



Genjo

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Shodo wrote:

I don't know if anyone has seen this yet... A letter from Lawrence Shainberg to Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...Chayat.pdf>



Sept. 5, 2011

Dear Shinge Roshi,

I know that, since I've not been a member of ZSS, I may not be completely qualified to offer my observations on the crisis faced by the organization now, but as a member of the Ethics Committee, ... **it seems to me that ZSS owes it to these students to make possible continuation of their practice in any framework they choose. ... I know there are those who will be enraged at this proposal but to me it seems inarguable.**

Respectfully/Lawrence Shainberg

I'm starting to see where this is all sadly headed. ☹

Recently I had the good pleasure to read the "Informational Paper" (<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...Paper.pdf>) presented to the Zen Studies Society (ZSS) at the all Sangha Meeting held August 26-28, by Rev. Kyoki Roberts, the lead facilitator from an Olive Branch. The paper starts out by going over the fact that thirteen states, but not New York, have enacted long overdue statutes making Sexual Conduct by Clergy a felony. By these enlightened standards my own Dharma Father would probably be behind bars after his very likely conviction(s) if subject to these laws honoring basic ground rules of ethical decency. And yet he is still allowed on campus, and at times shows up when Shinge Roshi, his successor, is not present, and apparently everyone acts like nothing has changed. Of course those present find it very disorienting to say the least. I find this totally unacceptable, and again call for the ZSS Board to insist that Eido Roshi be banned indefinitely from ZSS property. Here is a man who by a reasonable estimate not only seduced and slept with dozens of vulnerable students under his spiritual care over the course of decades, but also plied some with alcoholic libations and forced himself on them. There is a first hand account of a senior student of Eido Roshi's on the blogs that confirms just such an act. Many may not know who this student is, as she wishes to remain anonymous, but I have a good idea whom this is, and knowing this person, I totally accept her account as completely credible.

The "Informational Paper" goes on to say that resources need to be devoted to "educate your Sangha on prevention of misconduct and the abuse of power within a Sangha. Get training in communication, conflict resolution and family systems... You may want to create a task force to oversee and plan the events, education, and training that your community will need to re-create itself." In addition, the paper calls for the board to address "structural issues" such as membership and board representation that just may help prevent future excessive abuses of power and authority centered on one person. The paper notes that there are "victims of sexual misconduct who need your support" and a Sangha that is "desperately trying to figure out what to do."

I ask where in Shinge Roshi's letter to the ZSS Sangha summarizing her response to the Sangha Meeting (also posted on this page of this forum) does she move forward on these essential points presented by Rev. Kyoki Roberts? Instead of committing the organization to structural reforms that would decentralize power by making the organization membership based with a primarily elected board, we hear about how there is going to be a "review and revision of our by-laws to rationalize our governance decisions". Moreover, we read how new unnamed board members are being essentially appointed to board positions vacated by those who demanded more from this organization than it seems capable of giving. Since June of last year, five board members have resigned because more was not being done. Where is any kind of commitment to "educate your Sangha on prevention of misconduct and the abuse of power with the Sangha"? Where is the needed support for the many victims of sexual misconduct perpetrated by the founding abbot and serially minimized and inadequately addressed by previous ZSS boards?

At one point, the "Informational Paper" says, "For much of this past year Eido has been trying to figure a way back into teaching. That is exactly what he has managed to do before... This time it didn't work and on July 2nd he stated,... 'I will stop doing dokusan and giving teisho in a forma way'... With these words, Eido finished teaching and working with students." However, I have in my possession an email from Eido Roshi, addressed to the ZSS Board President and copied to other board members including myself dated July 5th, asking to be allowed to lead zazen at New York Zendo, teach Zen classics in a classroom format, stating, "Thus, everyone will have the opportunity to share the enthusiasm while I am still able to teach. And when the time comes, I will send them to DBZ and they will start (like Freshman) their zazen training." My fellow members of the ZSS Board insisted that this letter was an aberration of a desperate man. They said it should not be released because it would be confusing, embarrassing, and further damage his reputation. How is that possible? I resigned from the board because after the Board received this letter exposing Eido Roshi's sham of stepping down from all teaching, the majority of the ZSS Board, including the Board president and current abbot were not willing to insist on even a moderate hiatus of Eido Roshi's presence on ZSS property. I should have released the letter earlier, though I did not cover it up and publicly spoke of its content. Here is a redacted (email addresses removed) copy: <http://www.choboji.org/Transcript.pdf>

Moreover, as late as Sept. 5th of this year, a proposal by Lawrence Shainberg, who is unbelievably to me still on the current ZSS ethics committee, seriously suggests that Eido Roshi's supporters be given the opportunity to buy the New York Zendo - Shobo-Ji, so that Eido Roshi could continue to teach there! No one can stop him from teaching if there are enough fanatics to make that happen, but for Buddha's sake I'm glad to report the ZSS Board will not entertain this absurd but well stated argument that is also printed on this page of this forum. The point is there is no way Eido Roshi is not behind these attempts to find new venues to continue teaching and the least the ZSS Board can do is definitively restrict him from all further access to ZSS property. How can the Sangha hope to regain a solid footing while he remains present? Sadly, the founding abbot has almost no awareness of his crimes or the harm that he has done. More sadly to me, the current abbot still supports his presence on campus and doesn't appear to understand that much more needs to be done to foster real healing within the ZSS Sangha.

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<http://www.choboji.org>