot sit idly by in [Syracuse] and not be concerned about what happens in [Dai Bosatsu Zendo]. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Given the courage shown by people such as Kobutsu, Genkaku, Genjo Osho, "Olivia" and our own brother Kensei, how can I remain silent? I am here. Injustice is here. So, I must speak in solidarity with those who have been harmed directly by Eido Shimano,

as well as with those who have been shunned for speaking out against the grossly inadequate leadership response to his misconduct.

As you will recall, the specifics behind my leaving the ZCS, given its continuing association with Eido Shimano, are described in my January 5, 2011 letters to you and to the Zen Center of Syracuse Board of Trustees. In response to my letters, I did receive an apology, but was asked to keep it private while the Zen Studies Society Board of Trustees completed its difficult deliberations concerning Eido Roshi. I did honor that request. But in all of these months since then, that same apology has never been extended to those directly harmed by Eido Shimano. Furthermore, it appears that Shimano has been allowed to retire "with honor", and continues to be allowed access to and influence over the Zen Studies Society and its affiliates. Since these concerns have not been addressed, I believe that the risk of further harm to unsuspecting vulnerable people continues to be great.

Through all of this, I experienced a tremendous loss from not being able to return to the Zen Center of Syracuse. Like Dai Bosatsu Zendo, it is a very beautiful place in its own special way, and I have missed it. I spent many happy moments sitting there with the sangha. I was invited in, trusting in explicit assurances that my vulnerabilities and sensitivities as a survivor and advocate were understood and respected. I felt that I had at last found a safe haven. It was therefore the last place where I expected to find that its guiding teacher is a sexual predator. The continuation by the ZCS of its relationship with Shimano felt like a denial of the kind of suffering caused by him and those like him.

While in a state of shock after learning of Eido Shimano's history and the ZCS' continuing relationship with him, I knew that I could not stay at the Zen Center of Syracuse. One Sunday in the Spring on 2010, I entered the zendo, removed my robe and rokusu from their "special hanger" (an inside joke) and put them on for service one last time. I chanted my heart out, while catching glimpses of my beloved sangha. After the chanting had ended, I left the zendo along with my Dharma brothers and sisters, and then walked slowly down the driveway and across the street to my car. I sat there and watched as the zendo filled again and the door was closed shut for zazen (crying my eyes out). I never have been able to return, and it has taken a long time to find adequate words to express how the ripple of Shimano's unchecked misconduct effected me.

Although I believe it is too late for me to return (my practice has now taken a different path), I do hope that the Zen Studies Society and the Zen Center of Syracuse will be able to take the steps needed to become places where people like me can feel safe and supported. To accomplish this, I believe that the Zen Studies Society and the Zen Center of Syracuse need to completely disassociate themselves from Eido Shimano and also take the following steps:

Those who ZSS and ZCS would take on as students should be affirmatively and completely advised of the history of the "Shimano lineage", especially the misconduct of Eido Shimano;

All survivors of Eido Shimano's misconduct, including those harmed directly and indirectly, should be given a safe and appropriate opportunity to be heard by a completely neutral body, *outside of Zen Studies Society premises*. Then, at the very least, they should receive a detailed written apology from both Eido Shimano and those in leadership who disregarded the possibility that that his harmful behavior might continue;

Those heirs who would continue to teach should themselves refresh their training under another teacher; and

Eido Shimano's honorific as "Retiring Abbott"; his retirement package in lieu of compensation for his victims; and his presence and influence at the ZSS and its affiliates should all come completely and abruptly to an end.

Please receive my best wishes for a meaningful discussion that will lead to real action to benefit those who have been harmed by Eido Shimano.

Let True Dharma Continue!

DaiAn

* I trust that this letter will be shared under my Dharma name only, since the use of my full name could result in harm to innocents who are still living.