



Genjo

Posts: 58

Joined: Mon Aug 30, 2010 5:57 pm

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antispam: No

Re: Letter to Shinge Roshi

by [Genjo](#) on Thu Nov 10, 2011 6:57 pm

Nonin wrote:

I fully support Shinge Chayat, and have done so both publicly and privately. She's under an incredible amount of pressure right now as she tries to guide ZSS in a positive direction and is doing her best under difficult circumstances to satisfy a variety of sangha interests as she tries to steer ZSS back on course. This takes time, and she deserves the time to right the organization without having to weather a shitstorm of animosity directed toward her personally and without having her character assassinated by disgruntled and vicious outside sources.

It is certainly true that Shinge Chayat Roshi is under an incredible amount of pressure as she tries to balance a variety of sangha interests to steer ZSS back on course. I also agree that the "shitstorm of animosity" currently directed towards her personally is more than unfortunate, it is mean spirited and antithetical to my understanding of Buddhism. However, I do understand the frustration shared by many and I too am forced to conclude that there is an unhealthy attachment and some enabling going on in the current governance of ZSS. Please remember that five ZSS board members, all hand picked by Eido Roshi himself, have left the organization since July 2009 when the most recent ethical breach came to light. All five, including myself, left because we were not satisfied with the pace of change. I believe Shinge Roko Chayat cannot admit to herself that her beloved teacher repeatedly sexually preyed on vulnerable female students under his direct spiritual care (which is why she still refers to these events as "affairs") and repeatedly abused his rank and position in many ways during his tenure as abbot. If she could admit this to herself then in my mind there would be no way he would still be allowed on campus during this time of transition and there would be no way that one room is still reserved for him on each campus. I can only guess she is waiting for this "shitstorm" to quite down so that she can invite him back as a grandfatherly figure to work openly and freely at his translation work on both campuses and perhaps even engage in a light teaching schedule, as he has made it plain he wants to do.

It is my understanding that the current ZSS Board is still negotiating the terms of an extravagant Deferred Compensation Agreement (DCA) that was rubber stamped by a previous ZSS Board, another clear example of Eido Roshi's abuse of power and authority. This 1955 agreement agrees to pay all costs associated with living in his condo on the Upper East Side, pay 70% of the Shimanos' annual salaries with a 4% annual cost of living adjustment and cover health insurance. This means that since Eido Roshi's and Aiho-san's (Eido Roshi's wife and former Shobo-Ji Director) retirement, they have been paid well in excess twice the salary each month Shinge Roshi herself receives. I don't know, but under the circumstances this just seems absurd and borders on obscene. In hindsight, I believe they both should have been fired for cause thereby negating these agreements and allowing the ailing society to reach a reasonable settlement. I have no wish to throw Eido Roshi or Aiho-san out on the street, but I see no reason to coddle them either. Stronger leadership would have insisted that the 1995 DCA be scrapped and would have been willing to go to court to fight it rather than give in to this excessive agreement forced down the throat of a mostly unconscious rubber stamp board.

If Shinge Roshi could get past her attachment to the man, and her own fears of losing legitimacy, power and authority, I believe she could lead the organization to a healthy future, but in my mind she is still acting like a casualty of Eido Roshi's charisma and powers of persuasion. I too have been under this spell in the past, and feel fortunate to be free of it. If the organization doesn't more substantially and honestly admit and learn from its past, I fear there will be no future for the Zen Studies Society, and this in my mind would be a tragedy beyond measure. Time for change is slipping away, without a bold shift in direction, I fear this organization will lose any legitimacy as a place to nurture the awakened heart/mind.

With palms together,

Genjo

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