

From: **Merry Benezra** <[merrybenezra@gmail.com](mailto:merrybenezra@gmail.com)>  
Date: Fri, Feb 8, 2013 at 7:15 PM  
Subject: Response to Dear Sangha and Dharma Friends letter  
To: [roko@hoenji.org](mailto:roko@hoenji.org)

February 8, 2013

Roko Sherry Chayat  
New York Zendo Shobo-ji  
223 East 67th Street  
New York, NY 10065

Sherry,

I was a resident at Dai Bosatsu Zendo from July 1976 (including the opening kessei) to February 1977, and again from January to September 1978. My experiences with Eido Shimano are novelized and recorded in my book, *Special Karma*, a book I hope you will have a chance to read.

I have been following the unresolved scandals caused by Eido with some interest; in fact, it was the *New York Times* article in July 2010 that caused me to put my book into publishable form and get it out into the world.

The opening kessei in September 1976 followed on the heels of the "Fuck Follies" of Christmas 1975, in which Eido lost many students and swore to keep his hands off any new students he might teach, were he allowed to stay on. Based on this promise, the ZSS Board of Directors allowed him to continue as the spiritual leader of NY Zendo and Dai Bosatsu.

Yet, when I arrived at DBZ a mere six months later in July 1976, Eido was sexually involved with a resident student, Sxxxxx Jxxxxx Lxxxxx. By September, he was relentlessly propositioning me (the subject of my book). When I returned to DBZ in January 1978, he was sexually exploiting three new resident students. So much for the useless promises of a sexual addict.

And it is my understanding that the Board was made aware of Eido's ongoing sexual activities and lies around this time. Inexplicably, the Board permitted him to continue.

I am writing to take exception with the ZSS Board's recent *Dear Sangha and Dharma Friends* letter, which you co-signed and which says, "**we do remain grateful for [Eido's] visionary work in founding New York Zendo and Dai Bosatsu Zendo and for his five decades of inspiring teaching**" and therefore "**wanted to provide appropriate care for our teacher and his wife, Aiho Yasuko Shimano, after their retirement.**"

Eido's nonstop sexual predations over decades and decades have caused harm that cannot be counted. Harm to the women he lied to and abandoned and slandered after enjoying them, and harm to the cause of Buddhism in America. This man does not have anything owed to him. Can it possibly be that his ZSS contract does not have certain provisions, exceptions for fraudulent misrepresentation on his part?

Shouldn't "inspiring teaching" be available to sincere students of Buddhism without the rest of it—the sexual wheedling, the astonishment at being dumped by an enlightened being, the excruciating outcome of being labeled mentally ill if one speaks up?

Will you sell off Dai Bosatsu, turn it into an upscale spa with vegetarian nouvelle cuisine, to ensure that an unrepentant sexual predator has a nice retirement?

Don't his victims deserve more peace of mind than this? Reparations? Do you have a sense of justice?

And does it not strike you as somewhat ironic and telling that our Zen master, someone we were supposed to believe had gone beyond distinctions and preferences, needs \$2 million to continue his wretched existence?

To be very frank, the behavior of the Zen Studies Board has, for so many years, struck me as a kind of cult. I don't know you personally, but I must say that your active participation in this game of imagining the emperor has clothes is disheartening, and it strikes me as destructive to the cause of Dharma in America.

Merry White Benezra (Nennen)  
1926 Gamel Way, #3  
Mountain View, CA 94040  
[merrybenzra@gmail.com](mailto:merrybenzra@gmail.com)  
<http://specialkarma.wordpress.com>