

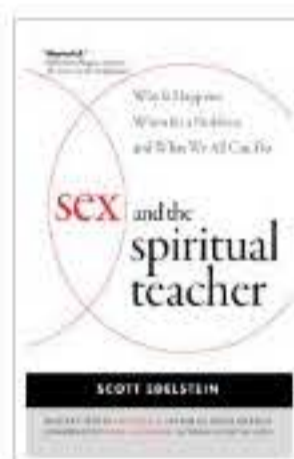


Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat at the Sanmon Gate Ceremony with Eido Tai Shimano in August 2012.

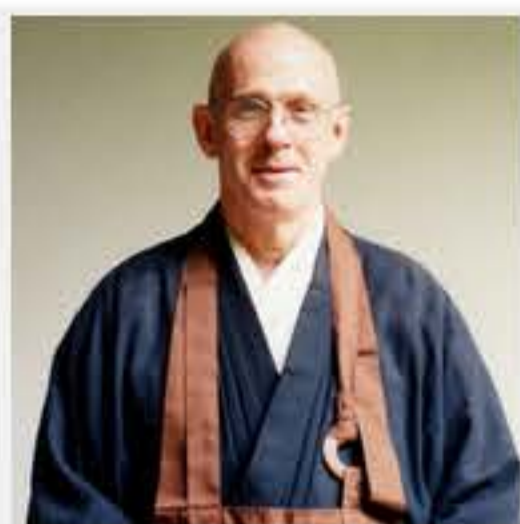
ENABLING BY GENJO MARINELLO

Posted by: Genjo Marinello January 25, 2014 Leave a comment

I've just returned from leading sesshin at the Blue Mountain Zendo in Allentown, PA. This zendo closely follows the form and ritual of Zen training I recall from doing thirty plus sesshins at Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) the monastery in the Catskills run by the Zen Studies Society (ZSS). The practice at Blue Mountain Zendo is strong, sincere and openhearted and attracts many Dharma "orphans" who once trained at DBZ. At the conclusion of this sesshin there was a ceremony where I affirmed Joriki Baker, who started the group, as a full temple priest. During this and every sesshin that I lead I offer dokusan (one on one Dharma dialogue). In dokusan, I'm reminded of just how intimate and deep the relationship can be between so called student and teacher and what a severe betrayal of trust it would be to in anyway take advantage or manipulate a student for my own selfish purposes. I very well understand that if the manipulation included sexualizing the student in some way it would be a violation tantamount to incest.



Including Joriki and myself there are many other ordained and lay sangha members from around the nation who no longer feel comfortable training at DBZ. Of course it was principally Eido Shimano "Roshi," who has multiple times been disgraced for preying sexually on female sangha members for decades and otherwise abusing his power and authority, who founded this organization. The latest wave of sangha members to leave came about when it was revealed in May 2010 that Shimano had been caught once again with his pants down. I was on the ZSS board and head of the ZSS Ethics committee at that time, and immediately asked Eido Roshi to resign from the board while the most recent transgression was investigated. Eventually, I was the last of five ZSS board members to leave the organization because of continued excuses, allowances and out right enabling provided to Shimano by the remaining ZSS board led by Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat. To be fair it seems much has been done to change the atmosphere of practice at ZSS for the better, there was one organized attempt made to listen to those harmed and disheartened, and Eido Shimano is no longer welcome to teach at the ZSS. Yet, in my mind, not nearly enough has been done to listen and respond to those harmed and alienated. Furthermore, as late as August 2012, Eido Shimano, who Shinge privately calls a "manipulative sociopath," was invited to DBZ as an honored guest to help lead the "Sanmon Gate Ceremony."



Zenrin R. Lewis

Moreover, the most recent issue, January 2014, of the ZSS newsletter features a lead article by Eido Shimano's newly elevated Dharma Successor, Zenrin R. Lewis. The last time I met with him at DBZ early in 2011, well after it had been established that Eido Shimano had continued unabated his sexual predation of students, he was trying to convince the ZSS board to continue to forgive Eido Shimano's transgressions, told us we should have no expectation that Shimano could tell the truth, and above all work to assist him to have someplace to continue teaching. Zenrin himself continues to train with Eido Shimano today at what is called the "Hidden Zendo."

It seems clear to me that ZSS by featuring an article by Zenrin and continuing to list his organization on their web site as a related Zen center is offering implicit approval of Zenrin and Eido Shimano's continued teaching of students. This boggles my mind to say the least. It is offering this kind of support, indirect as it may be, that is a real slap in the face to those directly harmed by Eido Shimano. Why does Shinge Chayat and the ZSS Board continue to enable a man who has little to no understanding of the harm done to American Zen?

With gassho,

~Genjo