

SWEEPINGZEN

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A Step Backwards by Genjo Marinello

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On May 23rd I wrote Shinge Roshi, Eido Roshi's successor, the following simple questions. I have others, but I thought I would start with some easy ones:

"Are you willing to say who exactly sits on the ZSS [Zen Studies Society] board at this time? I understand there have been at least two additions since I left. Were they elected or nominated? Has anyone else dropped off? How is the forensic audit coming? Any date in mind when it will be completed? Have the new bylaws been formally adopted yet? If so, may I have a copy, I think bylaws are designed to be a public document." Shinge Roshi passed this off to Soun Joe Dowling, the ZSS Board President, to respond. To date nothing has been forthcoming.

I just read in a June 4th, 2012 email from ZSS:

"Zensho Martin Hara has been a Rinzai Zen student under the guidance of Ven. Eido Shimano Roshi of the Zen Studies Society since 1979. For 33 years since then, he attended many sesshins at both Dai Bosatsu Zendo and New York Zendo Shobo-Ji, especially the observance of O Bon and Rohatsu which he attends each year. He was given the Dharma name Zensho in 1992, meaning 'Fully Alive'. In 2010, Zensho was chosen to serve on the Executive Committee at NY Zendo Shobo-Ji as a representative member of the Sangha. He was also chosen by Eido Roshi to serve as his personal secretary since his retirement in 2010. Zensho's Dharma talk 'The Heart of Being Alive' will share his early experiences as a Dharma Student, and how Rinzai Zen practice opened up his access to being 'fully alive' in the contemporary world today."

There is no question in my mind that Martin Hara, one of Eido Shimano Roshi's staunchest supporters (who is now on the NYC Zendo Shobo-Ji Executive Committee) is a bad sign. He is a lovely person and I like him a lot, but the selection of someone who, to my knowledge, has always adamantly supported Eido Roshi's efforts to continue to teach students, represents the opposite direction of where I hoped the organization was going. This just confirms that the organization, under Shinge Roshi's leadership, still has not come to terms with the depth of the damage done, is still unable to acknowledge the organization's part in this, and will be unable to reach out in any meaningful way to those who have been most harmed or alienated.

I recently read the following quote in the [[url=http://nconline.org/news/accountability/hierarchys-inability-mourn-thwarts-healing-church](http://nconline.org/news/accountability/hierarchys-inability-mourn-thwarts-healing-church)]National Catholic Reporter[[url](#)] that speaks to the opportunity that is being lost:

"When a large group's identity is threatened and power is lost, the healthy group will mourn before reworking their sense of self to accord with a new reality. When mourning goes well, there is a cleansing of mind, spirit, and psyche to go on after loss; to reconstitute self, relationships with others, hopes, dreams and beliefs in a renegotiated engagement with the real and the possible. There is self-examination about our own contribution to the control we are losing, perhaps ending in a rueful recognition that we never should have had that much control. The crisis of mourning well done can morph into a kairos leading to deeper connection with self, others and the Divine.

When mourning is refused, however, we may deny that loss is permanent and instead manically try to restore that which is forever changed. Nostalgia, memory's rose-colored cousin, rules the mind and soul. In some cases, we select someone or something defined now as "Other" onto whom we direct rage for "causing" our loss of power and control even if our own behaviors actually ushered in the loss. Mourning is submerged beneath rage and exclusivity — we are OK, they are not; the badness is out there while goodness and heroism is within."

Unfortunately, the course set by Shinge Roshi for the Zen Studies Society, sounds eerily familiar. Clearly there has been insufficient self-examination about the extent of the organization's missteps that allowed Eido Shimano Roshi to groom female students to feed his sexual appetite for decades, occasionally plying female students with alcohol and committing date rape to have his way. Moreover, I have personally felt what it is like to be the subject of attacks and misrepresentations of my motives and character by the faithful. With the selection of Zensho Martin Hara to be on the Executive Committee, I am losing all hope that the organization can turn around in any meaningful way.

Sadly,

Genjo