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THE ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY

PRESS RELEASE

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Eido Tai Shimano Roshi, in a formal resolution of the Board of Trustees, The Zen Studies Society of New York, was today declared the founder and first Abott of Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji and New York Zendo Shobo-Ji. The resolution also declares Nyogen Sensaki and Soen Nakagawa Roshi as Honorary founders. Eido Tai Shimano Roshi was a student of Soen Nakagawa Roshi and was chosen to be Soen Roshi's Dharma Heir in 1972.

Eido Tai Shimano Roshi arrived in the United States in 1960. In 1965 he started a small zendo in his New York City apartment. Here gathered a small group of people that were instrumental in establishing New York Zendo Shobo-Ji in 1968. Shobo-Ji is an old carriage house on East 67th Street that was renovated as a Zendo where as many as 50 Zen students can practice zazen.

In the spring of 1971 Eido Roshi had enough support from his Sangha to acquire land in Ulster County, New York. On this property, Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji, the only Zen monastery in the United States designed in the classical Japanese temple manner, was completed and dedicated on July 4, 1976. An American architect, Davis Hammerstrom, had traveled to Japan to study Buddhist temples to insure the authenticity of his final plans for Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

The friendship between the two honorary founders, Nyogen Sensaki and Soen Nakagawa Roshi is an important event in the history of Zen in America. Nyogen Sensaki arrived in the United States in 1905, a young monk who wished to teach Zen Buddhism to Americans. It was not until 1931 that he could open a small Zendo in Los Angeles. At that time, this was one of two places in the United States where people could practice zazen with a group.

In 1934, Nyogen Sensaki initiated a correspondence with Soen Nakagawa, a monk living alone on Dai Bosatsu Mountain in Japan. Their correspondence eventually led Soen Nakagawa Roshi's visit to the United States in 1949.

The friendship of Nyogen Sensaki and Soen Nakagawa Roshi is, for the Zen students of Eido Tai Shimano Roshi, a most fortuitous dharma connection. It was a friendship that made it possible for Eido Roshi to come to the United States and create Dai Bosatsu Zendo and New York Zendo. Dai Bosatsu Zendo was named after Dai Bosatsu Mountain, the place where Soen Nakagawa Roshi lived as a young monk.

In the formal resolution honoring these three Zen teachers, the Board of Trustees of the Zen Studies Society also declared the independence of New York Zendo Shobo-Ji and Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji from any Zen Buddhist organizations in the United States and abroad. The trustees felt it was necessary to make this declaration during a time when the affiliation of Zen organizations in the United States are being actively solicited by the Japanese Zen establishment. Eido Tai Shimano Roshi intends Dai Bosatsu Zendo and New York Zendo to remain independent as a place where Zen students may study in the best tradition of his Rinzai lineage.