



## Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shimano

by **genkaku** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 1:49 am

I received this article today in email and hesitate to post it for fear that it will just excite a dithering of virtues. But the observations and fears once expressed by Robert Aitken Roshi about Eido Tai Shimano (Roshi), and the latter's predatory sexual adventures with his students strike me as important pointers.

1. However wonderful Zen Buddhism and Zen practice may be -- and I for one would say it is pretty wonderful -- it is important to remember without rancor that there is no real accountability built into the realm. If the teacher is thought of, in one way or another, as an embodiment of the Dharma, then, despite all protestations this way or that, that teacher is as capable of sowing harm as s/he is of sowing kindness. We may all wish until we're blue in the face that in a realm of 'kindness' we will find true kindness. But I am talking about human realities, not the hopefulness and encouragement of precepts. As I say ... consider without rancor. It's just an observation worth making, for my money.

2. The central -- and perhaps only -- lesson any of us might take from arrogant fools is this: "Just don't you do that!"

PS. Mods ... if you find this topic in some way out of line, please feel free to delete it.  
genkaku

by **Luzdelaluna** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:03 am

Another lesson:  
Speak up when asked. Speak honestly and forthrightly.

Thank you Adam.

The ultimate Truth is beyond words. Doctrines are words. They're not the Way. The Way is wordless. Words are illusions. Freeing oneself from words is liberation.  
Bodhidharma

Luzdelaluna

**by doormat** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:14 am

It's an important lesson for anyone, but especially for beginners who are looking for teachers. The introductory workshops at the Rochester Zen Center include a talk on how to select a teacher and what things to look for when a teacher is not acting in the best interest of the student. I hope it's a common lecture at other zen centers - if it isn't, it should be.

...my teaching consists in the cessation of sufferings arising from the discrimination of the triple world; in the cessation of ignorance, desire, deed, and causality;...an objective world, like a vision, is the manifestation of Mind itself.-Lankavatara

doormat

Global Moderator

**by christopher:::** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:55 am

It might also be worth exploring the mythology of Zen, where recognized heirs and teachers are automatically considered wiser and more enlightened than everyone else. The kinds of problems described here seem to arise in any organized social community where a hierarchy of wisdom and authority is assumed, based solely on one's role and position.

Once we have such a hierarchy, and bow to it, we next have to do what we can to defend our group's "image." To make sure the "good name" of your institution/school isn't ruined. Not much different from defending one's ego. In fact they're intimately related- group identity and ego identity.

We have these same kinds of problems in academia. Same mythology as well...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Jundo Cohen** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 4:38 am

Hi,

All human beings, from 'Great Bodhisattvas' right on down to the rest of us, are human beings ... and that means rough edges, cracks and ugly spots, flesh, fallings down and flaws. (At least, of course, until we eventually become Perfect Golden Buddhas ...

assuming that even those ideals reside anywhere beyond our flawed human imaginations) Human beings are human. That includes Zen and other Buddhist teachers, no less.

What matters most is what we do with those flaws in life, how we live as human beings ... with a bit of grace, ease, non-attachment, wholeness, peace, at-oneness and sincerity, great Compassion and Loving Kindness toward our fellow flawed beings. Practice does not remove all our human rough spots, but it allows a wild and imperfect stone to be imperfect (perfectly imperfect) yet simultaneously material to be polished into a jewel ... so many rough edges made soft and round. The Precepts are a guide for constant moment-to-moment practice in "not falling down". One cannot polish a tile into a Buddha ... but the constant polishing is Buddha.

Yet, despite the roundness and polishing, some rough edges may remain. All human beings have the tendency to fall down from time to time, some more than others.

It is a fallacy to think that Zen priests are ever completely free, during this life, from being human. In any large group of people ... whether Zen priests, other Buddhist, Christian or Jewish priests and clergy of all kinds ... there will always be examples of greed, anger and ignorance. Furthermore, in the lifetime of any one individual ... even among the best of us ... there are sure to be moments of greed, anger and ignorance.

But our Practice does, more often than not, free us from the worst. It makes us better people. (In fact, most clergy I have met ... not just Buddhist clergy, but of all religions ... are good, caring, ethical people, the bad apples aside). Most of the Zen teachers I have met ... especially those with a few years and some maturity under their belt ... tend to be lovely, gentle, well rounded, self-actuated, moderate, compassionate, healthy people - balanced, living life with fullness and well.

What is more, a teacher can be 95% good, wise and decent, a caring and profound minister ... yet have a proclivity in the remaining 5% that is an inner devil. The fact is that being a Buddhist teacher has not allowed many to avoid getting led around by the "little Buddha" in their pants sometimes, getting involved in sex scandals. There have been several modern Buddhist masters with addiction issues, some who ended up in a Betty Ford center. I know more than one who has smoked himself for packs a day into lung cancer.

The question is whether the 95% that embodies Wisdom and Compassion is completely canceled and nullified by the 5% which is an ass and a human fool. Certainly, if the 5% is serious enough (child abuse as seen among some rabbis and priests is certainly an example, as are other acts of violence or truly malicious conduct), I say it does, certainly. (In fact, while recognizing that even the victimizer is too a victim of beginningless greed, anger, ignorance ... toss the worst of them in a cell, and throw away the key!). On the other hand, if what is seen is a relatively minor human weakness or failing ... I say it does not. What is more, it may make the teacher an even greater teacher because of his/her humanity.

In other words, I would rather learn about some things from a fellow weak and fragile human being wrestling, right now, with Mara than from a stone Buddha statue, a Dharma machine, a Flawless Saint (although how many of those long dead saints and ancestors in religious hagiographic story books, their lives cleaned up and dipped in gold and set on a pedestal after their deaths, were truly so flawless during their flesh and blood lives?).

In our Zen practice we taste a realm beyond all desire ... beyond "we" ... a view by which there is nothing lacking, so no base or object for greed ... where all hate, longing and despair evaporate, all swept away in peace and wholeness. There is such Liberation, and it can be known by anyone who follows this Way of Zen.

But so long as we are human beings ... whether an 80 year old man or a child of age 3 ... we must also live in this ordinary realm of flesh and blood, its sometime desire ... a world where "you" and "me" are separate too, where we may feel lack and greed ... subject to anger, longing and times of despair. So long as we are in this world ... so-called "Zen Master" or not ... we cannot escape fully the realm of Samsara (even if, ultimately, there is no other to stumble into, no place we can fall).

All human beings have the tendency to fall down from time to time. I guess it is just a matter of what the person does then ... picking themselves up, recovering balance, getting back on the trail, apologizing and learning from any damage caused. Like any great athlete, the point is not that we never get knocked around, never trip or stumble ... but how we handle the fall (as in the martial arts ... there is no training offered on how to never fall, but endless training on how to fall well). Show me the man or woman who falls down sometimes ... but who demonstrates how to fall well and recover one's footing ... and I will show you a great Zen teacher.

Gassho, J

PS - This is why we cannot neglect the Precepts in this Practice ... which, while recognizing that we may fail to abide by them sometimes, yet point toward harmless, healthful and beneficial actions toward our self and other selfs (not two).  
Last edited by Jundo Cohen on Wed Nov 11, 2009 10:55 am, edited 14 times in total.  
Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

by Carol on Wed Nov 11, 2009 5:00 am

Jundo Cohen wrote:  
Hi,

All human beings, from 'Great Bodhisattvas' right on down to the rest of us, are human beings ... and that means rough edges, cracks and ugly spots, flesh, fallings down and flaws. (At least, of course, until we eventually become Perfect Golden Buddhas ... assuming that even those ideals reside anywhere beyond our flawed human imaginations) Human beings are human. That includes Zen and other Buddhist teachers, no less.

Thank you, Jundo. Those were my sentiments, too, on reading this. It's a real conundrum for all of us who practice ... eventually our teachers will come off their pedestals and we will see them as human beings. Sometimes the flaws are so serious that something must be done ... sometimes the flaws are so endearing or irritating that our practice is profoundly deepened by them. In all cases, it seems to me that compassion is required. Without that, nothing is learned.

Deep bows,

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by hungryghost** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 5:35 am

Of course I allow any teacher their normal human frailties and such...I do think that a teacher should not, under any circumstances, have sex with a student. If a non celibate teacher chooses to do this under consensual conditions, the student-teacher relationship should be dissolved. In a case where actual abuse takes place, the teacher should step down. A medical professional who does this is subject to prosecution, yeah? Like a therapist? A spiritual teacher is dealing with peoples minds...keep it in yer freakin pants. There is absolutely no excuse for this kind of thing.

hungryghost  
Global Moderator

**by AlasdairGF** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 11:32 am

A couple of gut reactions to this - I read the article you linked to a week or so back, but haven't really sat down and had a good think about it yet!

First - I worry that reading about matters like this is mere titillation for me. Like when I found out about the Baker Roshi scandal... my reaction was not one I'm proud of, very much against the spirit of the right speech precepts. So I try to be careful about these. Have held off from getting Shoes Outside the Door, for instance, as I'm not sure enough of my motivations! These are serious & relevant matters of course, so the other side of it is not sticking my head in sand...

Second - the ability to question authority, to demand accountability of our teachers and leaders, what a wonderful gift we cynical moderns/Westerners bring to Buddhism! Can you imagine all the people over the past 800 years who have been in various ways taken advantage of by less-than-scrupulous Zen teachers, monks, nuns, whoever? (The same is true of other religions, in our own culture too, of course). The critical perspective is something we need to nurture and cherish, even if (especially if!) it means we have to abandon some of our romantic ideals about what Zen is. I really recommend that everyone have a look at the 'critical' section of The Zen Site. Question everything!

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

**by genkaku** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 12:38 pm

Nicely put AlasdairGF. Thank you.

On the one hand, Buddhist bloviations can't staunch bleeding wounds or dissuade us from being curious about 'all the sordid details.' On the other hand, Buddhist encouragements really do make some sense.

On the one hand, common sense and critical thinking make sense. On the other hand, there is a longing to actualize a life that is more sensible, somehow, than common sense and mere critical thinking.

It's a pain in the tail -- or anyway it is for me -- to recognize that I have to square off against such things ... neither burying myself in some pretend 'understanding' nor getting swept up in the particulars .... It all leaves me, as before, staring and often blithering in the goddamned mirror.

genkaku

**by Jok\_Hae** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 1:21 pm

Hi all,

There is only one thing that is truly reliable.

There is only one thing that is always there for us.

There is only one thing the teaches us without mistake.

The practice of zazen.

Putting one's practice and indeed, their life, completely in the hands of a teacher is, imo, the most dangerous thing a practitioner of any religion can do, for all the reasons pointed out in the posts above.

Good luck and thanks for practicing,

Keith

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Luzdelaluna** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 2:34 pm

.  
Damn, Keith! Excellent post! My thoughts and feelings precisely.

I recently had an experience of the "falling off the pedestal" nature and will not go into details here, but I found it critical and absolutely necessary to confront the person...and confront I did.

The ultimate Truth is beyond words. Doctrines are words. They're not the Way. The Way is wordless. Words are illusions. Freeing oneself from words is liberation.

Bodhidharma

Luzdelaluna

**by Shonin** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 2:36 pm

I love a bit of gossip

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

by **Jok\_Hae** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 2:48 pm

Luzdelaluna wrote:

Damn, Keith! Excellent post! My thoughts and feelings precisely.

I recently had an experience of the "falling off the pedestal" nature and will not go into details here, but I found it critical and absolutely necessary to confront the person...and confront I did.

Thanks Luz. It sucks when it happens, but teachers cannot possibly live up to the expectations and standards of perfection that we put on them. Ever. Sooner or later we will see a small (or in the case of the subject at hand, a very large) fault here or there that will change our perception. This is why I have always had the opinion that searching for the perfect "style" or teacher of Zen is less important as we sometimes make it. That ideal doesn't exist. But, the practice of Zen Buddhist sitting is impossible to taint. All imho, of course.

Keith  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

by **Jundo Cohen** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:04 pm

Jok\_Hae wrote:

But, the practice of Zen Buddhist sitting is impossible to taint. All imho, of course.

Keith

Although, perhaps, if one constantly places too high and idealistic expectations on sitting too ... putting "Zazen on a pedestal" ... one will also tend to a fall.

Sometimes people begin this practice with dreams and visions of 'what to expect' ... the Golden Buddha at the end of the rainbow ... and thus miss the true beauty of sitting with what is. Thinking that they are "let down" by the Zen experience ... they may miss, in the ups and downs and tumbles, that there is no place to fall.

Is the perfection of Zazen ... and the perfection of all of life ... found right in the imperfection of sitting? Much like looking honestly at our perfectly imperfect teachers.



Just a thought.

Gassho, J

Last edited by Jundo Cohen on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:07 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
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Jundo Cohen

**by Luzdelaluna** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:05 pm

Good Lord! I was never searching for perfection in any human being, and anyone who does will continually be let down...talk about creating your own suffering! And the imperfections in a teacher or anyone else for that matter, can deepen one's practice. But how about some plain old common sense behavior and honesty from someone you do seek guidance from? That's not too much to expect. And if they can't be met, or one finds some behavior unacceptable, time to move on. And that's your responsibility to yourself. That's all. (Just keep practicing...regardless)

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 Bodhidharma

Luzdelaluna

**by genkaku** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:10 pm

I was never searching for perfection in any human being,

Ummmmm ... really? Never sought perfection in yourself, for example?  
 genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:11 pm

Besides living teachers, and sitting, lets not forget that there's also great guidance to be found in the writings of the ancestors, and from conversations with fellow practitioners- aka, sangha. And while it's not "traditionally" considered essential for Zen Buddhism, I think a person's practice can only benefit when one digs a bit into the wisdom of other

Buddhist traditions and/or talks with other teachers. The Buddha himself went to many different masters of his time, seeking guidance. He didn't depend upon one single person to teach him, and much of what he learned he discovered on his own, by looking within.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher::  
Founding Member

**by Luzdelaluna** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:16 pm

genkaku wrote:

I was never searching for perfection in any human being,

Ummmmm ... really? Never sought perfection in yourself, for example?

LOL!!! Yes, of course I struggled with that in early years, but I have come to know, love and respect my warts. I just don't need to add someone else's warts that they won't acknowledge.

The ultimate Truth is beyond words. Doctrines are words. They're not the Way. The Way is wordless. Words are illusions. Freeing oneself from words is liberation.

Bodhidharma

Luzdelaluna

**by Christopher** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:19 pm

christopher::: wrote:

lets not forget that there's also great guidance to be found in the writings of the ancestors

It's interesting that you bring this up here, because that's precisely part of "the problem": i.e. that a given teacher can be very eloquent in writing, a brilliant translator or whatever, but still be a skirt-chasing buffoon in the interview room. Real zen practice only shows itself in your reactions to live, unpredictable situations. It's very easy to write nice stuff.

Christopher

**by Jok\_Hae** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:21 pm

Jundo Cohen wrote:

Jok\_Hae wrote:

But, the practice of Zen Buddhist sitting is impossible to taint. All imho, of course.

Keith

Although, perhaps, if one constantly places too high and idealistic expectations on sitting too ... putting "Zazen on a pedestal" ... one will also tend to a fall.

Sometimes people begin this practice with dreams and visions of 'what to expect' ... the Golden Buddha at the end of the rainbow ... and thus miss the true beauty of sitting with what is. Thinking that they are "let down" by the Zen experience ... they may miss, in the ups and downs and tumbles, that there is no place to fall.

Is the perfection of Zazen ... and the perfection of all of life ... found right in the imperfection of sitting? Much like looking honestly at our perfectly imperfect teachers.

Just a thought.

Gassho, J

Hello Jundo,

Thanks for your reply. If someone sits with visions of what to expect, imho, that is still perfect sitting. The changes that occur while we think we are practicing occur despite our best effort to screw them up. It may take years or even lifetimes (anyone for a throwdown? ) but the train can't be stopped, so to speak. Imperfect sitting is nothing less than perfect. Just my opinion, of course.

Keith

Last edited by Jok\_Hae on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:24 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Jundo Cohen** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:24 pm

Jok\_Hae wrote:

Imperfect sitting is nothing less than perfect. Just my opinion, of course.

I say that perfect sitting is nothing less than imperfect. So, I guess we agree.  
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Jundo Cohen

by **Dan74** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 3:42 pm

Look I don't give a hoot about this Shimano guy and I wouldn't waste a single breath condemning him etc (all else said he does make good bike gear).

What I am amazed about is what seems to be equivocation about this sort of behaviour, like some of the above posts. I am wondering if Jundo and some of the others had read the article. Yes, we are all human, still I don't know about others here, but I would expect my teacher to care more about the welfare of his students than his dick. I may be unrealistic here, in this day and age, but I really don't think so.

The sutras have warned about "demons" masquerading as dharma teachers, and indeed we have seen people who seem quite brilliant in some ways and yet they cause untold damage to those around them. Then we have others carrying on about "no one is perfect and it's your fault if you have fantasies of perfect Zen master." Please....

There are teachers who leave a legacy of discord and suffering and those who transmit the lamp to others and plant seeds of dharma in many grateful hearts, always handling those with utmost care. I suspect that Dogen and Hakuin would not have been Dogen and Hakuin had they been screwing their students, but please enlighten me if you know otherwise.

I've had plenty of personal contact with a teacher and heard enough stories to have been disabused of any fairy-tale images of Zen masters. But asking for decency and mastery of fundamental ethics is not only realistic, it is in my view, essential, otherwise whatever Zen they've got - I want none of it.

\_/\\_

PS Edited for a bad Freudian slip...

Dan74

by **Shonin** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 4:17 pm

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

by **partofit22** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 4:19 pm

Dan74 wrote:

(all else said he does make good bike gear)\_/\\_

partofit22

by **Nonin** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 4:33 pm

The incidents outlined in the link provided by the OP occurred many years ago, and unfortunately, were not properly addressed at the time. However, as far as I know, the sexual transgressions have not continued over the years, so something was corrected within the sangha in New York.

These issues and also the sexual transgression issues that occurred in the mid-to-late 1980's at San Francisco Zen Center and also in Theravadan and Tibetan Buddhist sanghas in the West have been addressed over the years by the Zen Buddhist sangha at large, however. Sexual misconduct by Zen Buddhist teachers has been discussed over and over again at American Zen Teachers Association and Soto Zen Buddhist Association meetings in the United States and many Zen Buddhist practice places have adopted Ethics Statements that outline the type of behavior both encouraged and prohibited within sangha relationships

These days sexual impropriety by teachers can carry a heavy price. Some teachers have been asked to step down as teachers and some have been terminated as teachers and asked to leave their sanghas as the result of sexual misconduct.

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship provides a booklet on ethical behavior called Safe Harbor that many sanghas make available for members. Also many Zen Buddhist practice places are encouraged to adopt and have adopted their own guidelines and provide Ethics Statements outlining these guidelines for all who practice at these places. These statements not only outline proper behavior for sangha members but also provide procedures for resolving disputes based on ethical transgressions.

I am providing our temple's Ethics Statement below. It's a bit long for posting here, but it's not on our website, so I can't link to it. Sexual misconduct by teachers and leaders is discussed in detail as part of this statement.

I hope that this is helpful.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

## STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

Nebraska Zen Center/Heartland Temple

### PREFACE

The intent of this statement is to nourish and protect the treasure of Sangha and to promote harmonious relationships among all its members and participants.

A compassionate standard of behavior is expected from everyone who participates in NZC activities. This standard is based on respect for each person as a unique expression of Buddha nature regardless of age, race, gender, ethnic background, appearance, sexual orientation, physical abilities, political beliefs, social class, or occupation.

### ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The principles that guide our actions as Zen Buddhist practitioners are the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts. They are:

The Three Refuges:

We take refuge in Buddha  
 We take refuge in Dharma  
 We take refuge in Sangha

The Three Pure Precepts:

To do no harm  
 To do good  
 To live to benefit all beings

The Ten Prohibitory Precepts:

A follower of the Way does not kill but rather cultivates and encourages life.

A follower of the Way does not take what is not given but rather cultivates and encourages generosity.

A follower of the Way does not misuse sexuality but rather cultivates and encourages open, honest, and acceptable relationships.

A follower of the Way does not lie but rather cultivates and encourages truthful communication.

A follower of the Way does not intoxicate self or others but rather cultivates and encourages clarity.

A follower of the Way does not slander but rather cultivates and encourages respectful speech.

A follower of the Way neither extols self nor demeans others but rather cultivates awareness of the interdependent nature of self.

A follower of the Way does not attach to anything, even the teaching, but rather cultivates mutual support and shares the dharma with all beings.

A follower of the Way does not harbor ill will but rather cultivates loving-kindness, understanding, and forgiveness.

A follower of the Way does not turn away from the Three Treasures but rather cultivates and encourages taking refuge in them.

It is our sincere intention to realign our lives continually in accord with these precepts.

**Appropriate action.** We aspire to relationships that are characterized by appropriate action, relationships based on trust, cooperation, openness to differences, good communication, fairness, kindness, and respect. The Sangha cultivates these qualities as the practice of keeping the precepts and developing good dharma friendships.

**Inappropriate action.** Inappropriate action is harmful to ourselves and others. It may include physical violence, sexual misconduct or harassment, drug and substance abuse, malicious gossip, extreme or regular displays of anger, insults or demeaning comments, and manipulative or duplicitous speech or action. Persons who encounter inappropriate actions from any member of the NZC Sangha -- including its teachers and senior instructors -- or who themselves practice such conduct, should be aware that these actions violate the spirit of the precepts and the practice of appropriate action.

**Student/teacher relationships.** A teacher at NZC is anyone involved in an instructional capacity. This includes the Head Priest and anyone designated by the Head Priest to serve as an instructor or mentor for newer students. This includes those giving zazen instruction, teaching Intro to Zen workshops, and leading study groups. Student/teacher relationships should be based on mutual respect, compassion, and kindness. We acknowledge the inequality inherent in such a relationship and the power issues involved.

We specifically acknowledge the great harm, both psychological and spiritual, that results from teachers becoming sexually involved with their students, both for the teacher and

student involved and for the community as a whole. We, therefore, consider it unethical for a teacher to engage in sexual behavior with her or his student.

We furthermore expect all who participate at NZC to follow these guidelines:

- 1) If a teacher and/or student feel at risk of violating the above ethical principle, they should suspend their teacher-student relationship at least until they have sought counsel with a senior teacher.
- 2) It is considered a misuse of sexuality for a teacher to form a sexual relationship with a former student within three months of the termination of the student-teacher relationship.
- 3) Any teacher considering forming a sexual relationship with another NZC participant should discuss the appropriateness of the relationship with a senior teacher.

Procedures for addressing inappropriate action. We are committed to solving problems and resolving differences that may arise from inappropriate action. If a person believes that they have been inappropriately treated and seeks resolution, the following steps may be taken:

Informal Resolution. 1) The aggrieved person should directly contact the person (s) who has (have) allegedly acted inappropriately and make an effort to reach an understanding and to resolve differences. 2) If the grievance is not resolved under step 1), the aggrieved person may request a meeting with the most senior priest not included in the grievance, the President of the Board of Directors (or Vice-President, if the President is involved in the grievance), and the person who has allegedly acted inappropriately to resolve the grievance.

If the parties are unable to reconcile under steps 1) and 2), the aggrieved person may proceed to step 3):

Informal Meeting. 3) The person filing the grievance should contact the Board President or Secretary. If the President and Secretary are named in the grievance, the most senior Nebraska Zen Center Priest not named may be contacted. The person filing the grievance will provide the contact person with a written description of the alleged inappropriate action and the effort to resolve the matter informally in steps 1) and 2) above. The person who allegedly acted inappropriately shall respond to the allegation in writing to the contact person within one week. The contact person shall request a meeting with a third party trained in mediation practices to be held within four weeks of receipt of response, and shall include the person alleging the grievance and the person (s) who allegedly acted inappropriately. The mediator may contact and seek information from others who have knowledge relevant to the case under discussion. The meeting shall consist of an attempted mediation led by the mediator, and may be supplemented, if the parties agree, by a meeting with others who have knowledge relevant to the case under discussion. The mediation meeting shall result in a written statement of the position reached by the parties in the mediation process, and this statement will be given to the contact person who originally received the grievance.



If step 3) results in a statement resolving the grievance, a copy of the statement will be kept in NZC files.

If step 3) results in a statement that resolution has not been reached, the aggrieved person may proceed to step 4).

Reconciliation Council. 4) The person filing the grievance may notify the Board of Directors that they wish to proceed with the unresolved grievance. Thereupon, the Board will form a Reconciliation Council consisting of the President and Secretary of the Board (or two other Board members if these Officers are named in the grievance), the most senior priest not named in the grievance, one person chosen by the person filing the grievance, and one person chosen by the person (s) who has allegedly acted inappropriately. After formation, The Council shall notify the concerned parties in writing, and all written records of actions heretofore filed shall be provided to the Council within two weeks of notification that they are needed. The Council shall set an appropriate date for a hearing within four weeks of receipt of the written records.

At the hearing, the Council shall hear the presentation of the person filing the grievance and the response of the person (s) who has allegedly acted inappropriately. The Council may also solicit views of other persons where that is deemed appropriate. Additional meetings may be called and may include the entire sangha, should the Council deem them necessary.

The Council shall make a finding based on the above process. The finding shall be written and shall be communicated to the person filing the grievance and the person (s) allegedly behaving inappropriately within four weeks of the completion of the reconciliation process.

The Reconciliation Council will keep written records of all meetings and findings. These shall be kept on file at Nebraska Zen Center.

Atonement. Any person who acts inappropriately is expected to make every effort to realign their conduct in accord with the precepts and to take the actions necessary to restore the harmony of the Sangha and to mitigate harm done. Such atonement is an integral part of our spiritual practice.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

Each student should feel free to explore the Dharma and study the self in an environment of trust and confidentiality.

Conversations with Priests or Dharma Teachers during Dokusan and Practice Discussion are privileged under the Law, but only when made privately without the intent of further disclosure, except to other persons present in furtherance of the purpose of the communication. Personal information offered at meetings, practice events, or Sangha gatherings are not confidential.

## CONCLUSION

This statement was first issued on April 20, 1998 after being endorsed by the Board of Directors on April 19, 1998. It was amended to its present form by the Board of Directors on June 28, 1998 and re-issued on August 28, 1998. It applies to all who practice, study, and teach at NZC and shall be kept on file at the temple and freely distributed to all. Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

**by genkaku** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 5:06 pm

However, as far as I know, the sexual transgressions have not continued over the years, so something was corrected within the sangha in New York.

Nonin -- Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case. If it were, I would not have started the thread in the first place.

genkaku

**by Carol** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 5:34 pm

Dan74 wrote:

What I am amazed about is what seems to be equivocation about this sort of behaviour, like some of the above posts. I am wondering if Jundo and some of the others had read the article. Yes, we are all human, still I don't know about others here, but I would expect my teacher to care more about the welfare of his students than his dick. I may be unrealistic here, in this day and age, but I really don't think so.

Yes, I understand. My personal opinion is that these things be made public and that the sangha deal with them as they see fit. In fact, the Shimano scandals (and a number of others) were well known. I've read about it all before elsewhere.

I think we do need to keep some perspective. Everyone loves a good scandal. It's more fun than dealing with our own demons. Thus, sometimes reactions can be more appalling than the original conduct. Perhaps I come from a generation where sexual mores were looser? I don't know. I lived through the '60s and '70s, and saw it all happening. Much experimentation ... much was lost and much was gained by the sexual freedom of those

days. It was definitely a mixed bag. But it has made me much less condemnatory than I might otherwise have been.

I do not think the line is clear cut. There are teacher-student relationships that have proved quite beneficial and happy. For example, John Daido Looi Roshi had a long-term relationship with one of his students, Bonnie Myotai Treace. She became Vice-Abbess at Zen Mountain Monastery for a time, though she eventually moved on and began teaching independently. I have never heard either one of them condemned for it, though perhaps they have been.

My main reaction to reading the article was "This all happened a long time ago" ... much like the monk who, when chastised for carrying a woman across the river, said "I put her down back by the river. Why are you still carrying her?"

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Anders Honore** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 6:05 pm

Dan74 wrote:

Look I don't give a hoot about this Shimano guy and I wouldn't waste a single breath condemning him etc (all else said he does make good bike gear).

What I am amazed about is what seems to be equivocation about this sort of behaviour, like some of the above posts. I am wondering if Jundo and some of the others had read the article. Yes, we are all human, still I don't know about others here, but I would expect my teacher to care more about the welfare of his students than his dick. I may be unrealistic here, in this day and age, but I really don't think so.

The sutras have warned about "demons" masquerading as dharma teachers, and indeed we have seen people who seem quite brilliant in some ways and yet they cause untold damage to those around them. Then we have others carrying on about "no one is perfect and it's your fault if you have fantasies of perfect Zen master." Please....

There are teachers who leave a legacy of discord and suffering and those who transmit the lamp to others and plant seeds of dharma in many grateful hearts, always handling those with utmost care. I suspect that Dogen and Hakuin would not have been Dogen and Hakuin had they been screwing their students, but please enlighten me if you know otherwise.

I've had plenty of personal contact with a teacher and heard enough stories to have been disabused of any fairy-tale images of Zen masters. But asking for decency and mastery of fundamental ethics is not only realistic, it is in my view, essential, otherwise whatever Zen they've got - I want none of it.

\_/\\_

PS Edited for a bad Freudian slip...

This.

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

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Anders Honore

by **Nonin** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 6:10 pm

genkaku wrote:

However, as far as I know, the sexual transgressions have not continued over the years, so something was corrected within the sangha in New York.

Nonin -- Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case. If it were, I would not have started the thread in the first place.

Genkaku,

The events described in the letter you linked to occurred many years ago; the last date was 1982. This letter has been circulating for a long time. I've been aware of it and the events described in it for many years, ever since the events occurred.

Do you have more current information that is not covered in the letter about events that have occurred since 1982? If so, please share it. If not, why did you start the thread?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin  
Global Moderator

**by booker** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 6:11 pm

As some said "without mistakes there's now wisdom".

And amen to that.  
"Be Buddhist or be Buddha"

booker

**by genkaku** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 6:21 pm

Nonin wrote:

genkaku wrote:

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Nonin -- Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case. If it were, I would not have started the thread in the first place.

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Do you have more current information that is not covered in the letter about events that have occurred since 1982? If so, please share it. If not, why did you start the thread?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Nonin -- Your observations are fair. I started the thread after a conversation with Kobutsu Malone who pointed me towards the old Aitken material and then expanded verbally with newer information. I did not feel it would be fair or accurate to reprise from memory what he said on the phone. I don't think I would be talking out of school to say that

people might contact him at kobutsu@engaged-zen.org. I apologize if this seems like something of a cop-out and am willing to absorb the wrong-speech critiques if anyone wanted to make them.

I had not heard, as you had, of this earlier material and I thought it important enough, after talking with Kobutsu, to give it a wider hearing. It may be easier to know what is right when there is some assessment of what might be wrong.

But that's just my take.  
genkaku

**by Anders Honore** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 6:34 pm

Nonin wrote:

genkaku wrote:

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Do you have more current information that is not covered in the letter about events that have occurred since 1982? If so, please share it. If not, why did you start the thread?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

From the article linked to:

On August 9, 1995, an extraordinary letter was composed and sent to Richard Rudin, President of the Board of Directors, Zen Studies Society, a New York-based group founded in 1956 by Cornelius Crane with the purpose of assisting the Japanese Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki in his work and for promoting Zen Buddhism in America. The letter was signed by eight prominent American Zen teachers, including Robert Aitken Rōshi and Philip Kapleau Rōshi. The gist of the letter was that the undersigned believed that something had to be done about the Zen Studies Society leader of the previous 30 years or so, Eido Tai Shimano Rōshi, the teacher at the Zen Studies Society's two centres,

Shōbōji in New York City and Daibosatsu Monastery in the Catskills Mountains of New York State.

The letter began by outlining the concerns of the teachers:

Over the past three decades, we have interviewed many former students of Shimano Rōshi. Their stories are consistent: trust placed in an apparently wise and compassionate teacher, only to have that trust manipulated in the form of his sexual misconduct and abuse. Some of these students elected to continue their practice with us; most of them wanted nothing further to do with Zen Buddhism.

With report after report of the same depressing story, it is clear to us that our colleague, Shimano Rōshi, is not simply one who slips into an occasional love affair. We have no hesitation in judging from first-hand accounts that the quality of these relationships is not loving but exploitive and extremely damaging to his victims. (RRL)

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

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Anders Honore

by **Nonin** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 8:56 pm

Genkaku and Anders,

The letter signed by Robert Aitken and other Zen teachers was composed in 1995, soon after the American Zen Teachers Association was formed. I joined the group in the following year, but I was privy to the letter being sent. It referred to concrete events that had occurred years earlier, so all of this is ancient history. I question the motives of those who continue to circulate what you linked to in your OP, Genkaku. One of them had a falling out with Eido Shimano that had nothing to do with the sexual misconduct described in the article and has been bad-mouthing him for years.

It is not possible for those of us teaching Zen Buddhism in America not to know of these and similar events and to be aware of the damage that has been done and will be done by those of us who engage in sexual relationships with our students. That damage is done to our students, our sanghas, and ourselves. Eido Shimano carries the stain from his mistakes in the minds of many Zen practitioners, mistakes that were committed years ago. The students he engaged in wrongful conduct with were damaged by it, and many other sangha members left not only his New York sangha but also Zen practice as well. Some have not been able to let go of the pain and have carried it for years. Some have forgiven him and continued as his students. Some have forgiven him and moved on to practice with other teachers.

No Zen teacher in America is unaware of the meaning of sexual misconduct as it applies to the student / teacher relationship, yet people still transgress. That's why we have Ethics Statements like the one I posted earlier. Human beings are what they are, and that's why it's also necessary to have some sort of grievance and reconciliation procedure. We have one as part of our Ethics Statement, and the Soto Zen Buddhist Association (SZBA) is working on procedures and processes that it will offer to all people and sanghas damaged by teacher misconduct, sexual and otherwise. Members of the AZTA (American Zen Teachers Association) schooled in mediation and reconciliation processes also will counsel fellow members and their sanghas embroiled in ethical controversies.

In the light of all of the, it's most important for all of us, Buddhist teacher or otherwise, to consider our actions, sexual and otherwise, in the light of the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts and all the nuances that they entail and also in the light of the mores of the culture in which we live. Buddhist teachers, no matter whether they are priests or lay people, and senior students in all sanghas are increasingly viewed in the same way as psycho-therapists, counselors, college teachers, doctors etc. It is considered unethical, and in some states illegal, for people in these positions and in similar unequal power relationships to engage in sexual relationships with those they serve. A psycho-therapist can lose their license for doing so. In some states, such as Minnesota, it is now illegal for a clergy person to engage in such conduct, and if they do, they can be prosecuted.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **Carol** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 9:08 pm

Luzdelaluna wrote:

Good Lord! I was never searching for perfection in any human being, and anyone who does will continually be let down...talk about creating your own suffering! And the imperfections in a teacher or anyone else for that matter, can deepen one's practice. But how about some plain old common sense behavior and honesty from someone you do seek guidance from? That's not too much to expect. And if they can't be met, or one finds some behavior unacceptable, time to move on. And that's your responsibility to yourself. That's all. (Just keep practicing...regardless)



Right you are.

I think this must come up in every honest student-teacher relationship.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Carol** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 9:24 pm

There is a profoundly moving interview with Wendy Engokuo Nakao Roshi, the current Abbot at Zen Center of Los Angeles, where she discusses without flinching the damage done when Maezumi Roshi had his sexual affairs and alcohol problems. She also discusses with heartfelt clarity what they did at ZCLA to repair the damage. Deeply moving stuff, especially when she discusses Maezumi Roshi's years after the scandal. Much more interesting to me than salacious gossip. I do believe even the worst mistakes can be transformed into Buddha's teachings. Perhaps that's because of the mistakes I have made in my life. I just never can believe anyone is beyond redemption.

Part 1 is the early part of her spiritual development/path. Part 2 is a very moving discussion of Maezumi Roshi and what happened at ZCLA. Part 3 is a very interesting discussion of ZCLA and its horizontal/circle leadership structure ... and how the healing happened. Each part is about 1 hour. Worth listening, especially parts 2 & 3.

If anyone's interested here are the links:

Part 1: <http://www.urbandharma.org/mp3/ZCLA-1.mp3>

Part 2: <http://www.urbandharma.org/mp3/ZCLA-2.mp3>

Part 3: <http://www.urbandharma.org/mp3/ZCLA-3.mp3>

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Anders Honore** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 10:00 pm

Nonin wrote:

Genkaku and Anders,

The letter signed by Robert Aitken and other Zen teachers was composed in 1995, soon after the American Zen Teachers Association was formed. I joined the group in the following year, but I was privy to the letter being sent. It referred to concrete events that had occurred years earlier, so all of this is ancient history. I question the motives of those who continue to circulate what you linked to in your OP, Genkaku. One of them had a falling out with Eido Shimano that had nothing to do with the sexual misconduct described in the article and has been bad-mouthing him for years.

If any news were 12 years old by then, what then compelled the seven others to lend their signatures to the letter in '95?

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

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Anders Honore

by **genkaku** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 10:27 pm

Nonin -- With all due respect to your position and knowledge, I hope you will trust me when I say that I have in my possession a copy of a detailed letter addressed to the Zen Studies Society board of directors dated 1992 from a woman who was subjected to precisely the sort of manipulation outlined in earlier events.

I will not make the contents public, but hope you will understand that this thread is not intended as some vindictive look into the past, but rather is intended as an aspect of what can occur within the well-intentioned, and often marvelously instructive, gated communities of Zen Buddhism. I see no need to over-emphasize such an aspect just as I see no need to whitewash its implications and usefulness.

genkaku

by **Dan74** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 10:33 pm

I just never can believe anyone is beyond redemption.

Absolutely!

But this is different than making excuses for what is inexcusable.

Thank you for posting those links, Carol. I'm looking forward to listening to them.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Carol** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 11:01 pm

Dan74 wrote:

I just never can believe anyone is beyond redemption.

Absolutely!

But this is different than making excuses for what is inexcusable.

Thank you for posting those links, Carol. I'm looking forward to listening to them.

\_/\\_

I believe at some point we have to go beyond blame and take responsibility for our reactions and our lives -- with our parents and our teachers and ourselves and with all the suffering in the world. This is not the same thing as excusing. It is something more like equanimity. My mother did some "inexcusable" things. So did I. So have many Zen teachers, and probably almost everyone we know, if we know them well enough.

So, what do we do about that? At what point do we stop carrying it as our suffering and inflicting it on others in our anger? At what point do we look more deeply into the nature of the universe and ourselves?

I have heard the horror stories of teachers' bad conduct ... and I've heard what happened to some of them later. How they made amends, moved on, learned, grew, did good things, continued working to save all beings, themselves included. I don't know about Shimano Roshi's conduct since 1992. It's not my business. I know in the early 1970s I was badly hurt by a Vipassana teacher. I carried it for years, like an addiction. Eventually it let go of me. I know that teacher went on to do really good works. I think of him now with gratitude for the teachings, as well as sorrow for the pain, but also with a feeling of true deep brother/sisterhood on this path of life.

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 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

**by genkaku** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 11:17 pm

I carried it for years, like an addiction. Eventually it let go of me. I know that teacher went on to do really good works. I think of him now with gratitude for the teachings, as well as sorrow for the pain, but also with a feeling of true deep brother/sisterhood on this path of life.

Nicely put, Carol. Thank you.

I too feel very grateful for the teachings I received from Eido. The bones were there even if the marrow was missing. So I am grateful for my training ... and wouldn't wish it on anyone else.

genkaku

**by Carol** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 11:23 pm

genkaku wrote:

I carried it for years, like an addiction. Eventually it let go of me. I know that teacher went on to do really good works. I think of him now with gratitude for the teachings, as well as sorrow for the pain, but also with a feeling of true deep brother/sisterhood on this path of life.

Nicely put, Carol. Thank you.

I too feel very grateful for the teachings I received from Eido. The bones were there even if the marrow was missing. So I am grateful for my training ... and wouldn't wish it on anyone else.

I would say to you in all friendship, Adam, that we really do not know what's in another's bones or heart. We cannot see that deeply unless we see our own true nature.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by Dan74** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 11:35 pm

I think It is absolutely wonderful when we are able to transform our suffering into wisdom!

And it is wonderful when we are ready to let go of the anger and not only forgive but embrace those who have wronged us.

This deserves a thread of its own because it is such an important part of practice, of life.

But this doesn't make what they did right or commendable, of course.

Sure it is all life and "nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so" as Will Shakespeare said. But if a parent puts his or her own desires ahead of essential needs of the child and seriously damages the child in the process, he or she is no longer fit to be a parent. And a spiritual teacher who is meant to be a beacon of light, when he does what was narrated above, is no longer fit to be a teacher. Probably never was.

It's not a question of anger, blame, condemnation, etc. Just like doing surgery with dirty hands is likely to do great harm and is strictly prohibited, doing spiritual work with a mind driven by desire or anger is bound to be disastrous. Most people will not be able to transform their suffering. Most will not let go of the hurt an the anger. What could have been a deep journey toward liberation turns to mounts of bitterness and distrust...

A little quote from the Dhammapada to remind us that what we talk about is not some unattainable pipe-dream, but a step on the path:

Even as the rain does penetrate  
a house that's badly thatched,  
likewise lust does penetrate  
the mind uncultivated.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Carol** on Wed Nov 11, 2009 11:54 pm

Dan74 wrote:

But if a parent puts his or her own desires ahead of essential needs of the child and seriously damages the child in the process, he or she is no longer fit to be a parent.

I did that. So did my parents. So did my grandparents. I've heard some horrendous stories about my great-grandmother, too. Not all the time. But sometimes.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Dan74** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 12:11 am

We may have different ideas of "seriously damaged", Carol. What I meant and what I've seen, is stuff that makes ones heart miss a beat. Kids get taken away by the authorities. Rescued. Sometimes it is too late.

But professing to be a teacher is a different story altogether. You advertise yourself as a spiritual guide. As a parent you do not advertise yourself as someone wise and compassionate. The standards are different.

We are human and all that that entails. Judging others we distract ourselves from the task at hand. Forget to be humbled by our own humanity and imperfections. By our mistakes. This is not what I am talking about. I am just for calling a spade a spade.

Abuse is abuse. An abuser is not fit to guide others. Another Russian saying: "Don't let a goat into the garden." Or if you do, be fully prepared for the consequences.

Peace.

\_/\\_

Dan74

by **Nonin** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 12:36 am

Dan74 wrote:

We may have different ideas of "seriously damaged", Carol. What I meant and what I've seen, is stuff that makes ones heart miss a beat. Kids get taken away by the authorities. Rescued. Sometimes it is too late.

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Peace.

\_/\\_

Dan,

Is there room for transformation, atonement, redemption, or, especially, forgiveness in your philosophy?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by christopher:::** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 12:41 am

As Carol points out we are all human, we have all made mistakes. We can create heavy burdens of karma from that, which can not be put down as easily as the girl picked up by the monk and carried over the puddle.

In line with Dan's points, what i found most troubling about this information was the covering up and enabling, that there was not a process in place for challenging Shimano

sensei, sending him off to find another profession, or to follow up and have him put on a form of "probation" with oversight of his student relationships and activities, if he were to remain in a teaching position. The steps taken by the Zen Teacher's Association, as described by Rev. Nonin, are an excellent beginning.

Are they enough?

Is there room for transformation, atonement, redemption, or, especially, forgiveness in your philosophy?

There has to be.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Anders Honore** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 12:42 am

Nonin wrote:

Is there room for transformation, atonement, redemption, or, especially, forgiveness in your philosophy?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

I would like to suggest that this question is not necessarily related to whether or not Shimano Roshi is fit for continuing to guide others.

The Buddha was I believe, quite forgiving but in the Vinaya he set down, the policy he set down was pretty clear: Screw up too badly and you lose the support of the community (ie, getting booted out of the ordained sangha).

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Anders Honore

**by genkaku** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 12:54 am



I would say to you in all friendship, Adam, that we really do not know what's in another's bones or heart. We cannot see that deeply unless we see our own true nature.

Carol, dear -- Your heart, as always, is in the right place. But I would say that if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, we would be foolish not to admit it's a duck.

I couldn't agree more -- there is no knowing another's heart or mind. And I agree that seeing into our own true nature is our most important effort. AND ... we can assess another's actions and resolve to try to emulate what seems good (Gautama Buddha and his descendants, for example) and to steer clear of what can rightly be called foolish or harmful. No sense in being any stupider than I already am, right? Will we be correct in our assessment of what is good and trustworthy? We hope so, but let's admit it -- sometimes we're wrong. Will we be correct in our assessment of what is foolish and full of deception? We hope so, but let's admit it -- sometimes we're wrong.

With enough evidence, we can be relatively assured: Attachment doesn't work very well; compassion is worth understanding, etc. And likewise, from my point of view, I don't have to go on eating anchovies to know that I think they suck...or hang around a sewage treatment plant to know that the air can be foul... or a Zen teacher whose ACTIONS are foolish or harmful.

Just my perspective.  
genkaku

**by Dan74** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 12:59 am

Nonin wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

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But professing to be a teacher is a different story altogether. You advertise yourself as a spiritual guide. As a parent you do not advertise yourself as someone wise and compassionate. The standards are different.

We are human and all that that entails. Judging others we distract ourselves from the task at hand. Forget to be humbled by our own humanity and imperfections. By our mistakes. This is not what I am talking about. I am just for calling a spade a spade.

Abuse is abuse. An abuser is not fit to guide others. Another Russian saying: "Don't let a goat into the garden."

Peace.

\_/\\_

Dan,

Is there room for transformation, atonement, redemption, or, especially, forgiveness in your philosophy?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Absolutely, Nonin.

I don't know if I can elaborate any further. I think I've stated my position and don't want to flood this thread with my posts (any further).

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Carol** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 1:00 am

Dan74 wrote:

We may have different ideas of "seriously damaged", Carol.

Maybe not. I'm not going to tell my whole family story here, nor the worst of my transgressions nor the damage I caused my children, but in reflecting on it over the past 40 years I have learned not to cast the first stone at anyone else.

I'm also reminded of the story of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, who refused to listen to his wife about a troubling person hanging around the Temple he ran back in Japan before he came to the US. In his pride, he thought he knew better. That person later killed Suzuki's wife with an ax while their young daughter looked on. The daughter spent some years in a mental hospital before committing suicide. So, yes, I think people can make terrible mistakes out of self-interest and pride and other human failings, and cause serious damage to others, and still be fit to teach others. Perhaps Suzuki Roshi had more wisdom and depth because of this than anything else.

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for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

by Carol on Thu Nov 12, 2009 1:05 am

genkaku wrote:

I would say to you in all friendship, Adam, that we really do not know what's in another's bones or heart. We cannot see that deeply unless we see our own true nature.

Carol, dear -- Your heart, as always, is in the right place. But I would say that if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, we would be foolish not to admit it's a duck.

I couldn't agree more -- there is no knowing another's heart or mind. And I agree that seeing into our own true nature is our most important effort. AND ... we can assess another's actions and resolve to try to emulate what seems good (Gautama Buddha and his descendants, for example) and to steer clear of what can rightly be called foolish or harmful. No sense in being any stupider than I already am, right? Will we be correct in our assessment of what is good and trustworthy? We hope so, but let's admit it -- sometimes we're wrong. Will we be correct in our assessment of what is foolish and full of deception? We hope so, but let's admit it -- sometimes we're wrong.

With enough evidence, we can be relatively assured: Attachment doesn't work very well; compassion is worth understanding, etc. And likewise, from my point of view, I don't have to go on eating anchovies to know that I think they suck...or hang around a sewage treatment plant to know that the air can be foul... or a Zen teacher whose ACTIONS are foolish or harmful.

Just my perspective.

Well, I'm not making my meaning clear. I'm not saying we should emulate the mistakes of others, or that we should remain in an abusive relationship, or that we should not challenge wrongdoing ... I'm saying that there is always more to the story than we can see. And that at some point we need to expand our perspective. Forgiveness is a great healing. When it comes, if it comes, the blessings flow in all directions.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by shel on Thu Nov 12, 2009 1:08 am

Carol wrote:

... the story of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

Great, the one founding (in the west) teacher I hadn't heard a negative story about yet. If you've come here to help me you're wasting your time. But if you've come because your liberation is tied up with mine then let's work together. ~ Lilla Watson

The Hunger Project

shel

**by genkaku** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 1:17 am

Well, I'm not making my meaning clear. I'm not saying we should emulate the mistakes of others, or that we should remain in an abusive relationship, or that we should not challenge wrongdoing ... I'm saying that there is always more to the story than we can see. And that at some point we need to expand our perspective. Forgiveness is a great healing. When it comes, if it comes, the blessings flow in all directions.

Carol -- I'm afraid I am not making MY meaning clear. I couldn't agree with you more. Forgiveness or clarity is, as you might say, a great healing. But to the extent there is some anxiousness about addressing what might be unpleasant, to that extent precisely the healing will be incomplete.

Just my take.  
genkaku

**by Dan74** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 1:23 am

genkaku wrote:

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Dan74

**by Carol** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 1:29 am

genkaku wrote:

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Carol -- I'm afraid I am not making MY meaning clear. I couldn't agree with you more. Forgiveness or clarity is, as you might say, a great healing. But to the extent there is some anxiousness about addressing what might be unpleasant, to that extent precisely the healing will be incomplete.

Just my take.

To the extent that there is some anxiousness about addressing what is unpleasant, healing cannot take place. And, at some point, a different point for all of us, we have to put it down, too, in order for the healing to take place. Perhaps the two -- putting it down and healing are the same thing. For all those who are carrying the harm done by Eido Shimaon Roshi in their hearts, I wish only healing -- including the Roshi himself.

Thanks for sharing your insights here, Adam. These wounds run deep, don't they? I think this goes to the very heart of practice -- the unforgiveable nature of reality, until we forgive it

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for you are drunk,  
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~Rumi

Carol

**by christopher:::** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 2:04 am

Deep bows to you both, Carol and Adam. No matter how foul or distasteful, it seems like there's no such thing as a "life situation" which doesn't offer us the opportunity to deepen and further our practice.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by genkaku** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 3:33 am

These wounds run deep, don't they? I think this goes to the very heart of practice -- the unforgiveable nature of reality, until we forgive it

Carol -- No disrespect intended, but the above reminds me of a woman overheard by George Bernard Shaw to say, "I accept the universe." And GBS commented gruffly, "She damned well better."

The heart of practice, as you pointed out earlier, is the matter of our own true nature. As far as I can figure it, our true nature does not forgive the blue sky or the universe or foolish behavior ... it is just clear about such things.

genkaku

**by Jundo Cohen** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 4:28 am

Dan74 wrote:

What I am amazed about is what seems to be equivocation about this sort of behaviour, like some of the above posts. I am wondering if Jundo and some of the others had read the article. Yes, we are all human, still I don't know about others here, but I would expect my teacher to care more about the welfare of his students than his dick. I may be unrealistic here, in this day and age, but I really don't think so.

The sutras have warned about "demons" masquerading as dharma teachers, and indeed we have seen people who seem quite brilliant in some ways and yet they cause untold damage to those around them. Then we have others carrying on about "no one is perfect and it's your fault if you have fantasies of perfect Zen master." Please....

Yes, I do not wish what I wrote to be taken as excusing truly abusive or malevolent behavior, or the taking advantage of the student-teacher relationship in any way. I believe that tar and feathering, following on the heels of a good defrocking, would be the appropriate response to someone who oversteps a certain line in the sand.

Unfortunately, we do not have an organization in Western Zen to chastise or unrecognize teachers ... it being felt that it is up to each teacher or lineage to "take care of its own" juniors and members (which often does not happen ... these things tend to get swept under the rug, or a compromise reached where the offending teacher just "leaves and sets up his own group" or some such. I believe that Japanese Soto and Rinzai will "un-ordain" folks subject to their jurisdiction from time to time ... but it is not a subject of wide discussion, and probably pretty uncommon (knowing them, the most common reason may be for lack of payment of fees to the church ... certainly, there is the famous Uchiyama Gudo case, but that was politics).

Uchiyama Gudo (May 17, 1874–January 24, 1911) was a Soto Zen priest and anarcho-socialist activist executed in the High Treason Incident. He was one of few Buddhist leaders who spoke out against the Meiji government in its imperialist projects. Gudo was an outspoken advocate for redistributive land reform, overturning the Meiji emperor system, encouraging conscripts to desert en masse and advancing democratic rights for all.[1][2][3] He criticized Zen leaders who claimed that low social position was justified by karma and who sold abbotships to the highest bidder.[4]

In July of 1909, before Gudo's conviction, officials of the Soto Zen sect moved to deprive Gudo of his abbotship. After he was convicted, they deprived him of his status as a priest in June of 1910. Gudo continued to consider himself a priest until he died.

In 1993, the Soto Zen sect restored Gudo's status as a priest citing that "when viewed by today's standards of respect for human rights, Uchiyama Gudo's writings contain elements that should be regarded as farsighted" and that "the sect's actions strongly aligned the sect with an establishment dominated by the emperor system. They were not designed to protect the unique Buddhist character of the sect's priests".[11]  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uchiyama\\_Gudo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uchiyama_Gudo)

We do not even really have a mechanism in the West to publicize the names of so-called "Zen priests" who are operating under totally fictitious credentials and false personal histories (there are a few cases out there).

So, it is really a "buyer beware" situation ... and one should be careful about too much dependence on the teacher, as others have pointed out here. If something seems abusive about a relationship ... whether with a Zen teacher or other clergy, school teacher, doctor or psychologist .... run, don't walk, for the door.

Yet ... do not give up on this wondrous Practice in the process, baby with the bath water.

Gassho, J

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by Carol** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 6:08 am

genkaku wrote:

Carol -- No disrespect intended,

None taken.

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and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Christopher** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 11:35 am

PeterB wrote:

Why on earth is "forgiveness" a big word?

For one thing, it has 11 letters.

Christopher

**by PeterB** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 11:43 am

Blimey, that many. Oh well now I see the problem.

PeterB

**by PeterB** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 12:05 pm

No Chris not really. Unless we are to assume that forgiveness in the sense of letting go of imagined or real hurts is not part of the result of seeing things as they are. Which of course it is. And even if we do make that assumption which I would not and I dont believe that many Zen practitioners would either. But no one says these things do they ? Everyone would prefer to ignore the elephant in the room.



And most importantly it doesnt address the real crux of the issue, ok everyones been forgiven or not because Zen Buddhists are above such nonsense as forgiveness, its a sign of weakness and dualistic thinking. Now, what do you folks do about women who have been abused and their abusers, or does "clarity" somehow magic that issue away ? After all no abuse is possible in the great world of solipsism.

PeterB

**by christopher:::** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 1:29 pm

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Yes, that's most definitely the real crux of the issue, and a most important matter. Somewhat related, I'm concerned with what Jundo posted earlier...

Jundo Cohen wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

What I am amazed about is what seems to be equivocation about this sort of behaviour, like some of the above posts. I am wondering if Jundo and some of the others had read the article. Yes, we are all human, still I don't know about others here, but I would expect my teacher to care more about the welfare of his students than his dick. I may be unrealistic here, in this day and age, but I really don't think so.

The sutras have warned about "demons" masquerading as dharma teachers, and indeed we have seen people who seem quite brilliant in some ways and yet they cause untold damage to those around them. Then we have others carrying on about "no one is perfect and it's your fault if you have fantasies of perfect Zen master." Please....

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Unfortunately, we do not have an organization in Western Zen to chastise or unrecognize teachers ... it being felt that it is up to each teacher or lineage to "take care of its own" juniors and members (which often does not happen ... these things tend to get swept under the rug, or a compromise reached where the offending teacher just "leaves and sets up his own group" or some such. I believe that Japanese Soto and Rinzai will "un-ordain" folks subject to their jurisdiction from time to time ... but it is not a subject of wide discussion, and probably pretty uncommon (knowing them, the most common reason

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So, it is really a "buyer beware" situation ... and one should be careful about too much dependence on the teacher, as others have pointed out here. If something seems abusive about a relationship ... whether with a Zen teacher or other clergy, school teacher, doctor or psychologist .... run, don't walk, for the door.

Yet ... do not give up on this wondrous Practice in the process, baby with the bath water.

Gassho, J

Good points, Jundo san, but it sounds like there are not yet enough safeguards in place. There is also a disconnect when some teachers tell people "one should not try to practice Zen without a teacher" while others advise "one should be careful about too much dependence on a teacher."...

Perhaps both are true, but how one manages that hasn't been clarified, I think. Zen is new to the West, so I guess we just need to figure out some of these things as we go along...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Christopher** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 2:04 pm

Anyone care to comment on that rather suspect quote at the beginning of the article, about how the mind of a master is "pure" even while he's boozing and chasing women?

And who is this "master Sheng-Yen", anyway?

Christopher

**by genkaku** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 2:09 pm

Christopher wrote:

Anyone care to comment on that rather suspect quote at the beginning of the article, about how the mind of a master is "pure" even while he's boozing and chasing women?

And who is this "master Sheng-Yen", anyway?

I won't stick my head into the bee's nest of "purity," but here's Wikipedia on Sheng-Yen: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheng-yen> He is the author of the highly-regarded "Hoofprint of the Ox," among many other books. I was always sorry I hadn't found Hoofprint earlier on, when I was more patient with wonderful understandings.  
genkaku

**by Jundo Cohen** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 2:51 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Good points, Jundo san, but it sounds like there are not yet enough safeguards in place. There is also a disconnect when some teachers tell people "one should not try to practice Zen without a teacher" while others advise "one should be careful about too much dependence on a teacher."...

Perhaps both are true, but how one manages that hasn't been clarified, I think. Zen is new to the West, so I guess we just need to figure out some of these things as we go along...

One should not give oneself a root canal without a proper dentist in a properly equipped office. Just find a good doctor in a good environment.

One should not practice Zen without a Teacher and supportive Sangha. Just a find a good teacher in a good environment.

Asking around, checking reputations of long standing developed over many years ... an excellent way to find a physician or a teacher.

But, anyway, we have had this debate before ...

[viewtopic.php?p=20783#p20783](#)

People who practice this practice without the support of a Sangha and Teacher are also likely to end up in a self-abusive situation. This practice is just too likely to run off the rails if the self is left to its "me, myself and I" alone.

Just find a good Teacher and a supportive Sangha. It ain't rocket science.

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by partofit22** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 2:58 pm

Jundo Cohen "So, it is really a "buyer beware" situation ..." so it seems ... proceeding with caution isn't bad advice-

i don't think anyone wants their trust taken advantage of- but where, in this circumstance, was trust transformed into something else and how is it that only one is guilty of sexual misconduct? the man didn't have sex with himself- somewhere along the line, the sex was consensual- no? because if it wasn't, it would be rape, wouldn't it? was there any mention of that?

partofit22

**by christopher:::** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 3:40 pm

Jundo Cohen wrote:

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People who practice this practice without the support of a Sangha and Teacher are also likely to end up in a self-abusive situation. This practice is just too likely to run off the rails if the self is left to its "me, myself and I" alone.

I won't challenge you, since- as you say- we've had this conversation before.

Great post on the other end of that link. Thanks!

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher::  
Founding Member

**by Carol** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 3:55 pm

partofit22 wrote:

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Because of the unequal power dynamics and the vulnerability of a student seeking spiritual guidance, "consent" can be compromised in these situations. Not always, but it can be the case -- much like sexual relationships between psychotherapists or counselors and their patients or clients. In the "helping" professions, therapists can lose their license for such conduct if there are complaints.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by Carol** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 4:11 pm

Christopher wrote:

Anyone care to comment on that rather suspect quote at the beginning of the article, about how the mind of a master is "pure" even while he's boozing and chasing women?

And who is this "master Sheng-Yen", anyway?

Master Sheng Yen did not say "the mind of a master is pure even while he's boozing and chasing women." The quote at the beginning of the article is Stuart Lachs quoting his own book where he is allegedly quoting Master Sheng Yen ... we don't know what Master Sheng Yen actually said. But whatever it was, I'm certain Lachs has taken it out of context. Master Sheng Yen was a strict proponent of moral purity.

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~Rumi

Carol

Founding Member

**by Gregory Wonderwheel** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 4:25 pm

Moderator note. I have removed some posts from this topic because they diverged too far from the main topic and included matter that was a personal attack on another writer. There are some posts remaining that come very close to being removed for mentioning "motives" and seeming to imply that people were making "excuses" for Shimano's behavior when no one has made or implied excuses. These posts haven't been removed but any further posts discussing personalities, motives, or that appear to be mischaracterizing each others posts will be strictly moderated and removed. Because I'm taking this moderating action I won't wade into this very interesting topic. Please continue to to discuss, and feel free to be personal about yourself, just don't get into attacking or characterizing others. Thanks.

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, “The recognition of the one vehicle (一乘) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness.” ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel  
Global Moderator

by **Nonin** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 4:36 pm

Jundo wrote:

Unfortunately, we do not have an organization in Western Zen to chastise or unrecognize teachers ... it being felt that it is up to each teacher or lineage to "take care of its own" juniors and members (which often does not happen ... these things tend to get swept under the rug, or a compromise reached where the offending teacher just "leaves and sets up his own group" or some such.

It is true that it is up to each teacher or lineage to offer oversight to the practices and conduct of its own lineage holders, even after the person is teaching independently, and this frequently happens when someone strays. However, things do get "swept under the rug" sometimes; compromises are reached and someone quietly leaves and shows up elsewhere. How misconduct by teachers is handled depends on the integrity of the person's teacher or the senior members in the lineage and their willingness to confront misconduct openly and forthrightly and deal with it fairly. Some do; some don't.

Also, except for small sitting groups, most practice places in the United States are non-profit religious corporations, so they are legal entities under Internal Revenue Code 501 c-3. They have to have a Board of Directors, and that Board is legally and ethically responsible for the health and well-being of the organization. If a sangha member is sexually abused and damaged, a lawsuit may arise, and Board Members can be held legally responsible. So, it behooves Board Members to develop an Ethics Statement that outlines misconduct and confront clergy misconduct forthrightly, openly, and directly. If they don't, they have abdicated their responsibility.

Jundo also says,

I believe that Japanese Soto and Rinzai will "un-ordain" folks subject to their jurisdiction from time to time . . .

Yes, this is so, and it has also happened in the West. People have had their robes taken back and told not to teach, but this has been done by the person's teacher, not by a parent organization. However, the phrase "un-ordain" is problematic, for some hold that ordination has an ontological base and that once a person is ordained, she or he cannot be "un-ordained." Some hold that "un-ordination" can be done. I have taken robes back from two people that I priest ordained, not because of any misconduct on their part but because they were unable to complete their training.

A master can, however, revoke a disciple's authorization to teach, however, and disassociate themselves from the person. Whether the person stops teaching or not is problematic. There are no dharma police around who'll raid the practice place and put the offender in jail if they're teaching without authorization!

Jundo's right when he says that there's no overall parent organization in the West that can un-recognize teachers. However some members of the American Zen Teachers Association and the Soto Zen Buddhist Association make themselves available for counsel and if they are asked, will help when one of their members strays, and they have been asked to help, sometimes by the person, sometimes by sangha members. Also, some of us will speak with the member if rumors are floating around and try to help

I have counseled teachers who have strayed and committed sexual misconduct, and I've also tried to help sanghas who are dealing with the fallout from such misconduct. Every time, I've wished that I or someone else could have intervened before the misconduct occurred rather than trying to pick up the pieces after the explosion. The AZTA and the SZBA are trying to educate their members about the dangers of sexual and other misconduct, but because human beings are what they are, 100% success is not possible, so we're also exploring the best ways to pick up the pieces.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **Nonin** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 4:41 pm

Carol wrote:

partofit22 wrote:

Jundo Cohen "So, it is really a "buyer beware" situation ..." so it seems ... proceeding with caution isn't bad advice-

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consensual- no? because if it wasn't, it would be rape, wouldn't it? was there any mention of that?

Because of the unequal power dynamics and the vulnerability of a student seeking spiritual guidance, "consent" can be compromised in these situations. Not always, but it can be the case -- much like sexual relationships between psychotherapists or counselors and their patients or clients. In the "helping" professions, therapists can lose their license for such conduct if there are complaints.

Yes, Carol, this is true. Because of the power imbalance in the student / teacher relationships and the vulnerability of the student in such relationships, it is incumbent on the teacher not to enter into a sexual relationship. "Consent" cannot be used as an excuse in such situations.

Hands palm-to-palm,

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Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Linda Anderson** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 5:42 pm

Forgive me for jumping in before I have read any of this. I will take the time to read it. I had some initial impressions of a general nature, out of the box.

If there is a pedestal, it must come down. Perfection is not real in a mature spiritual perspective, we shouldn't expect it of our teachers. It is a setup for failure. In the laws of nature, one polarity naturally attracts the other. That does not dumb the teaching or teacher down to being "just like us" either which is a compensation to our own sense of inferiority. Tricky, isn't it. So, where is the unity?

Who could know what to do about it, if we believe in the natural flow of dharma. complicated and risky as it is. is this not the dharma wheel also? I think it's rather curious that some forms of playing God are condemned (like sexual actions) yet other forms, like punishment and judgement are not considered God-like. So, are we being honest here? Obviously, this is not addressing the laws of conventional society as we know it... I like the description of Maya as socialized consciousness. That is pause for meditation.

Yes, harm is done, or not. That is it too. Are there any mistakes that a heat seeking missile makes. It's an intense call for self-inquiry on everyone's part. I'm not an advocate of censure, I've seen it too many times to think there isn't culpability on both sides. As things slide off me, I find intense trust in all that is, which is a dangerous existence beyond what we know. Trust is a funny word when there's nothing out there... in the meantime, quietude can support our fears.

I have seen this in and out of zen. I have seen it dealt with only once in a healthy way, it was not a zen community. There was no defense, only an acceptance of the person's reaction on the part of the accused, for it was all about the reaction. Accused made no apologies, no excuses, no confessions either. For, it was none of anyones' business. The accuser came to discover his own self in the process. And, I saw the great Love and pain of the accused to provide such a teaching. It's a difficult path to walk, and it's so easy to judge.

After seeing that the incidents of 30 years ago and farther back have not healed yet, I wonder what has been accomplished. Maybe there's a clue that something is not working.

And, I'll refer back the the Watts article on Beat Zen, Square Zen... to know the unconscious side of our own culture. That is the most intenlligent article I've seen in a long time.

It goes without saying that this is my perspective, but it's so tedious to keep repeating that sentiment. I'll trust you to always know that, or know why you don't. It goes beyond perspective when it zings with another's sensibility. We all walk together, but do our own work, or not.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Carol** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 5:52 pm

Linda Anderson wrote:  
Forgive me for jumping in before I have read any of this. I will take the time to read it. I had some initial impressions of a general nature, out of the box.

Yes, Linda, you said it better than I did. Thank You.

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 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

**by Linda Anderson** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 5:59 pm

PS I thought it might be useful for you to know my spiritual path started with a teacher who taught us to do our own work, sent us home with tools. There was no access to call him back. He trusted that we would do what we needed to, even if that was to forget everything. Sitting in an eternal circle, listening to others who are oddly speaking for me, supports a compassionate view. He had the wisdom to teach what he knew, nothing beyond that. While he had never studied Buddhism in depth, he was Buddhist at heart. He studied the self deeply. So, it never occurred to me to put all my faith in anyone... but then, I don't think Buddhism encourages that either. So, who does?

Linda

Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by partofit22** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 6:08 pm

Linda Anderson wrote:

If there is a pedastal, it must come down.

beautiful- i was wondering how wonderful it might be if somehow "power" was absorbed by or assigned to equality- that nobody had any actual position considered above others, just different- more or less a mutual respect for what each other had to bring to the table -  
 - even if people don't agree with it-  
 partofit22

**by genkaku** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 6:31 pm

Perfection is not real in a mature spiritual perspective, we shouldn't expect it of our teachers.

Nicely said, Linda.

And then there are the facts.

The fact is that many do indeed expect something like 'perfection' -- from themselves, from their chosen teachers, from their spiritual endeavor, from their work or marriage or some other circumstance. With a little determination and patience, this longing is refined and re-seen, but during a time of longing for perfection, there is a vulnerability that is as touching as it may be misguided. Hope and belief are front and center on the big stage. We are not yet mature. In fact we all might be described as very immature. There is no talking immaturity out of a person. There are just suggestions that can be made together with the hope that the 'immature' person will elect to follow those suggestions. When the suggestions are nourishing, perhaps some good will come of it all. When the suggestions are made under cover of sincerity and kindness but are really self-serving ... well, there are problems and sometimes considerable pain.

Just noodling.  
genkaku

**by PeterB** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 6:41 pm

That would indeed be wonderful Partofit. It cuts several ways however, In my case I would not attempt to fix my car engine, but I know a man who can. In turn I may have skills that might be of use to him and his family sometime. In just the same way I know people who know more about meditation than I do, not just in the abstract sense or anything mystical, they are deeply acquainted with the mechanics of the mind and are able to make suggestions that can move one past the usual range of blocks. We must do the moving ourselves of course, but a word in the ear at the right time can be worth years of trial and error. And thats ok. we dont lose our individuality or succumb to cultishness by asking the right person for advice about practice.

If the besetting sin in the Vajrayana is a tendency to hand the keys of the meditation car over to an expert and let them do the work, it seems to me a besetting sin of western Zen people , and of course I could be well wide of the mark here, is to have an inverse snobbery and an exaggerated fear of anyone that seems to know a bit more, which then gets expressed as a kind of institutionalised " tall poppy syndrome".

In asking for advice in this area, we risk exposing ourselves to the tiny minority that might take advantage, that might take a financial turn, or if we are young and attractive it might be otherwise. The fact that it is caveat emptor need not mean nihil emptor.

PeterB

**by Nonin** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 8:50 pm

christopher::: said:

There is also a disconnect when some teachers tell people "one should not try to practice Zen without a teacher" while others advise "one should be careful about too much dependence on a teacher."...

There's no disconnect here. All teachers would probably say, "one should not try to practice Zen without a teacher" because all of them either practiced or still practice with a teacher. All teachers would also probably say, "one should be careful about too much dependence on a teacher," for their teachers, if they were good ones, taught them to stand on their own two feet, and if they themselves are good teachers, this is what they teach their students.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Nonin** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 11:11 pm

PeterB said:

it seems to me a besetting sin of western Zen people , and of course I could be well wide of the mark here, is to have an inverse snobbery and an exaggerated fear of anyone that seems to know a bit more, which then gets expressed as a kind of institutionalised " tall poppy syndrome".

I don't think that you're wide of the mark at all. Many Western people are either afraid of trusting in another person to guide their spiritual practice, too ego-ridden to accept advice, mistakingly think that they can do it themselves, are too individualistic too accept help, or, sadly, have heard of a few abusive teachers and are scared off. No Japanese, Korean, Chinese, or Vietnamese person would think of practicing Zen Buddhism without a teacher; it's ingrained in those cultures.

However, there are many, many serious Zen Buddhist practitioners in the West who do practice under the guidance of a teacher. From what I've seen over the past 30 years, they're in the majority of those interested in Zen. They get it; others don't.

By the way, Peter, what is "tall poppy syndrome?" Please explain. Is this another Scottish thing that doesn't travel well?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

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Nonin

**by partofit22** on Thu Nov 12, 2009 11:33 pm

PeterB wrote:

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In asking for advice in this area, we risk exposing ourselves to the tiny minority that might take advantage, that might take a financial turn, or if we are young and attractive it might be otherwise. The fact that it is caveat emptor need not mean nihil emptor.

i did mention difference, PeterB- and difference doesn't need to be elevated, although, in the Yellow Pages, i'm happy the sections are separated, for dopes like me, and labeled- it

even has full page ads- and little ones, too- page upon page of "professional(s)"- like poppies of every shade and height-

i completely agree about the benefits of the right words in the ear at the right time- totally- but i don't think there's anything unhealthy about giving credit where credit is due- there's nothing unhealthy about accepting credit either- obsessing about it is another story- no? but caution is important also- in choosing a teacher as it is i assume accepting a student -- or hiring a plumber or mechanic-

what i think, personally, fuels snobbery and caution i cannot say without being inflammatory- so, i won't- but there are examples of it- partofit22

**by genkaku** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 1:03 am

As a part of the themes offered in the original post here, I have posted on my blog a farewell letter to Eido Tai Shimano

The letter dates from 1982, but I believe that the difficulties it portrays persist today, whatever the enormous strides Zen Buddhism has made as regards sexual and power abuses. Yesterday is yesterday, it's true, but I also think that when our yesterdays are or may become very much our todays, then it is well to recall what actual human beings (not just historical pop-ups) experienced in the past.

As I say on the blog, I am not trying to claw open healed wounds or claim some oh-so-virtuous high seat with its ever-so-much-more-correct views. What I am trying to do is to place before any Zen student who cares to read it the potentials for decency and disaster we all face.

FWIW  
genkaku

**by Carol** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 6:02 am

genkaku wrote:

As a part of the themes offered in the original post here, I have posted on my blog a farewell letter to Eido Tai Shimano

This is a deeply moving letter, Adam. I can only begin to imagine the upheaval and pain that brought you to write it. And courage.

Eido's conduct was inexcusable and did great harm to many. I wish them all peace.

Carol

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

by shel on Fri Nov 13, 2009 6:59 am

Nonin wrote:

Many Western people are either afraid of trusting in another person to guide their spiritual practice, too ego-ridden to accept advice, mistakingly think that they can do it themselves, are too individualistic to accept help, or, sadly, have heard of a few abusive teachers and are scared off.

I couldn't help wondering how you acquired this knowledge. It would seem that you would have very little contact with such people. Was there some sort of survey taken? If so, would you mind posting the statistics? Or are you just talking about a handful of folks you've seen online?

If you've come here to help me you're wasting your time. But if you've come because your liberation is tied up with mine then let's work together. ~ Lilla Watson

The Hunger Project

shel

by **PeterB** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 9:16 am

"Tall Poppy Syndrome" Rev. Nonin is I believe actually Australian in origin.. I wasn't sure when I posted whether it was current in the USA. It refers to an seemingly inbuilt attitude that some people have towards anyone they see as having authority or greater knowledge. It is the knee jerk opposite to undue deference. It started off as an attitude to what was seen as unearned privilege, but has become extended beyond that. It carries an image of a field, in that field are a number of tall poppys, to some this provokes an urge to cut them all down to the same size.

I wonder whether to some extent Internet sites attract a proportion of Tall Poppy Syndromers who are attracted to that medium in a self selecting way because they can avoid face to face interaction with those Tall Poppys who are nimble and able to take



avoiding action when faced with the little clippers..It is social egalitarianism dragged into Buddhism not just as a recognition of individual equal worth, which is a proper thing, but as a blurring of roles, which is not. Teachers are teachers not because they are more like Buddhas, at least not all of them, they are teachers because they have a range of more useful stuff than the student does. Until the student becomes the teacher, which also happens.

Last edited by PeterB on Fri Nov 13, 2009 9:23 am, edited 1 time in total.  
PeterB

**by Carol** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 9:22 am

Wikipedia article on "Tall Poppy Syndrome"  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol  
Founding Member

**by christopher:::** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 10:23 am

As Rev. Nonin noted, rightly i think, many Western people have difficulty trusting in another person to guide their spiritual practice- for a variety of reasons. They may be too ego-ridden to accept advice or may believe they can do it themselves. They may also be fearful or mistrusting of individuals who present themselves as teachers and authorities, and yet do not seem to live, act, speak and/or think very wisely. Just as there are ego-driven students such as described by Peter, who flock to the Internet, there are "teachers" of this type as well, imo. We've all put our time in over at the Grey Forum, so we've all seen this...

BUT this Poppy Cutting issue is beside the point. Big Student/Teacher Egos verbally attempting to knock one another down on the Internet is not the topic we are discussing. The issue here that Adam (genkaku) has brought to our attention is actual physical abuse by teachers, in flesh and blood sangha situations.

I think to talk about these ego-driven communication dynamics is a diversion from what is way more troubling- actual physical and psychological abuse. That's what creates more distrust and serious problems than any Internet pissing matches i've seen. Please read genkaku's letter, if you haven't already...

genkaku wrote:

As a part of the themes offered in the original post here, I have posted on my blog a farewell letter to Eido Tai Shimano

Thank you for sharing this.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Founding Member

by **PeterB** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 10:47 am

I think that there is a direct connection Chris. I think it works in a number of ways. It means that the issues arising from sexual and other forms of exploitation cannot be properly examined if, instead of a cool look at the issues, they are simply dismissed due to Tall Poppy Syndrome. In other words if the contention is that the issue is not abuse, its the fact that there are authoratative teachers at all. And if what is being said is that because we all have Buddha Nature the function of a hands on teacher is at best superflous then the problem is seen as one of status per se, as levelling, rather than as that of a minority of teachers who abuse their position, but whose behaviour does not negate the need for teachers who do not abuse their position. I think any diversion of the thread comes from a very different position, i.e. that any stick is good enough to beat the teacher with. Because magically and despite all of the overwhelming evedence to the contrary we are all somehow already Buddhas and so do not need teachers apart from wavy smilies on websites. That leaves a vacuum in which people are either phobic about teachers, or do not have the necessary information to distinguish the abuser from the non abuser until after the abuse.

NB I have read Adams letter. Adams position in this issue is not one that I am addressing. Adam has paid his dues both as a student and a teacher, and I write that as one who takes a fundamentally different view of various aspects of the Dharma than does Adam. But Adam has reached his different conclusions at the coal face, as have I , not by reading about coal, or visiting coal mines without getting his hands dirty.

Would that this were true of everyone who ventures opinions on this and other Buddhist websites.

PeterB

by **Dan74** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 11:00 am

I'd only like to say to Genkaku and everyone else who has ever had their trust so deeply betrayed I am sorry.

Thank you for your courage to share it with us. It's an uncomfortable truth that one would like to look away from, to rationalize away, to turn into something good. Facing it as it is, is heart-wrenching.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Carol** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 11:45 am

christopher::: wrote:

I think to talk about these ego-driven communication dynamics is a diversion from what is way more troubling- actual physical and psychological abuse.

Everything being said here is directly related to the actual abuse that took place ... the questions are: "What do we do about it?" "What do we learn from it?" "How do those who were hurt by it find healing?" "Is anything in our Zen (or Buddhist) practice even relevant to these questions?" "If not, why do we practice?"

As Peter said, some of us have actually been at the coal face, I would add myself and Nonin in that group along with Peter and Adam. That we see it from different perspectives is not a diversion, it is a fact of experience and practice deserving respect.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol  
Founding Member

**by PeterB** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 11:50 am

So would I Carol, you and Ven Nonin and Rev Jundo, et al, the sooty marks of the coalface are always visible to those who also carry them..

PeterB

by **genkaku** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 12:20 pm

Nonin wrote:

Many Western people are either afraid of trusting in another person to guide their spiritual practice, too ego-ridden to accept advice, mistakingly think that they can do it themselves, are too individualistic to accept help, or, sadly, have heard of a few abusive teachers and are scared off.

I agree with this. The individualistic, anti-authoritarian, let's-play-democracy insinences can really get in the way of a fruitful link between student and teacher. And, in the very same breath, the teacher-knows-best, teacher-is-enlightened, dig-my-lockstep-consent views can also poison the well.

I suspect that any serious student has felt the lash of what are sometimes slickly referred to as extremes. I say "lash" because it requires some real, personal, no-kidding patience and determination to take a lickin' and keep on tickin' -- to find the middle way that does not just come from a book. This is a living, breathing koan for my money and what makes it hard, as with any koan, is that there is no single, cookie-cutter answer, no one-size-fits-all middle way. To find the middle way, the peaceful way, is your job and mine ... it's damned hard work because, praise or blame as we may, still, it is my responsibility. Dontcha just hate that? I know I have. My responsibility if I praise. My responsibility if I blame. My responsibility if I fake neither-praising-nor-blaming. My responsibility if I dance around pretending that there is no ego. My responsibility if I imagine I know what compassion is. My responsibility if I claim there is no 'me.' My responsibility if I cling to Buddhism or flee from it. The list is endless.

Practice, practice, practice.  
genkaku

by **Christopher** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 12:42 pm

genkaku wrote:

I have posted on my blog a farewell letter to Eido Tai Shimano

Man, all I could think of when reading these testimonials is that Eido sure dropped the ball in bringing the dharma to the west. I can't imagine what people like Aitken and the folks at DBZ must have been thinking. Amazing.

And the fact that Eido's still out there teaching, sexcapades or no, means that this is not old news.

Christopher

by **PeterB** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 12:42 pm

Indeed indeed indeed.  
PeterB

by **Nonin** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 12:53 pm

praxis wrote:

Nonin wrote:

Many Western people are either afraid of trusting in another person to guide their spiritual practice, too ego-ridden to accept advice, mistakingly think that they can do it themselves, are too individualistic too accept help, or, sadly, have heard of a few abusive teachers and are scared off.

I couldn't help wondering how you acquired this knowledge. It would seem that you would have very little contact with such people. Was there some sort of survey taken? If so, would you mind posting the statistics? Or are you just talking about a handful of folks you've seen online?

I've been teaching independently since 1989, praxis, not only at our temple, but as a guest teacher at many practice places in the U.S. I've spoken privately with a variety of people, fielded questions after giving talks from hundreds more and am frequently e-mailed by people seeking advice. I'm also active in two national Zen teachers groups where we discuss issues like this. My statements on this issue are based on my personal experience and the experience of other Zen teachers. If a person practices in sangha under the guidance of a teacher and has much experience interacting with other Zen students, this issue becomes clearer and clearer.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

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Nonin

**by partofit22** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 3:09 pm

Carol wrote:

As Peter said, some of us have actually been at the coal face, I would add myself and Nonin in that group along with Peter and Adam. That we see it from different perspectives is not a diversion, it is a fact of experience and practice deserving respect.

We dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig  
 In a mine the whole day through!  
 To dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig  
 Is what we like to do!

partofit22

**by PeterB** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 3:22 pm

Well sometimes it what we dont like to do, but needs must...  
 One of my teachers used to say it might be best not to even start with this business but if you do you have to see it through...  
 PeterB

**by christopher:::** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 3:59 pm

Carol wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

I think to talk about these ego-driven communication dynamics is a diversion from what is way more troubling- actual physical and psychological abuse.

Everything being said here is directly related to the actual abuse that took place ... the questions are: "What do we do about it?" "What do we learn from it?" "How do those who were hurt by it find healing?" "Is anything in our Zen (or Buddhist) practice even relevant to these questions?" "If not, why do we practice?"

As Peter said, some of us have actually been at the coal face, I would add myself and Nonin in that group along with Peter and Adam. That we see it from different perspectives is not a diversion, it is a fact of experience and practice deserving respect.

Thanks for your thoughtful response, Carol. If you all feel up to it-- Peter, Adam, Nonin and others who have actually been in these kinds of situations... How would you respond to these questions?

The questions are: "What do we do about it?" "What do we learn from it?" "How do those who were hurt by it find healing?" "Is anything in our Zen (or Buddhist) practice even relevant to these questions?" "If not, why do we practice?"

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher::  
 Founding Member

**by christopher:::** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 4:08 pm

genkaku wrote:

Nonin wrote:

Many Western people are either afraid of trusting in another person to guide their spiritual practice, too ego-ridden to accept advice, mistakingly think that they can do it themselves, are too individualistic too accept help, or, sadly, have heard of a few abusive teachers and are scared off.

I agree with this. The individualistic, anti-authoritarian, let's-play-democracy insitences can really get in the way of a fruitful link between student and teacher. And, in the very same breath, the teacher-knows-best, teacher-is-enlightened, dig-my-lockstep-consent views can also poison the well.

I suspect that any serious student has felt the lash of what are sometimes slickly referred to as extremes. I say "lash" because it requires some real, personal, no-kidding patience and determination to take a lickin' and keep on tickin' -- to find the middle way that does not just come from a book. This is a living, breathing koan for my money and what makes it hard, as with any koan, is that there is no single, cookie-cutter answer, no one-size-fits-all middle way. To find the middle way, the peaceful way, is your job and mine ... it's damned hard work because, praise or blame as we may, still, it is my responsibility. Dontcha just hate that? I know I have. My responsibility if I praise. My responsibility if I blame. My responsibility if I fake neither-praising-nor-blaming. My responsibility if I dance around pretending that there is no ego. My responsibility if I imagine I know what compassion is. My responsibility if I claim there is no 'me.' My responsibility if I cling to Buddhism or flee from it. The list is endless.

Practice, practice, practice.

Looks like Adam already responded.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by partofit22** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 4:10 pm

Nonin wrote: Many Western people are either afraid of trusting in another person to guide their spiritual practice, too ego-ridden to accept advice

Nonin wrote: I've spoken privately with a variety of people, fielded questions after giving talks from hundreds more and am frequently e-mailed by people seeking advice

must be frustrating- yet emancipating- people seeking advice merely to disagree with it- it reminds me of me, and the times i tried to tie my own flies and fish only to find the hobby seemed more than i had to offer it-  
partofit22

**by Nonin** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 4:17 pm

genkaku wrote:

As a part of the themes offered in the original post here, I have posted on my blog a farewell letter to Eido Tai Shimano

I've read your letter, Adam. It was painful to read, and I can't imagine how painful it must have been for you and others to go through these experiences.

I practiced in the mid-1980's at San Francisco Zen Center and at it's monastery, Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, shortly after the similar incidents concerning Richard Baker's behavior became public. My master, Dainin Katagiri, served as abbot there after Richard Baker was forced out. The pain of practitioners at SFZC, many of them long-term, and the sense of betrayal was palpable back then, and it took a long time for the sangha to heal. Fortunately, SFZC recovered and is solid now, but some people still carry the scars from those unfortunate events.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

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Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

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Nonin

Global Moderator



by **Nonin** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 4:49 pm

genkaku wrote:

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I agree with this. The individualistic, anti-authoritarian, let's-play-democracy insitences can really get in the way of a fruitful link between student and teacher. And, in the very same breath, the teacher-knows-best, teacher-is-enlightened, dig-my-lockstep-consent views can also poison the well.

Absolutely. This kind of attitude can also be poisonous and very dangerous, for it can leave the student open to be manipulated in many ways -- sexually, financially, and otherwise -- and is not conducive to productive practice.

As a teacher, I'm very wary of people who are overly deferential, rush to do anything asked, or who put me up on a pedestal. I climb down from it as soon as I can, and I strive to present myself as I am, warts and all, not as somebody's idea of what a Zen teacher is or supposed to be.

I've discussed all of the issues we're discussing here with sangha members at our temple over the years and fortunately, I have some senior, long-time students who would not hesitate to tell me if my behavior either is or looks questionable. A while ago, a senior student asked me about my relationship with a female student who was occupying much of my time. I explained things to the person, eased her mind, and spoke with other senior students and asked them if they were concerned about my behavior.

Our temple by-laws state that my ultimate responsibility as Abbot is to set up and maintain our practices and to guide students in them. The ultimate responsibility of the Board of Directors is to oversee business and financial matters and to insure the on-going viability of the temple. This does not mean that our activities don't overlap or that we do not have opinions or concerns about them. If we do, we discuss them in an open meeting. Ultimately, the Board of Directors has the power to replace me if my behavior becomes counter-productive to the health and well-being of the temple and its members.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

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Nonin wrote:

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Ultimately, the Board of Directors has the power to replace me if my behavior becomes counter-productive to the health and well-being of the temple and its members.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

This sounds truly wonderful to me.

Thank you.  
genkaku

**by Carol** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 5:08 pm

genkaku wrote:

I agree with this. The individualistic, anti-authoritarian, let's-play-democracy insitences can really get in the way of a fruitful link between student and teacher. And, in the very same breath, the teacher-knows-best, teacher-is-enlightened, dig-my-lockstep-consent views can also poison the well.

One thing, the past 20-30 years or so American Zen has not stood stationary. The cautionary tales of Eido Shimano Roshi, Dick Baker Roshi, Maezumi Roshi had an impact. Second and Third generation American teachers moved Zen more into harmony with American culture. Not that it has become a democracy ... but the fantasy that teachers are or should be all-knowing, infallible, authoritarians has been modified considerably. Codes of Ethics have been widely adopted, grievance and reconcillation committees widely formed, and so on. At the sangha where I practice the teacher is loathe to assume the projections of students that he is some "higher" being, and disabuses us of such projections regularly. At the same time, if someone wants to practice Zen, he's all there and willing to teach with no bullshit. But, when we're in a "management meeting" he can be argued with and generally takes it with good grace. Sometimes he's wrong. He's not a good administrator, but sometimes gets his way anyway. And then we work with that, too, just like when anyone else is wrong. It's a pretty forgiving no-bullshit place, where we're all humans stepping off the 100-foot pole together.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by shel on Fri Nov 13, 2009 7:15 pm

Nonin wrote:

praxis wrote:

Nonin wrote:

Many Western people are either afraid of trusting in another person to guide their spiritual practice, too ego-ridden to accept advice, mistakingly think that they can do it themselves, are too individualistic to accept help, or, sadly, have heard of a few abusive teachers and are scared off.

I couldn't help wondering how you acquired this knowledge. It would seem that you would have very little contact with such people. Was there some sort of survey taken? If so, would you mind posting the statistics? Or are you just talking about a handful of folks you've seen online?

I've been teaching independently since 1989, praxis, not only at our temple, but as a guest teacher at many practice places in the U.S. I've spoken privately with a variety of people, fielded questions after giving talks from hundreds more and am frequently e-mailed by people seeking advice. I'm also active in two national Zen teachers groups where we discuss issues like this. My statements on this issue are based on my personal experience and the experience of other Zen teachers. If a person practices in sangha under the guidance of a teacher and has much experience interacting with other Zen students, this issue becomes clearer and clearer.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Think I may have misunderstood you Nonin, sorry.

You're talking about student who are practicing with teachers but are uncooperative? That's interesting.

If the uncooperative students are not giving up then perhaps it's just a phase of development?

If you've come here to help me you're wasting your time. But if you've come because your liberation is tied up with mine then let's work together. ~ Lilla Watson

The Hunger Project

shel

by genkaku on Fri Nov 13, 2009 9:02 pm

If the uncooperative students are not giving up then perhaps it's just a phase of development?

Keith can correct me if I've got this wrong, but I think there is a story about Soen Sa Nimh in which he told a particular student to get a haircut. The student refused, saying something along the lines of "I like my hair the way it is." SSN repeated that the student should get a haircut. And again the student refused. Back and forth it went until finally the student said all right, he'd get a haircut. At which point SSN said, "Now you don't need one."

genkaku

**by Carol** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 9:21 pm

Consider all phenomena to be dreams.  
 Be grateful to everyone.  
 Don't be swayed by outer circumstances.  
 Don't brood over the faults of others.  
 Explore the nature of unborn awareness.  
 At all times simply rely on a joyful mind.  
 Don't expect a standing ovation.

~Atisha

(quoted by Joseph Goldstein at the end of his talk The Buddha; Song of Enlightenment; Achieved Is The End of Craving , thanks to Christopher::: for posting it elsewhere)

It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol  
 Founding Member

**by genkaku** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 9:27 pm

Be grateful to everyone.

I was just sitting here thinking how grateful I am to all the positive and nourishing directions evident in this thread. Sure, there are some bounces and some bullshit, but there is also some truly wonderful stuff, I think.

genkaku

by **Carol** on Fri Nov 13, 2009 11:10 pm

genkaku wrote:

Be grateful to everyone.

I was just sitting here thinking how grateful I am to all the positive and nourishing directions evident in this thread. Sure, there are some bounces and some bullshit, but there is also some truly wonderful stuff, I think.

Me, too.

Do you know the koan, "It's all for your benefit, Acharya" ... I'm often reminded of it.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

by **Jok\_Hae** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 3:19 am

genkaku wrote:

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Keith can correct me if I've got this wrong, but I think there is a story about Soen Sa Nimh in which he told a particular student to get a haircut. The student refused, saying something along the lines of "I like my hair the way it is." SSN repeated that the student should get a haircut. And again the student refused. Back and forth it went until finally the student said all right, he'd get a haircut. At which point SSN said, "Now you don't need one."

Hi Genkaku,

That is a story from Dropping Ashes on the Buddha:

One of my first students in America had very long blond hair, which he wore in a pony-tail. One day I said to him, 'I think it would be good if you cut your hair.' He said, 'No no, I like my hair the way it is.' I said, 'If you are attached to your hair, you cannot attain enlightenment.' 'Okay, then I will cut my hair.' 'Fine. Now you don't need to cut it.' So he learned that being a true hippie is having no attachments. Afterwards, he did hard training and soon understood."

He wasn't trying exert control over the student, he was just demonstrating the student's attachment to his hair. We all have have our little roadblocks that we set-up to protect ourselves. And, with practice, those road blocks seem kind of silly once they come down. Thanks for bringing up the story.

Good luck and thanks for practicing,  
Keith  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by AlasdairGF** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 12:27 pm

Jok\_Hae wrote:

He wasn't trying exert control over the student, he was just demonstrating the student's attachment to his hair. We all have have our little roadblocks that we set-up to protect ourselves. And, with practice, those road blocks seem kind of silly once they come down.

Keith, does history (or legend!) relate whether the student eventually did cut his hair?!

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF  
Global Moderator

**by genkaku** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 1:54 pm

AlasdairGF wrote:

Jok\_Hae wrote:

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Keith, does history (or legend!) relate whether the student eventually did cut his hair?!

Does it matter?  
genkaku

**by Dan74** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 1:56 pm

What I find most disturbing about this story is how someone like that could get sanction from a number of respected teachers who seemed oblivious to the fact that the guy, far from a Bodhisattva, was a predatory and abusive womaniser and continued to turn a blind eye to the problem for sometime even after they were alerted to it by Aitken Roshi, say.

I am wondering how much faith one can put in that entire lineage?

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by genkaku** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 2:13 pm

Dan74 wrote:

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I am wondering how much faith one can put in that entire lineage?

\_/\\_

Dan -- Is this perhaps why Gautama was alleged to have said: "It is not what others do and do not do that is my concern. It is what I do and do not do -- that is my concern"?

If a friend or enemy does something wrong, aren't we instructed?

If a friend or enemy does something right, aren't we instructed?

Is it the friend or foe, right or wrong, that matters so much or is it instead the instruction we consent to act on?

genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 2:19 pm

Thanks once again for starting this discussion, Adam, and to everyone else for joining in.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::



Founding Member

by **Dan74** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 2:25 pm

Thank you for replying, Adam.

Hmmm... to me it seems to be useful to know where to go to find good teachers.

For instance, after reading through this thread I would not hurry to visit Zen Studies Society in the hope of meeting Eido Shimano. Life is short and I would rather meet a genuine teacher.

Now if his teachers failed to see the problem and address it once it was pointed out, I can't see how they could be legitimate heirs of Hakuin and Dogen. And if not, well...

So I don't see how your response really addresses this...

\_/\\_

Dan74

by **christopher:::** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 2:40 pm

Dan, you might appreciate Jundo's thoughts here, on dharma transmission...

Jundo Cohen wrote:

[viewtopic.php?p=20783#p20783](http://viewtopic.php?p=20783#p20783)

As Zengetsu said:

Living in the world yet not forming attachments to the dust of the world is the way of a true Zen student.

When witnessing the good action of another encourage yourself to follow his example. Hearing of the mistaken action of another, advise yourself not to emulate it.

Even though alone in a dark room, be as if you were facing a noble guest. Express your feelings, but become no more expressive than your true nature.

A person may appear a fool and yet not be one. He may only be guarding his wisdom carefully.

Virtues are the fruit of self-discipline and do not drop from heaven of themselves as does rain or snow.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher::  
 Founding Member

by **genkaku** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 3:30 pm

Dan -- I apologize. Let me try this:

At the time it occurred, I hated the shit-storm that blew into the zendo I attended. It confused me. It made me angry. It blew gaping holes in the tapestry of what I thought Zen practice was and what I imagined Zen Buddhism implied. And I'm not just saying this stuff -- it was painful.

Like any other student, I had my store of uncertainty and suffering and saw Buddhism as a way of easing or clarifying my confusions. In the books I read and lectures I heard as I wove my tapestry, everyone was more clear-headed than I was. No one ever screwed the pooch -- made the mistakes I was all too capable of making. I believed stuff like "our lineage reaches all the way back to Shakyamuni Buddha." The statement was true, but I was in no position (had no capacity) to know exactly how true it was...so I believed it and wove it into my tapestry of hope and effort.

And then the shit hit the fan. My trust and tapestry -- like the trust and tapestry of others - - had been violated, big time. It was as if someone joked, "This is Buddhism ... NOT!" But of course it was not funny at all.

When things get blown to smithereens, I guess what anyone does is to try to salvage what they can. Buddhism, love affairs, it doesn't matter what. So what could be salvaged from this shit storm. Facts were facts and there was no escaping them. I might be hurt that my tapestry had been shredded, but was there anything I could use these shredded fragments for ... was there some new tapestry, one that addressed my confusions before and after the shit storm, I could weave? I was worried that Buddhism had somehow been sullied and upended, but was that actually the case or was it the case that I had been knocked down and angered and confused by events?

As I saw it at the time, there were two choices -- neither of them politely expressed. Either I could say, "Fuck 'em all ... all those Buddhists with their hypocritical smarm and philosophy and goodness that was hardly goodness at all" or I could revise my thinking. And what I came up with for my own personal use was this: "The teacher may be a liar, but zazen is no liar." I was pretty hard-headed and hard-hearted in this conclusion ...

pushing away the hypocrisies I felt I had endured and yet continuing a practice that I felt actually addressed my confusions and uncertainties.

Rinzai once said, "grasp and use, but never name." I take this to mean that we use the circumstances of our lives -- the actual-factual circumstances, not the well-woven tapestries of imagination -- to get to the bottom of things. The short version of all this is sometimes called "growing up." Maybe Buddhism as a practice is just a matter of "growing up."

Of course we extend our trust to those who seem trust-worthy. Of course we rely on our hopes and beliefs as a means of encouraging our investigations. Of course we feel wounded when our trust is betrayed. Of course we talk sweetly of the wisdom and heritage of Buddhism. Of course we hope against hope that confusion and sorrow will be eased. As a child trusts a parent, so, perhaps, we extend our trust to Buddhism. It is appropriate and understandable.

I once read the news story of a little girl who was beaten -- eventually beaten to death -- by her mother. The mother was in court, charged with murder. Testimony during that trial uncovered the fact that even as the little girl was being beaten, she would cry out, "I love you." (It tears my heart out even to tell that story).

And aren't the circumstances of that trial -- though thankfully less extreme -- the way things really are in our lives. Fall down seven times, get up eight. There is the tapestry of "Buddhism" and then there is Buddhism. Nothing wrong with tapestries of lineage and teachers and temples and texts, but all of them leave open the question of actual-factual Buddhism, of actual-factual growing up.

Growing up is not a process that can be accelerated. We can talk ourselves blue in the face about emptiness or compassion or love or joy or freedom or wondrous lineage -- and it can act as a wonderful encouragement -- but wanting to be a grown-up and being a grown-up are not the same thing.

We practice.

We practice when the teachers are good. We practice when the teachers are fools. We practice in sunshine. We practice in rain. We practice with deep devotion to lineage. We practice in places where lineage cannot enter. We practice with tears of joy. We practice with tears of sorrow.

Good teachings are good teachings. Thank you very much. Bad teachings are bad teachings. Thank you very much. Good teachings, bad teachings ... isn't it, in an actual-factual sense rather than a gee-I-hope sense, pretty good teaching? Glossing over idiocies would be as idiotic as glossing over kindnesses. But still, we practice.

And practice, why? Because it is better to be a grown-up than to imagine being one. There is "Buddhism" and then there is Buddhism.

Sorry ... I got off on a bit of a toot there. I hope it is somewhat more responsive to your concerns.

genkaku

**by Nonin** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 3:34 pm

Dan74 wrote:

What I find most disturbing about this story is how someone like that could get sanction from a number of respected teachers who seemed oblivious to the fact that the guy, far from a Bodhisattva, was a predatory and abusive womaniser and continued to turn a blind eye to the problem for sometime even after they were alerted to it by Aitken Roshi, say.

I am wondering how much faith one can put in that entire lineage?

\_/\\_

A certain percentage of we humans are going to go crazy, Dan. The next one could be me; or, it could be you.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sat Nov 14, 2009 4:46 pm

AlasdairGF wrote:

Jok\_Hae wrote:

He wasn't trying exert control over the student, he was just demonstrating the student's attachment to his hair. We all have have our little roadblocks that we set-up to protect ourselves. And, with practice, those road blocks seem kind of silly once they come down.

Keith, does history (or legend!) relate whether the student eventually did cut his hair?!

Hi Alasdair,

I am not sure. I feel pretty confident that if he did, Dae Soen Sa Nim didn't make him, or really care either way!

The story did remind of sitting in the barber shop in basic training (right before they hooked us up to the brainwashing machines! sorry, couldn't resist. ) and watching a CA surfer guy getting his long blond hair cut. He literally had tears in eyes!

Keith  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by christopher:::** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 2:35 am

genkaku wrote:

As a part of the themes offered in the original post here, I have posted on my blog a farewell letter to Eido Tai Shimano

Just read through your letter again, Adam.

Perhaps the mythology of Zen can become a burden, especially when it becomes entwined with one's sense of identity? The robes, the roles, the dharma name and position- the title of "Zen master" - they create an identity which teachers have to carry. This is no small challenge.

Same can be said for any other cultural role or title which is presumed to be a recognition of wisdom, expertise and authority- president, teacher, doctor, counselor, priest, scientist, etc...

The majority of professionals do a good job, of course, same for dharma teachers. But for some the position of assumed expertise and wisdom may become a burden. People have incredibly high expectations of you, look up to YOU. Call you Sensei, Roshi, Master, Rinpoche, Professor, Doctor, "Mr. President"....

A little bit of insecurity, a touch of narcissism, strong sexual desires, a love of alcohol, a desire for fame or fortune... these can become magnified, fed by the adulation, hero worship, praise and idolization... creating an illusion of specialness and SELF that may sow even more trouble and havoc in one's sphere of influence than they might for the average Joe....

Best not to put our teachers up on a pedestal. I think Nonin and Jundo have described that wisely. The myths should be seen as such. We can bow to one another, learn from those who are wiser than ourselves, without holding illusions and expectations that don't fit with reality...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher::  
Founding Member

**by partofit22** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 3:03 am

"Best not to put our teachers up on a pedestal. I think Nonin and Jundo have described that wisely."

absolutely- but after linda and carol had done so -- wisely ...  
anyone else see a pattern here?!

partofit22

**by genkaku** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 3:10 am

partofit22 wrote:

"Best not to put our teachers up on a pedestal. I think Nonin and Jundo have described that wisely."

absolutely- but after linda and carol had done so -- wisely ...  
anyone else see a pattern here?!

Addicted to wisdom.  
Addicted to ignorance.  
Anyone else see a pattern here?  
genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 3:19 am

When I started studying for my Ph.D. in grad school (late 1980s) a part of my personality was excited at the prospect of being called "Doc" by future students, or Dr. C\_\_\_\_\_ one day. To my ego's disappointment, all the Profs and Ph.D.s at our University had dropped

the use of the term. Dr. Bandura was now "Al", Dr. Greeno asked students to call him "Jim..."

The culture had shifted, thankfully.

Last edited by christopher::: on Sun Nov 15, 2009 4:00 am, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by partofit22** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 4:26 am

genkaku wrote:

Addicted to wisdom.

Addicted to ignorance.

Anyone else see a pattern here?

sounds well balanced!

partofit22

**by Dan74** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 9:10 am

Nonin wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

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\_/\\_

A certain percentage of we humans are going to go crazy, Dan. The next one could be me; or, it could be you.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

I am not following, Nonin.

Dan74

**by Dan74** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 9:26 am

christopher::: wrote:

Dan, you might appreciate Jundo's thoughts here, on dharma transmission...

Jundo Cohen wrote:

<http://www.zenforuminternational.org/vi ... 783#p20783>

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Virtues are the fruit of self-discipline and do not drop from heaven of themselves as does rain or snow.

Chris, this is great, but I challenge you to go to a local quack when you need brain surgery. And if you find the quack actually is an accredited surgeon but has no idea, would you not lose faith in the system that accredited him?

Quoting other people's words, lets not forget common sense here. I was just speaking on that level. Common sense.

A recent example at work: A highly respected mathematical journal published a paper. A colleague whose work the paper referenced read it and dicovered that it was completely wrong. Unsalvageable. It's pretty embarrassing that the referees had let it through especially at a journal like that. He wrote a note to the journal explaining why they paper was wrong and unfixable. Some time later they wrote back saying they have a backlog of papers and even if it is correct, they will not be able to publish it. In other words they will let the wrong paper stand and let other mathematicians base their work on it. As a result



our esteem for this journal took a nose-dive. This is common sense isn't it? Well the case of Shimano sounds very similar to me on this level.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Dan74** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 10:15 am

Dear Adam,

Thank you for what you wrote. I read it and re-read it and I appreciate much of what you've said, but I still don't see how it addresses what I was asking, but I guess it doesn't matter.

Thank you for sharing what you've shared.

\_/\\_

genkaku wrote:

Dan -- I apologize. Let me try this:

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And practice, why? Because it is better to be a grown-up than to imagine being one. There is "Buddhism" and then there is Buddhism.

Sorry ... I got off on a bit of a toot there. I hope it is somewhat more responsive to your concerns.

Dan74

by **Linda Anderson** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 10:43 am

A few responses, out of the box.

After I wrote my response and then went off to work last week ... while opening the car door, I thought... no, I have no need to read the "stuff", there's nothing new in the universe. The "stuff" being the long article. I did read the forum responses. Good thread... varying responses.

The following comment is not meant to support or not support the issue of teacher student relations.

But, is this beginning to sound a bit like the legislature discussing (in my imagination) whether abortion is or is not right for a woman. So, who knows that? There is karma, there are consequences, mother earth knows what to do when we are gone.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

by **christopher:::** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 11:09 am

Dan74 wrote:

Chris, this is great, but I challenge you to go to a local quack when you need brain surgery. And if you find the quack actually is an accredited surgeon but has no idea, would you not lose faith in the system that accredited him?

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A recent example at work: A highly respected mathematical journal published a paper. A colleague whose work the paper referenced read it and discovered that it was completely wrong. Unsalvageable. It's pretty embarrassing that the referees had let it through especially at a journal like that. He wrote a note to the journal explaining why the paper was wrong and unfixable. Some time later they wrote back saying they have a backlog of papers and even if it is correct, they will not be able to publish it. In other words they will let the wrong paper stand and let other mathematicians base their work on it. As a result our esteem for this journal took a nose-dive. This is common sense isn't it? Well the case of Shimano sounds very similar to me on this level.

\_/\\_

I also re-read thru Genkaku's letter. And i was honestly so thrown off by the details of the opening article, concerning a) what Robert Aitken discovered in the 1960s about Shimano sensei, and b) the way these facts were hushed up by those around him-- the wider Zen Sangha -- that i (and others) have perhaps been avoiding some of the implications here.

We know that the American Zen Teachers Association has tried to address this, but Jundo has said "buyer beware." How big of a problem is this, STiLL? Unfortunately, situations like these arise far too easily when there is a huge power imbalance in relationships and human beings meet in privacy. Was Shimano an extreme case, a blip, or is this kind of situation widespread? Are the roots of the problem back in how things are done in Japan or in part endemic to the way Zen is being taught here in the West?

I really don't know. Your response is understandable.

I think for many this issue is something like a family issue. We are discussing dysfunction in the family, the sangha. It's a huge can of worms but it has to be faced. Hopefully the worst of it is what we are aware of, and there are not greater "secrets" hiding in the shadows.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Anders Honore** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 12:16 pm

genkaku wrote:

As a part of the themes offered in the original post here, I have posted on my blog a farewell letter to Eido Tai Shimano

The letter dates from 1982, but I believe that the difficulties it portrays persist today, whatever the enormous strides Zen Buddhism has made as regards sexual and power abuses. Yesterday is yesterday, it's true, but I also think that when our yesterdays are or may become very much our todays, then it is well to recall what actual human beings (not just historical pop-ups) experienced in the past.

As I say on the blog, I am not trying to claw open healed wounds or claim some oh-so-virtuous high seat with its ever-so-much-more-correct views. What I am trying to do is to place before any Zen student who cares to read it the potentials for decency and disaster we all face.

FWIW

Thanks for sharing, Adam.

In relation to all this, I was reading an article by Stuart Larchs about all this and he seems to give a very different account of Soen Roshi's role in all of this.

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Anders Honore

by **Dan74** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 1:51 pm

Very interesting, Anders, thank you for sharing that.

\_/\\_

Dan74

by **Dan74** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 1:58 pm

I've just re-read this thread to get a better understanding of where people are coming from. Still pretty puzzled but found this post by genkaku that may have been overlooked (judging by some subsequent comments).

genkaku wrote:

However, as far as I know, the sexual transgressions have not continued over the years, so something was corrected within the sangha in New York.

Nonin -- Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case. If it were, I would not have started the thread in the first place.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by genkaku** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 2:31 pm

Anders Honore wrote:

genkaku wrote:

As a part of the themes offered in the original post here, I have posted on my blog a farewell letter to Eido Tai Shimano

The letter dates from 1982, but I believe that the difficulties it portrays persist today, whatever the enormous strides Zen Buddhism has made as regards sexual and power abuses. Yesterday is yesterday, it's true, but I also think that when our yesterdays are or may become very much our todays, then it is well to recall what actual human beings (not just historical pop-ups) experienced in the past.

As I say on the blog, I am not trying to claw open healed wounds or claim some oh-so-virtuous high seat with its ever-so-much-more-correct views. What I am trying to do is to place before any Zen student who cares to read it the potentials for decency and disaster we all face.

FWIW

Thanks for sharing, Adam.

In relation to all this, I was reading an article by Stuart Larchs about all this and he seems to give a very different account of Soen Roshi's role in all of this.

Thanks Anders. I hadn't read that one, though I enjoy Lachs' stuff. And I can't pretend I read all of it with as much care as Stuart brought to his thesis. In general, his appreciation of Soen is much better grounded and informed than my own was in 1982 in the midst of so much upset and with only six or seven years of practice under my belt.

What I found myself asking as I read down the article was this: Even granting all of the grisly details that Stuart brings to bear -- and he really does a very good job, I think ... even granting that there is an unwarranted elevation by teacher and student and tradition ... even granting that American (or other) appreciations of Zen are out of realistic alignment...

Still there is honest-to-goodness, flesh-and-blood suffering. We may be able to say how NOT to approach the topic, how many approaches are out of kilter or fabulous, but this does not answer the question of how we actually CAN or DO approach the tears of the world. The righteous and smug may answer calmly, "Let us return to The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path," but to my mind this is more idle chatter than it is realistic. Why? Because the very people who attempt to put The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path to work or to instruct others in how to do so are open -- wide open -- to the suffering, the elevation, the aggrandizement of those who do not. I'm not attempting to be critical. This is just an observation. If, in fact, it is somewhere close to being accurate, we are left with the dog fruitlessly chasing its tail and suffering -- the actual-factual stuff -- takes home the gold medal of a winner.

My own feeling, since I am not inclined to suffer if I can help it, is that human beings (the ones who suffer and are uncertain) are forced to choose a particular path out of suffering. That choice is later informed by experience. There is no laying claim to experience -- good or bad -- before you have had that experience. So ... it's a crapshoot. It is, in one sense, the choosing of a lie in order to discern what later will be the truth ... although that truth may be quite different from the one initially imagined. Put another way, we all choose our lies in order to get at the truth. It is not possible to warn someone of the actual-factual dangers on the chosen path. We can make suggestions and those suggestions may have some good results, but no one can know the dangers of sticking your head in a pot of glue before they have glue all over their heads.

I don't know about you, but I always liked the lines, "Wishing to entice the blind/The Buddha has playfully/Let words escape/His golden mouth./ Heaven and earth have ever since/Been filled with entangling briars." Entangling briars of wonderful teachers; entangling briars of self-serving teachers; entangling briars of Buddhism; entangling briars of ... well, pick your poison. Basically, it's just my entangling briars. This does not mean we cannot say something about self-serving teachers. This does not mean we cannot say something about wonderful teachers. This does not mean we cannot say something about the dangers of elevation and aggrandizement and deference. This does not mean we cannot use words like "enlightenment" or "emptiness" or "freedom" or "compassion" or other similar briars.

But as one who actually-factually can suffer, the question remains for me: Of what truth are my current, briar-strewn, virtue-laced lies an experiential example? I choose "Buddhism" as a path: Now the only question is, what is Buddhism; what experiential proof evolves from my crapshoot path? What proof puts me at ease in the deepest possible sense ... irrespective of anything that might be called "Buddhism," irrespective

of good teachers and bad, irrespective of any limitation whatsoever? There is always the distinct possibility that I am living in a fantasy world. But there is also the distinct possibility that I am not.

Sorry ... got off on a somewhat diffuse toot. What do you think?  
genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 3:00 pm

For some background on Stuart Lachs, here's a letter he wrote to David Chadwick, over at cuke.com. He describes some interesting experiences in S.F. with Baker and Suzuki in the 1960's, and mentions that he spent two years studying Zen in NY with Shimano, after that....

1/28/03 - a letter from Stuart Lachs.

And here are two audio interviews with him (which I haven't listened to yet)...

<http://personallifemedia.com/guests/999-stuart-lachs>

genkaku wrote:

Sorry ... got off on a somewhat diffuse toot. What do you think?

As you've often said, the teacher may be a liar, but zazen is no liar. I'd expand that to say dharma practice is no liar. And the Buddha was no liar. Keep the precepts, meditate regularly, walk the 8 fold path, practice compassion, kindness and mindfulness....

We can trust in the Dharma, trust in the Way of our wiser ancestors...

Last edited by christopher::: on Sun Nov 15, 2009 4:08 pm, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by Anders Honore** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 3:11 pm

re: the article:

I like the questions Larchs asks and the problems he raises, but I am not sure I always agree with the way he arrives at it. Reading his account of TNH's involvement with the Baker scandal, I found myself thinking 'or maybe TNH was a guy who hung out for a



little bit with Baker, was impressed by what he saw, spoke accordingly and didn't think to consider the possibility that Baker was highly two-faced in ways not obvious if you weren't familiar with what was really going on'. Can't help but think that sometimes he imputes an aura of assumed mysticism in their actions that's not there for any of the parties involved.

Same way with Suzuki's assesment of Soen Roshi. So he had a fanboi moment. So what. But Larch treats us to a lengthy dissection of how Suzuki simultaneously elevates himself to being beyond mortal ken, etc.

I give him thumbs up on the summary of his examples on the problematics of the assumptions of the guru-role in Zen. But I find myself taking his analysis of the examples with a grain of salt.

As for where all that leaves us - There may be all sorts of logical and correct reasons to practise (or not practise) Buddhism, but as far as I can see, it boils down to an intuition of 'this makes sense enough for me to want to try'. And those initial reasons are almost always a mixture of unclarified emotional appeal, shoddy thinking and maybe a few good thoughts to boot - and following a teacher's advice seems no different to me in that regard.

Buddhism is incidentally a path among many that encourages understanding [for] ourselves and testing through experience, even as it encourages to trust the teachings. And part of that is to me that we come to see how that tangle of motivations that led us to Buddhism aren't actually really trustworthy - yet it has worked, despite the inaccuracy of the thoughts and feelings that engendered that path. For me, it boils down to a tentative relationship of trusting these teachings on account of how well I find them to work and yet being careful in lending too much trust in how I think and feel about these teachings.

In relation to teachers, it seems to me the dangers of being disappointed or blinded, by a teacher who might not be all he's cracked up to be (or perhaps, even someone who is) falls on the side of lending too much trust in how we feel and think about them - and then having the curtain fall on those emotions and thoughts when it turns out they weren't really true to us

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

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Anders Honore

by **genkaku** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 3:26 pm

As for where all that leaves us - There may be all sorts of logical and correct reasons to practise (or not practise) Buddhism, but as far as I can see, it boils down to an intuition of 'this makes sense enough for me to want to try'. And those initial reasons are almost always a mixture of unclarified emotional appeal, shoddy thinking and maybe a few good thoughts to boot - and following a teacher's advice seems no different to me in that regard.

Anders -- As we used to say in the army, "I'll drink to that!"

As a PS., I just wrote to Stuart Lachs asking him basically, "OK, we can point with some accuracy to what muddies the water. What, in your opinion, constitutes clear water?"  
genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Sun Nov 15, 2009 4:13 pm

genkaku wrote:

"OK, we can point with some accuracy to what muddies the water. What, in your opinion, constitutes clear water?"

"Let there be a silent understanding and no more. Away with all thinking and explaining. Then we may say that the Way of Words has been cut off and movements of the mind eliminated. This Mind is the pure Buddha-Source inherent in all men. All wriggling beings possessed of sentient life and all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are of this one substance and do not differ. Differences arise from wrong-thinking only and lead to the creation of all kinds of karma.

All the visible universe is the Buddha; so are all sounds; hold fast to one principle and all the others are Identical. On seeing one thing, you see ALL. On perceiving any individual's mind, you are perceiving ALL Mind. Obtain a glimpse of one way and ALL ways are embraced in your vision, for there is nowhere at all which is devoid of the Way. When your glance falls upon a grain of dust, what you see is identical with all the vast world systems with their great rivers and mighty hills. To gaze upon a drop of water is to behold the nature of all the waters of the universe.

Only come to know the nature of your own Mind, in which there is no self and no other, and you will in fact be a Buddha."

~Huang Po

source: The Zen Teachings of Huang Po

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by christopher::: on Sun Nov 15, 2009 11:08 pm

P.S. Believing the above, "Going for Buddha"... without practicing the foundational brahmaviharas and the precepts, may be what creates a lot of our troubles...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Christopher** on Mon Nov 16, 2009 11:33 am

The problem is the assumption that the Buddha - or anybody - was perfectly good. That's a goddamn lie. We all live with "the water" of our minds, no matter whether you call it clear or murky, and we all start our practice with a different set of baggage, so nobody can ever claim to be on the "outside" looking in. Stuart Lachs is just making a career out of finding examples of that lie in the canon. Big deal.

My prediction is that in 100 years zazen will be - for better or for worse - stripped entirely of its religious and mythological aspects, and be will taught in high school alongside gym class. Inquiry such as that done by Stuart Lachs and Sam Harris is just the first step in that direction.

PS Carol: the fact that Sheng-Yen was an advocate of something called "moral purity" isn't exactly helping his case in my book!

Christopher

**by Carol** on Mon Nov 16, 2009 12:29 pm

Christopher wrote:

PS Carol: the fact that Sheng-Yen was an advocate of something called "moral purity" isn't exactly helping his case in my book!

I was mainly objecting to Lachs' quoting him out of context, sort of as a straw man for his argument I thought.

He was a great teacher ... pretty conservative by US standards, being Chinese and living the Vinaya code. Pretty radical by Chinese standards, bringing the Dharma to the West and Dharma Transmission to Western laypeople. I said "moral purity" to describe him because he was very strong on the precepts and paying attention to those things. He was

also compassionate and pragmatic. I can highly recommend his books.... Hoofprints of the Ox is a great one. Wish I'd read it earlier in my explorations.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol  
Founding Member

**by genkaku** on Mon Nov 16, 2009 12:40 pm

Christopher wrote:

The problem is the assumption that the Buddha - or anybody - was perfectly good. That's a goddamn lie. We all live with "the water" of our minds, no matter whether you call it clear or murky, and we all start our practice with a different set of baggage, so nobody can ever claim to be on the "outside" looking in. Stuart Lachs is just making a career out of finding examples of that lie in the canon. Big deal.

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PS Carol: the fact that Sheng-Yen was an advocate of something called "moral purity" isn't exactly helping his case in my book!

Chris -- I disagree with your prediction. The delights and wonderment of human suffering or uncertainty cry out for some format, some hand-hold, some construct within which to settle things down. Religion and myth are one way in which human beings allow themselves to assert, "I am important" or "I have meaning."

How many tales have either of us read in which the 'master' sits before the assembly (don't ask me to remember the names or page numbers) and says in one way or another, "How I wish just one of you would come up here and spit in my face!" Understanding or peace or enlightenment or whatever you want to call it is our birthright and yet we have to work pretty hard to recognize the obvious. Formats -- and I imagine religion and ritual and myth will continue to be leading contenders in the format department -- seem to be necessary until we all learn how to spit.

Anyway, let's meet in a hundred years and see which of us is correct.  
genkaku

**by Floating\_Abu** on Mon Nov 16, 2009 2:00 pm

genkaku wrote:

Anyway, let's meet in a hundred years and see which of us is correct.

Don't speak the obvious now, gen

Blog

genkaku's book: Answer Your Love Letters: Footnotes to a Zen practice

Floating\_Abu

**by hungryghost** on Mon Nov 16, 2009 8:53 pm

I think if zazen is stripped of its buddhist trappings so early in its existence here in the west, it will disappear. To say that the institutions that exist now will adopt zazen to the point where high school children will be doing it en masse seems a little far fetched IMHO. Of course, the world of advertising, video games, the internet, moral bankruptcy on a massive scale, genocide, rampant and heartless capitalism of every form - this might become like a bubble that will pop and people will begin to seek on a massive scale. That's probably way off topic. Anyway, I was taught that even a beginner should cultivate moral purity as laid out in the precepts, and that this if nothing else is an aid to zazen. Also, the cultivation of zazen aids the ethical aspect. Soooo then how does a zen teacher justify these behaviours? How do zen students justify these behaviours for them? What is the real question? Is it: Can you still be 'enlightened' and act this way? I guess that depends on what your definition of enlightenment is. For myself, the conduct of a teacher is one of the ways I judge his ability to teach. It's one of the ways a teacher teaches, by example.

hungryghost

**by genkaku** on Mon Nov 16, 2009 9:20 pm

Hi hungryghost -- When I asked my teacher, Kyudo Nakagawa Roshi, who the teacher might be, he said, "Except for me, everything is the teacher." He wasn't just blowing Buddhist smoke.

I agree with you -- it is wonderful to have upright and caring friends, friends who will support and encourage your clear life. To borrow from Islam, "blessings be upon them."

But also I think our practice needs to be what you might call 'wider' than that as well. I don't mean exercising the mouth ("love your enemies") alone: There is also the matter of exercising and actualizing in the heart. It's not a matter of pretense or virtue ... it's just how things work best. I think such an appreciation flows naturally and without effort out of a patient and determined practice:

"Except for me, everything is the teacher."  
genkaku

**by shel** on Mon Nov 16, 2009 11:15 pm

Christopher wrote:

My prediction is that in 100 years zazen will be - for better or for worse - stripped entirely of its religious and mythological aspects, and be will taught in high school alongside gym class. Inquiry such as that done by Stuart Lachs and Sam Harris is just the first step in that direction.

Heck, in 100 years enlightenment will come in pill form. But unfortunately the world will probably be run by damn dirty apes.

If you've come here to help me you're wasting your time. But if you've come because your liberation is tied up with mine then let's work together. ~ Lilla Watson

The Hunger Project

shel

**by shoey** on Mon Nov 16, 2009 11:18 pm

"Except for me, everything is the teacher."

thats a nice saying - right up to the moment you try it....then its kinda in your face,and it aint always smoke.

when you're going through hell - keep going.  
winston churchill

shoey

by genkaku on Mon Nov 16, 2009 11:28 pm

shoey wrote:

"Except for me, everything is the teacher."

thats a nice saying - right up to the moment you try it....then its kinda in your face,and it aint always smoke.

Practice, practice, practice, I imagine.  
genkaku

**by shoey** on Tue Nov 17, 2009 12:14 am

genkaku wrote:

shoey wrote:

"Except for me, everything is the teacher."

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Practice, practice, practice, I imagine.

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winston churchill

shoey

**by hungryghost** on Tue Nov 17, 2009 4:23 am

genkaku wrote:

Hi hungryghost -- When I asked my teacher, Kyudo Nakagawa Roshi, who the teacher might be, he said, "Except for me, everything is the teacher." He wasn't just blowing Buddhist smoke.

I agree with you -- it is wonderful to have upright and caring friends, friends who will support and encourage your clear life. To borrow from Islam, "blessings be upon them."

But also I think our practice needs to be what you might call 'wider' than that as well. I don't mean exercising the mouth ("love your enemies") alone: There is also the matter of exercising and actualizing in the heart. It's not a matter of pretense or virtue ... it's just how things work best. I think such an appreciation flows naturally and without effort out of a patient and determined practice:

"Except for me, everything is the teacher."

"except for me, everything is the teacher."

hungryghost  
Global Moderator

by **Carol** on Sun Nov 22, 2009 10:59 pm

Here is a link to a Tricycle interview with June Campbell regarding her relationship with Kalu Rinpoche. While some of what she says may be specific to the Tibetan tradition, some of it has general implications for teacher-student relationships, too. She raises a lot of important issues.

The Emperor's Tantric Robes -- An Interview with June Campbell on Codes of Secrecy and Silence

Excerpt:

Tricycle: As in the case of other controversies over Buddhist teachers, the real issue here seems to be about power; and as you describe it, this power is not a corrupt or aberrant twist within the Tibetan system, but is essential to its entire social fabric. How do think this is going to play out in the West?

Campbell: Obviously those involved closely will have a better idea than I have of the ways it'll play out. But I think the issues will be around how power is being used-for example in male-female relationships, elitism, teacher-student issues, materialism. Having said that, it's very important not to lose sight of the fact that the Tibetan system's not unique in there being a link between power, religion, and gender. and it's not the first system in the world to face change or be challenged. OK, many of the Tibetan customs may seem very different, but in essence we have the same problems in the West to do with abuses of power. This is what I tried to highlight in the book--they're the same old problems but in new disguises.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **ReturningToTheSource** on Mon Nov 23, 2009 4:08 am

Does wonders for the notion of male-female equality. Another woman "the victim" of male power. Sounds like another groupie to me.



My relationship with Kalu Rinpoche was not a partnership of equals. When it started. I was in my late twenties. He was almost seventy. He controlled the relationship. I was sworn to secrecy. What I am saying is that it was not a formal ritualistic relationship, nor was it the "tantric" relationship that people might like to imagine.

Aspiring woman. Often things simply do not go to plan. Buddha said "not getting what one wants is suffering".

Last edited by ReturningToTheSource on Mon Nov 23, 2009 4:26 am, edited 1 time in total.

ReturningToTheSource

**by ReturningToTheSource** on Mon Nov 23, 2009 4:23 am

Jundo Cohen wrote:

All human beings, from 'Great Bodhisattvas' right on down to the rest of us, are human beings ... and that means rough edges, cracks and ugly spots, flesh, fallings down and flaws. At least, of course, until we eventually become Perfect Golden Buddhas ...

Generally in Buddhism, abiding by the five precepts is for laypeople. It is not considered something so difficult.

Generally, the immoral teacher has sexual relations with the immoral student.

The immoral teacher cannot have sexual relations with a moral student and visa versa. That is impossible.

If we are waiting until we become a Buddha so we can develop right view about sexuality...brother...our journey will be very long.

ReturningToTheSource

**by christopher:::** on Mon Nov 23, 2009 4:32 am

I've heard that keeping the precepts is easy, even laypersons can do it. Or is keeping the precepts incredibly difficult, given that over and over again even supposedly enlightened masters seem to have trouble keeping them?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Carol** on Mon Nov 23, 2009 4:48 am

christopher::: wrote:

I've heard that keeping the precepts is easy, even laypersons can do it. Or is keeping the precepts incredibly difficult, given that over and over again even supposedly enlightened masters seem to have trouble keeping them?

I've never heard that keeping the precepts is easy! Don't know who would say such a thing, or why they would say so. It's not easy being human, with human weaknesses, delusions, attractions and aversions. Sex seems to be the one that gets everyone all riled up ... but lying, taking what is not given, speaking ill of others, and so on ... all very difficult precepts to keep. Probably most of us break at least one of them every day, without even noticing we're doing it.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by partofit22** on Mon Nov 23, 2009 4:53 am

ReturningToTheSource wrote:

The immoral teacher cannot have sexual relations with a moral student and visa versa. That is impossible.

to further the journey: it would be possible if the immoral teacher raped the moral student-  
partofit22

**by christopher:::** on Mon Nov 23, 2009 4:58 am

Carol wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

I've heard that keeping the precepts is easy, even laypersons can do it. Or is keeping the precepts incredibly difficult, given that over and over again even supposedly enlightened masters seem to have trouble keeping them?

I've never heard that keeping the precepts is easy! Don't know who would say such a thing, or why they would say so.

RTTS just said it, Carol...

ReturningToTheSource wrote:

Generally in Buddhism, abiding by the five precepts is for laypeople. It is not considered something so difficult.

Didn't want to jump on him personally, but would be interested in hearing his response to your questions...

It's not easy being human, with human weaknesses, delusions, attractions and aversions. Sex seems to be the one that gets everyone all riled up ... but lying, taking what is not given, speaking ill of others, and so on ... all very difficult precepts to keep. Probably most of us break at least one of them every day, without even noticing we're doing it.

I agree!

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher::  
Founding Member

**by partofit22** on Mon Nov 23, 2009 5:01 am

praxis wrote:

Heck, in 100 years enlightenment will come in pill form. But unfortunately the world will probably be run by damn dirty apes.

partofit22

**by Linda Anderson** on Mon Nov 23, 2009 5:47 pm

christopher::  
wrote:

"Let there be a silent understanding and no more. Away with all thinking and explaining. Then we may say that the Way of Words has been cut off and movements of the mind eliminated. This Mind is the pure Buddha-Source inherent in all men. All wriggling beings possessed of sentient life and all the Buddhas and Boddhisattvas are of this one

substance and do not differ. Differences arise from wrong-thinking only and lead to the creation of all kinds of karma.

All the visible universe is the Buddha; so are all sounds; hold fast to one principle and all the others are Identical. On seeing one thing, you see ALL. On perceiving any individual's mind, you are perceiving ALL Mind. Obtain a glimpse of one way and ALL ways are embraced in your vision, for there is nowhere at all which is devoid of the Way. When your glance falls upon a grain of dust, what you see is identical with all the vast world systems with their great rivers and mighty hills. To gaze upon a drop of water is to behold the nature of all the waters of the universe.

Only come to know the nature of your own Mind, in which there is no self and no other, and you will in fact be a Buddha."

~Huang Po

source: The Zen Teachings of Huang Po

This is beautiful... I've never relieved my own suffering with more thought and control, being Buddha, even for a second, takes the problem out of itself. Still, we try, 8 pages later. To be a bit irreverent, I can think of other ways that power is misused in spiritual groups, sex seems more fun than some of them and yes, I can't deny there can be harm done in all cases. Spitting is a good thing when you think about standing by numbly watching harm be done... this is the call to find our own truth, and spitting is a creative expression, more in the Tao than more policies. To walk along together with a spacious Buddha heart brings us direct experience of the sensibility around this issue, about how the universe works. Sometimes, I notice that "I love you" isn't quite right, when "I love" is more true. So, then consider the nature of the misconduct.

I woke up this morning musing about zen being a contribution to the gene pool (that it won't exist in form as we know it), but the truth of zen is indestructible and will touch people in eternity. Not sure it'll look like gym class In a hundred years, we'll all walk alone thru the town at midnight... and we'll all have a good laugh. (Quoting the koan of the week over here.)

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

by Keisei on Tue Nov 24, 2009 2:49 am

Carol wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

I've heard that keeping the precepts is easy, even laypersons can do it. Or is keeping the precepts incredibly difficult, given that over and over again even supposedly enlightened masters seem to have trouble keeping them?

I've never heard that keeping the precepts is easy! Don't know who would say such a thing, or why they would say so. It's not easy being human, with human weaknesses, delusions, attractions and aversions. Sex seems to be the one that gets everyone all riled up ... but lying, taking what is not given, speaking ill of others, and so on ... all very difficult precepts to keep. Probably most of us break at least one of them every day, without even noticing we're doing it.

This is keeping the precepts. By working with them enough, we may get to a point of figuring it out when we do break them. Perhaps working with them long enough will lead to recognizing when we're about to break them and move forward with total clarity - whether we break the precept or not.

In gassho,

"Whether teachings are mastered or not, reality constantly flows." -Song of the Precious Mirror Samadhi

Tony Roscoe

Keisei

**by christopher:::** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 7:39 am

Hi Tony. I think a lot of people get to a point in their practice where they recognize they are breaking precepts, but just are not able to stop themselves. And sadly, this is a problem we may not be able to simply meditate our way out of, or overcome simply by will-power.

In another discussion I shared a link to this dharma talk by Joseph Goldstein, on the issue of desires and craving...

The Buddha's Song Of Enlightenment: Achieved Is The End Of Craving

Goldstein mentions the Buddha's Song of Enlightenment, the last words that are said (in the Pali suttas) to have come to his mind after his "Awakening" under the Bodhi tree "Realized is the Unconditioned, Achieved is the End of Craving"...

"Realized is the Unconditioned" refers to our recognition of Original Mind, nondual Buddha Nature. This is central in Zen. Koan practice, zazen, even Big Mind™ seminars- are all methods for helping us to recognize our true nature.

I think the difficulty many (most) of us have, including great teachers even, is with the second part- the focus of Goldstein's talk- reaching a point of complete liberation from craving. In the case of the Tibetan teacher Kalu Rinpoche (that Carol provided a link to here is a man that many had thought was completely enlightened...

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalu\\_Rinpoche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalu_Rinpoche)

Kalu Rinpoche was born in 1905 during the Female Wood Snake year of the Tibetan lunar calendar in the district of Treshö Gang chi Rawa in the Hor region of Kham, Eastern Tibet.

When Kalu Rinpoche was fifteen years old, he was sent to begin his higher studies at the monastery of Palpung, the foremost center of the Karma Kagyu school. He remained there for more than a decade, during which time he mastered the vast body of teaching that forms the philosophical basis of Buddhist practice, and completed two three-year retreats.

At about the age of twenty-five, Rinpoche left Palpung to pursue the life of a solitary yogi in the woods of the Khampa countryside. For nearly fifteen years, he strove to perfect his realization of all aspects of the teachings and he became renowned in the villages and among the nomads as a representative of the Bodhisattva path.

He did all that work, at an early age, and yet seemed to stumble later on. What's the message here, for the rest of us mortals?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Dan74** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 11:06 am

christopher::: wrote:

I think the difficulty many (most) of us have, including great teachers even, is with the second part- the focus of Goldstein's talk- reaching a point of complete liberation from craving. In the case of the Tibetan teacher Kalu Rinpoche (that Carol provided a link to here is a man that many had thought was completely enlightened...

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He did all that work, at an early age, and yet seemed to stumble later on. What's the message here, for the rest of us mortals?

Hi Chris,

I think the lesson for us, mortals, here is that "Not all that glitters is gold." Big names tend to go with big heads, not necessarily big minds (and vice versa).

In my experience desire appears to be unbeatable when we have become so used to succumbing to it. A habit is formed, a mental pattern that say "Uh-oh I shouldn't be doing this... But I want to. I know it's naughty, but I want to. Ah what the hell! Then..... Damn! I failed again!! Oh, no! I can't beat this thing... I feel so helpless" Or some variation on the theme.

The point is that this is all in the mind. The habit is formed by the mind and can be unformed, unravelled. It is empty, therefore lacking inherent essence and comes into being because it is fed by us - arises from causes and conditions.

Anyway, you've mentioned elsewhere that support is needed. Feel free to PM.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Dazzled** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 11:27 am

Regarding the relationship between June Campbell and Kalu Rinpoche mentioned earlier - she was his translator and she was a consenting adult.

Irrespective of the moral issues involved with Kalu Rinpoche's request for sex, she could quite simply have said a firm "No !"

Also, certainly in Tibetan Buddhism, some of the teachers are lay practitioners and not ordained, and as they haven't taken a vow of celibacy, I don't think there's any rule to say that they shouldn't have girlfriends.

I do think that there is a less than realistic view with some women and their adulation of Buddhist teachers in general though. I've seen and heard it in action sometimes. I also even heard of young western women exposing their breasts to a handsome young teacher in India.

I was married to a musician, so I can see a parallel with groupies. Teachers can become fantasy partners in some women's minds, just like rock stars can.

Of course naturally I'm not suggesting that this is the case with all women who are sincere students and practitioners.

<http://www.buddhismwithoutboundaries.com>

Dazzled

**by genkaku** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 12:53 pm

Skimming down this now-lengthy thread, I am struck by how much decency can spring from indecency. I don't mean that I think relaxing into a kind of self-congratulatory 'understanding' is enough. People are people and are capable of anything at all. But that doesn't mean we can't keep an eye on it and acknowledge -- sometimes with great sorrow -- the dog shit where we find it.

All I can think of is Shoey's old observation about the guy who went to the doctor and complained, "It hurts when I do this." And the doctor replied, "Well don't do that."  
genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 1:46 pm

Dan74 wrote:

The point is that this is all in the mind. The habit is formed by the mind and can be unformed, unravelled. It is empty, therefore lacking inherent essence and comes into being because it is fed by us - arises from causes and conditions.



Anyway, you've mentioned elsewhere that support is needed. Feel free to PM.

\_/\\_

Thanks, Dan.

genkaku wrote:

All I can think of is Shoey's old observation about the guy who went to the doctor and complained, "It hurts when I do this." And the doctor replied, "Well don't do that."

To which the patient started singing my wife's favorite Mariah Carey song....

I am thinking of you  
 In my sleepless solitude tonight  
 If it's wrong to love you  
 Then my heart just won't let me be right  
 'Cause I've drowned in you  
 And I won't pull through  
 Without you by my side

I'd give my all to have  
 Just one more night with you  
 I'd risk my life to feel  
 Your body next to mine  
 'Cause I can't go on  
 Living in the memory of our song  
 I'd give my all for your love tonight

or perhaps my favorite Leona Lewis song...

But nothing's greater than the rush  
 That comes with your embrace  
 And in this world of loneliness I see your face  
 Yet everyone around me thinks that I'm going crazy  
 Maybe, maybe...

And I keep bleeding, keep, keep bleeding love  
 I keep bleeding, I keep, keep bleeding love  
 Keep bleeding, keep, keep bleeding love

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Carol** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 2:16 pm

Dazzled wrote:

Regarding the relationship between June Campbell and Kalu Rinpoche mentioned earlier - she was his translator and she was a consenting adult.

Irrespective of the moral issues involved with Kalu Rinpoche's request for sex, she could quite simply have said a firm "No !"

Also, certainly in Tibetan Buddhism, some of the teachers are lay practitioners and not ordained, and as they haven't taken a vow of celibacy, I don't think there's any rule to say that they shouldn't have girlfriends.

I do think that there is a less than realistic view with some women and their adulation of Buddhist teachers in general though. I've seen and heard it in action sometimes. I also even heard of young western women exposing their breasts to a handsome young teacher in India.

I was married to a musician, so I can see a parallel with groupies. Teachers can become fantasy partners in some women's minds, just like rock stars can.

Of course naturally I'm not suggesting that this is the case with all women who are sincere students and practitioners.

I don't think it's as simple as "consenting adults" -- ever -- when there is a power imbalance like this. The teacher is in a position of authority, is telling the student it's good for them, is giving more access to that student and status, while at the same time keeping the relationship secret. The teacher is also responsible for the well-being of the student.

Yes, a wise, secure, grown-up woman who did not idolize the teacher would not succumb to this kind of manipulation. And, it's not rape. But it is sexual misconduct for a teacher to prey on the vulnerability and adulation of students for sex.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Nonin** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 3:37 pm

Carol said:

I don't think it's as simple as "consenting adults" -- ever -- when there is a power imbalance like this. The teacher is in a position of authority, is telling the student it's good for them, is giving more access to that student and status, while at the same time keeping the relationship secret. The teacher is also responsible for the well-being of the student.

Yes, a wise, secure, grown-up woman who did not idolize the teacher would not succumb to this kind of manipulation. And, it's not rape. But it is sexual misconduct for a teacher to prey on the vulnerability and adulation of students for sex.

Agreed, Carol. Well said.

With bows,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Nonin** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 5:22 pm

Dan74 said:

I think the lesson for us, mortals, here is that "Not all that glitters is gold." Big names tend to go with big heads, not necessarily big minds (and vice versa).

For me, the lesson is that "Enlightened Masters" can make mistakes, just like the rest of us.

Also, perhaps the problem is that we think that "enlightenment" is a one-time event after which the person becomes a perfect human being, whatever that is.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

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Nonin  
Global Moderator

**by booker** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 5:40 pm

christopher::: wrote:

He did all that work, at an early age, and yet seemed to stumble later on. What's the message here, for the rest of us mortals?

That extreme celibacy is not exactly the ideal way in present times (especially if you want to be your own father)?  
"Be Buddhist or be Buddha"

booker

**by christopher:::** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 5:51 pm

Perhaps, as Buddhist Masters hold high expectations of their students, we hold high expectations of our teachers as well, and that's just The Way it Is? In this manner, Buddhas bow to Buddhas, down through the ages...

Shodoka: Song of Freedom

Have you ever seen one of the Way?

Beyond action and beyond learning,  
one is at ease,

not struggling against delusion  
or grasping after the truth.

One sees the nature of ignorance  
to be itself Essential Awareness,

and the illusion of one's own body  
is the Realm of Reality.

Completely realizing  
the Realm of Reality to be objectless,

one finds oneself the source of all things  
and one's own nature to be Awake Awareness.

The five aggregates arise and decay like  
aimless clouds,  
the three distorted orientations come and go  
like bubbles on water.

Realizing Suchness, neither self nor things exist;  
in one moment cause and effect are liberated.

If anything I say is untrue  
may my tongue be pulled out for countless eons.

In a single moment of direct awakening  
to the Zen of Reality as a continuous presencing,  
the six perfections and countless skillful means  
are complete.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by booker** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 6:09 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Perhaps, as Buddhist Masters hold high expectations of their students, we hold high expectations of our teachers as well, and that's just The Way it Is?

Yeah, but again - aren't those expectations hold mostly just to satisfy our vision?

Vision satisfied = good teacher. Vision unsatisfied = bad teacher

What Ven.Nonin said.

Nonin wrote:

perhaps the problem is that we think that "enlightenment" is a one-time event after which the person becomes a perfect human being, whatever that is.

"Be Buddhist or be Buddha"

booker

by **Linda Anderson** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 6:23 pm

Carol wrote:

I don't think it's as simple as "consenting adults" -- ever -- when there is a power imbalance like this. The teacher is in a position of authority, is telling the student it's good for them, is giving more access to that student and status, while at the same time keeping the relationship secret. The teacher is also responsible for the well-being of the student.

Yes, a wise, secure, grown-up woman who did not idolize the teacher would not succumb to this kind of manipulation. And, it's not rape. But it is sexual misconduct for a teacher to prey on the vulnerability and adulation of students for sex.

Carol, well intentioned and true. There are many truths in this discussion. I am not a liberal in this area, but do see a multiplicity of cause and effect with no solutions.

Yet, a little spitting would help a lot. A firm "NO" empowers one in ways that policies can't, and is a teaching in itself when one can't say it. After all these hundreds of years, the policies are losing it seems. Sometimes, we learn thru total devastation of our illusions and we are given what we need to learn I suppose, like a heat seeking missile. Even then, it's empowering to acknowledge what one attracts in life and awakening, these things happen hand-in-glove in the way of karma. I think the path includes knowing ourselves deeply, our inadequacy, projective patterning, etc... This is the path until the moon sets at midnight. Like adjusting a pillow in the night, we party on until we don't. The true misconduct goes beyond sexuality... as we know.

I've got battle scars in this area from over 20 years ago. I was obsessed yet knew enough to say a firm "NO". My karma is such that I wouldn't sacrifice my journey, and knew it. It was as much rigid as it was wise. all the more painful not surrendering. The path of the broken heart is mysterious, I wouldn't begin to think I knew anything about it. Then, humor and joy are infectious atlast.

Linda

ps this poem comes to mind

The Well Of Grief

Those who will not slip beneath  
the still surface of the well of grief

turning downward through its black waters  
to the place we cannot breathe

will never know the source from which we drink,  
the secret water, cold and clear,

nor find in the darkness glimmering  
the small round coins  
thrown by those who wished for something else

David Whyte from Where Many Rivers Meet  
[http://www.panhala.net/Archive/Well\\_of\\_Grief.html](http://www.panhala.net/Archive/Well_of_Grief.html)

Linda Anderson

**by Seigen** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 6:32 pm

Thank you, Linda, that is meaningfully touching with no glossing over. Palms together,  
Seigen  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen  
Global Moderator

**by Carol** on Tue Nov 24, 2009 6:36 pm

Yes, Linda, that too. I agree.

In reading the interview with June Campbell, I think she probably did eventually see her way through it ... though it took many years. In the end, we cannot regret anything that brings us to this place. But that is not an excuse for doing harm. The parent may beat the child and say "I'm doing this for your own good," and thus feed the cycle of violence, or the child may wake up ... I think we can devoutly aspire to wake up and to wake all the beings ...

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by genkaku** on Sun Mar 14, 2010 6:25 pm

Received this relevant article/link in email today.  
genkaku

**by genkaku** on Fri May 21, 2010 3:44 pm

Received in email today: Robert Aitken Roshi's open letter to Eido Tai Shimano  
genkaku

**by Seigen** on Fri May 21, 2010 4:29 pm

Thank you for posting this, Genkaku. Zen community is hardly absent of structural misogyny, as any other community arising in patriarchy will be. The men DO have to call out the men in this context.

Thank you, Robert Aitken Roshi.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Linda Anderson** on Fri May 21, 2010 4:35 pm

Seigen wrote:  
The men DO have to call out the men in this context.

Thank you, Robert Aitken Roshi.

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Eco** on Fri May 21, 2010 6:15 pm



Nonin wrote:

Carol said:

I don't think it's as simple as "consenting adults" -- ever -- when there is a power imbalance like this. The teacher is in a position of authority, is telling the student it's good for them, is giving more access to that student and status, while at the same time keeping the relationship secret. The teacher is also responsible for the well-being of the student.

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Agreed, Carol. Well said.

With bows,

Nonin

An unexpected response coming from a student of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.  
Eco

**by Nonin** on Fri May 21, 2010 6:25 pm

Eco wrote:

Nonin wrote:

Carol said:

I don't think it's as simple as "consenting adults" -- ever -- when there is a power imbalance like this. The teacher is in a position of authority, is telling the student it's good for them, is giving more access to that student and status, while at the same time keeping the relationship secret. The teacher is also responsible for the well-being of the student.

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Agreed, Carol. Well said.

With bows,

Nonin

An unexpected response coming from a student of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Eco,

Why would you say my response is unexpected?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

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Nonin

**by Eco** on Fri May 21, 2010 6:41 pm

Sorry, I read Natalie Goldberg's "The Great Failure: A Bartender, A Monk, and My Unlikely Path to Truth," recently. Have you read it? Any insights you might like to share about this would be appreciated.

Eco

**by Nonin** on Fri May 21, 2010 8:06 pm

Eco wrote:

Sorry, I read Natalie Goldberg's "The Great Failure: A Bartender, A Monk, and My Unlikely Path to Truth," recently. Have you read it? Any insights you might like to share about this would be appreciated.

Eco,

I haven't read Natalie's book, but I read an excerpt in one of the Buddhist magazines where she writes about Katagiri-roshi's alleged sexual transgressions. There was a lot of unsubstantiated and unverified information in the excerpt, so I didn't bother reading the whole book.

There are two major misrepresentations in the book you mention. First, she was not exposing a secret about Katagiri Roshi; There was a public process, mediated by professionals, when the issue of teacher transgression came up at Minnesota Zen Center ten years after Katagiri-roshi's death. At that time, one of his students alleged that she had a sexual relationship with him many years earlier. The student was a reliable source, so

most of his students, including me, regarded her admission as true, and the mediation and reconciliation process was then begun.

Second, Natalie Goldberg alleged in her book, written about ten years after many of his students became aware of his transgression, that Katagiri-roshi had other sexual relationships with other students. This is all unsubstantiated and unverified. I would not take the book as a reliable source of information about Katagiri-roshi. What I read, and what I gained from Natalie's first book (Long, Quiet Highway) was that Natalie's books are about herself, not about others.

Most of what has been written about Katagiri-roshi is unverified hearsay. He did make one huge mistake, however, and I don't deny it nor condone it. It is clearly improper for a Zen teacher to have an intimate, sexual relationship with a student. This has been clearly established in Western Zen Buddhist Culture.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

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Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Eco** on Fri May 21, 2010 8:50 pm

It is improper by mere common sense, and that is sense which existed long before "Western Zen Buddhist Culture." Western Zen Buddhist culture has established that "monks" or priests don't need to be celibate, if I'm not mistaken, as well as other tolerances not normally given to monks. Western Zen seems to have established itself as a lay tradition, and being such it's no big deal when a teacher has sex with a student. I remember reading what Brad Warner wrote about Goldberg's book, in fact I just looked it up to quote properly, his reaction was, "Katagiri Roshi had sex!! Oh. My. God. The Dharma is ruined! Ugh! I agree it's high time we thoroughly trashed the image of the Eastern holy person."

Eco

**by Carol** on Fri May 21, 2010 9:07 pm

Here is an interesting article:

Celibacy: the view of a Zen monk  
from Japan

Soko Morinaga

Buddhist monk. Rector of Hanazono University  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol  
Founding Member

by **Nonin** on Fri May 21, 2010 9:41 pm

Eco wrote:

It is improper by mere common sense, and that is sense which existed long before "Western Zen Buddhist Culture." Western Zen Buddhist culture has established that "monks" or priests don't need to be celibate, if I'm not mistaken, as well as other tolerances not normally given to monks. Western Zen seems to have established itself as a lay tradition, and being such it's no big deal when a teacher has sex with a student. I remember reading what Brad Warner wrote about Goldberg's book, in fact I just looked it up to quote properly, his reaction was, "Katagiri Roshi had sex!! Oh. My. God. The Dharma is ruined! Ugh! I agree it's high time we thoroughly trashed the image of the Eastern holy person."

Eco,

You said:

Western Zen seems to have established itself as a lay tradition, and being such it's no big deal when a teacher has sex with a student.

Not so in both instances. There is a strong and growing priest and also monastic tradition in Western Zen. Also, it's a big deal when a teacher engages in a sexual relationship with a student. Many teachers have had to step down from teaching activities if this activity becomes known, and some have permanently lost their positions.

Many Zen Buddhist practice places have even published Ethics Statements that all sangha members, including teachers are required to follow. Ours contains many areas of conduct. Here's the section that covers sexual misconduct:

**Inappropriate action.** Inappropriate action is harmful to ourselves and others. It may include physical violence, sexual misconduct or harassment, drug and substance abuse, malicious gossip, extreme or regular displays of anger, insults or demeaning comments, and manipulative or duplicitous speech or action. Persons who encounter inappropriate actions from any member of the NZC Sangha -- including its teachers and senior instructors -- or who themselves practice such conduct, should be aware that these actions violate the spirit of the precepts and the practice of appropriate action.

**Student/teacher relationships.** A teacher at NZC is anyone involved in an instructional capacity. This includes the Head Priest and anyone designated by the Head Priest to serve as an instructor or mentor for newer students. This includes those giving zazen instruction, teaching Intro to Zen workshops, and leading study groups. Student/teacher relationships should be based on mutual respect, compassion, and kindness. We acknowledge the inequality inherent in such a relationship and the power issues involved.

We specifically acknowledge the great harm, both psychological and spiritual, that results from teachers becoming sexually involved with their students, both for the teacher and student involved and for the community as a whole. We, therefore, consider it unethical for a teacher to engage in sexual behavior with her or his student.

We furthermore expect all who participate at NZC to follow these guidelines:

- 1) If a teacher and/or student feel at risk of violating the above ethical principle, they should suspend their teacher-student relationship at least until they have sought counsel with a senior teacher.
- 2) It is considered a misuse of sexuality for a teacher to form a sexual relationship with a former student within three months of the termination of the student-teacher relationship.
- 3) Any teacher considering forming a sexual relationship with another NZC participant should discuss the appropriateness of the relationship with a senior teacher.

Our Ethics statement then goes on to outline ways to address ethical violations should they occur.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

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<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Nonin** on Fri May 21, 2010 9:43 pm

I have started another topic on Sexual Misconduct in this same forum. Check it out.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

**Moderator's Note:**

The new topic on the sexual misconduct precept has been moved to the Zen Practice in Daily Life forum here

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

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Nonin

**by Eco** on Fri May 21, 2010 10:13 pm

With respect, you were addressing Western Zen Buddhist culture. NZC only represents a small part of this culture. Indeed, by comparison Brad Warner is a far more visible and consequently influential part of this culture. And there is no reason at all to view him as a lesser authority.

Eco

**by Carol** on Fri May 21, 2010 10:18 pm

I don't know much about Brad Warner ... other than what I read here from time to time.

But over the past decade or two most Zen Centers have adopted ethical guidelines such as Nonin posted ... these models have been developed and shared through the American Zen

Teachers Association and have spread far and wide. The Diamond Sangha has similar ethical guidelines, as well.

This doesn't mean there are no longer problems or transgressions, people being what we are, but ways to recognize and deal with it have become quite commonplace among Zen groups in recent years.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Eco** on Fri May 21, 2010 10:34 pm

Trying to reacquire what Warner calls "the image of the Eastern holy person." Is not Zen master good enough?  
Eco

**by Nonin** on Fri May 21, 2010 10:39 pm

Eco wrote:

With respect, you were addressing Western Zen Buddhist culture. NZC only represents a small part of this culture. Indeed, by comparison Brad Warner is a far more visible and consequently influential part of this culture. And there is no reason at all to view him as a lesser authority.

Please drop the "with respect," for this statement shows no respect for our temple and its place in Zen Buddhism in the US.

If Brad Warner says that it's no big deal for a Zen Buddhist teacher to have sex with a student (and I say if, for the quote you presented by him doesn't say this at all), he would be far outside the ethical mainstream of Western Zen Buddhism. Our Ethics Statement has been used as boilerplate for many other Zen Buddhist practice places, and no one who says that teacher / student sexual relationships are no big deal is taken seriously these days in Zen Buddhism in the US.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

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Nonin

**by Eco** on Fri May 21, 2010 11:04 pm

Sorry, I did not know that you would consider it disrespectful to be compared with Brad Warner. Assuming that was the offence. I can think of what else it would be.

Hardcore Zen is a big part Western Zen culture, like it or not.

Culture is a hard thing to control, Nonin. It is influenced by everyone within the culture, including the horny ones.

Eco

**by christopher:::** on Fri May 21, 2010 11:19 pm

Are you going to be satisfied with any answer here, Eco? I think Rev. Nonin has explained the situation as best he can in a forthright manner. This isn't a court of law and no one is on trial. As for Brad Warner I have difficulty sometimes knowing when he is speaking satirically and with irony or trying to be direct, so I wouldn't want to debate his comments or try to defend against them..

Peace,

Chris

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Jok\_Hae** on Fri May 21, 2010 11:23 pm

I am not sure what Brad Warner has to do with all this, but I do remember discussing it once:

74 posts of Brad Warner Discussion!



Enjoy.  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Eco** on Fri May 21, 2010 11:44 pm

christopher::: wrote:  
Are you going to be satisfied with any answer here, Eco?

What an odd question. Sorry, I did not know that you were all above scrutiny.

I will not write anything further.  
Eco

**by ReturningToTheSource** on Sat May 22, 2010 12:19 am

Eco wrote:  
Brad Warner says that it's no big deal for a Zen Buddhist teacher to have sex with a student....

So what are these "teachers" actually 'teaching'?

They are teachers of what?

ReturningToTheSource

**by Eco** on Sat May 22, 2010 2:08 am

ReturningToTheSource wrote:  
Eco wrote:  
Brad Warner says that it's no big deal for a Zen Buddhist teacher to have sex with a student....

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They are teachers of what?

As Nonin, who you are actually quoting, pointed out, Mr. Warner did not say that. What Brad meant in context was that there are no "spiritual supermen," as much as we want there to be spiritual supermen. All that we have are Zen masters who might be great at Zen mastering, but as Goldberg writes in her book on page 136, they can function "cruelly and ignorantly" in their personal lives.  
Eco

**by Dan74** on Sat May 22, 2010 4:41 am

The issue is not the "Eastern holy person" or any other such fantasy. It is (to me) whether the teacher has the best interests of the students at heart or is after something else altogether. I don't expect my teacher to be holy or superhuman (or enlightened (shock horror!)) what I do look for is a sincere commitment to sharing the Dharma in an unreservedly compassionate way. That and some insight into the said Dharma.

From my experience this is a reasonable standard and any teacher worth the name satisfies it. There are other interesting characters who don't and we can learn from those too. "Approach with care!" I would say. The damage can be enormous (as can be seen from some testimonies above).

Dan74

**by Carol** on Sat May 22, 2010 5:30 am

Dan74 wrote:

The issue is not the "Eastern holy person" or any other such fantasy. It is (to me) whether the teacher has the best interests of the students at heart or is after something else altogether. I don't expect my teacher to be holy or superhuman (or enlightened (shock horror!)) what I do look for is a sincere commitment to sharing the Dharma in an unreservedly compassionate way. That and some insight into the said Dharma.

From my experience this is a reasonable standard and any teacher worth the name satisfies it. There are other interesting characters who don't and we can learn from those too. "Approach with care!" I would say. The damage can be enormous (as can be seen from some testimonies above).

Ditto, what Dan said.

With the addition that even very good teachers do make mistakes. Sometimes they learn from them and become even better teachers. Sometimes not. So, I don't require faultlessness from teachers, and I do look for humility.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

by **Dan74** on Sat May 22, 2010 6:03 am

These days I think that it is at least in part a product of our consumerist conditioning that the notion of successful self-restraint seems a pipe dream. But when even a small hole is punctured in this consumerist mindset (say with some good old fashioned integrity or a smidgeon of compassion) it is clear that this is no big deal at all!

I have interesting karma with older gay men which are supposedly completely preoccupied with sex (a stereotype confirmed by a gay Zen practitioner friend recently). A teacher at school and another one at Uni were gay, both were mentors, both were very close. There were certainly times when I was very vulnerable but I never perceived and never received anything but friendship and support. Mind you some years after school was over the teacher did try to propose something, but the dynamics of the relationship were equal then and I felt neither pressure nor betrayal. It was very easy to say "no" and no offense was taken of course.

I've met many people like that and I have been a person like that to others, where even though under different circumstances the other person may well have been a potential partner, because of the dynamics it was just inappropriate and wrong.

Of course mistakes can happen, for example when both people are very strongly attracted and believe it is a good thing and then later realize the repercussions to the Sangha and end it. As for Shimano it is quite clear that these were no mistakes.

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Dan74

by **Linda Anderson** on Sat May 22, 2010 6:21 am

Dan74 wrote:

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horror!)) what I do look for is a sincere commitment to sharing the Dharma in an unreservedly compassionate way. That and some insight into the said Dharma.

Thank you Dan for setting some priorities... "a sincere commitment to sharing the Dharma"... it's sometimes lost in the "he said", "she said" that we engage.

Seems like a little balance at this point includes the idea that sexuality is hardly the only way to misuse power or be "after something else altogether". And, useful to see that sexuality is getting a bad name by association with inappropriate conduct as well as ancient and ongoing misunderstanding and heartache. Sexuality is so much bigger and beautiful than the little prick that causes all the problems.

Carol, agree that perfection isn't necessary, but consciousness is for a teacher worth their salt... thus, they suffer in the midst of what is unavoidable, and compassion arises too.

It's also possible to love a teacher enough not to compromise their devotion to dharma or one's own path to awakening. This is a much richer perspective than assuming that it's always about victimization. It's always made sense to me.

At the end of the day, we all make our own beds, and karma has its way with us, not to censure, but as a natural outcome of plus and minus, the rules of electricity.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Eco** on Sat May 22, 2010 6:46 am

Nonin wrote:

There is a strong and growing priest and also monastic tradition in Western Zen.

Obviously there are Zen priests being trained etc in the West. Don't know how you could show "strong and growing."

Can you list any Western Soto Zen monastic communities that require, for instance, that the monastics be celibate? And I do not mean just during retreat intensives.

Eco

by **Carol** on Sat May 22, 2010 7:09 am

Linda Anderson wrote:

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At the end of the day, we all make our own beds, and karma has its way with us, not to censure, but as a natural outcome of plus and minus, the rules of electricity.

Linda

Thanks for pointing out that we're mainly in the realm of "he said" "she said" here -- when something much more complex and shaded than that is always going on, beyond what either "he" or "she" can see.

Yes, consciousness is necessary for a teacher worth their salt and we know from experience that everyone loses consciousness and has dark spots they do not see. Recognizing that is the beginning of consciousness, the kind of consciousness worthy of salt.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Linda Anderson** on Sat May 22, 2010 7:16 am

Carol wrote:

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Linda Anderson

by **ReturningToTheSource** on Sat May 22, 2010 10:38 am

Eco wrote:

As Nonin, who you are actually quoting, pointed out, Mr. Warner did not say that. What Brad meant in context was that there are no "spiritual supermen," as much as we want there to be spiritual supermen. All that we have are Zen masters who might be great at Zen mastering, but as Goldberg writes in her book on page 136, they can function "cruelly and ignorantly" in their personal lives.

Eco

I personally have little empathy for Brad's statement. Abiding in the third precept is the sphere of morality and not the sphere of spiritual superstardom.

My parents have no super spiritual qualities however they have always abided by the third precept.

If I go to an office party and have sex with a co-worker, I will certainly lose my job.

If I am a school teacher in a high school and have sex with a student, I may lose my job. This could even happen in a university, depending on the university and the situation.

If I am a psychologist or therapist and have sex with my clients, certainly I will be subject to censure from my professional peers.

That human beings in positions of social trust & responsibility are expected to abide by the third precept is a social norm. It is not superman.

When one goes to a Dharma centre, one goes with trust in & a sense of safety about the Buddha, Dharma & Sangha.

ReturningToTheSource

by **Dan74** on Sat May 22, 2010 12:16 pm

Yeah, rereading this sorry thread made me wonder if there isn't more than one universe around here.

If one needs to be a "spiritual superman" to not be an exploitative sexual predator, then I am you man! Just wait till I don my cape and then you can bow.

If those of us who are concerned with this sort of behaviour by teachers (and especially the cover-up) are busy constructing fantasies of "golden buddhas" and/or in denial of our own transgressions, well there is no point discussing, because calling a spade a spade obviously means that I am against spades and probably have spade envy.

One other thing that crossed my mind is that I am pretty unfamiliar with the Japanese style Zen (except for the little Soto group I sit with at work, but I understand that he has toned down some formalities and there is hardly any hierarchy to speak of except for the master's zafu that we can't walk across). I guess it is easy to project all sorts of things onto a teacher and in a way it is a sorry state of things that in Zen we kind of expect our teachers to be enlightened whereas if you came to a good priest or rabbi it wouldn't even cross your mind that the man is a saint and experiences a union with the Godhead. We can place a lot of burden on the teachers and I like the ones who are simple and humble and put on no appearances or displays. I recall hearing Master Sheng-Yen, his voice was like a gentle mountain spring, a part of nature. Which we all are, even Eido Shimano, but we think we are something.

"Spiritual supermen" is a silly phrase just as keeping your dick to yourself is no big achievement for a Zen master. Likewise failing to do so can happen in a variety of ways, and no one ever suggested that even a psychopathic sexual predator is beyond the pail. Angulimala repented and became an arahat. Anything is possible and of course people are mixed bags, but as far as basic ethics are concerned I've met people for whom they posed no problem and others for whom they seems impossible to master. We are where we are.

All I have a problem with is calling someone who hasn't mastered basic ethics, "a Zen master." Just like I wouldn't call someone who hasn't mastered calculus, "a mathematician." If that makes me judgmental, then so be it.

As for Linda's great suggestion to broaden the scope of this inquiry beyond sexuality, I think it's just what this thread needs! The other biggie is power and its satellite self-importance. It would be interesting to hear people share their stories.

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Dan74

**by Eco** on Sat May 22, 2010 4:00 pm

All I have a problem with is calling someone who hasn't mastered basic ethics, "a Zen master." Just like I wouldn't call someone who hasn't mastered calculus, "a mathematician." If that makes me judgmental, then so be it.

You are suggesting that because of their indiscretions, teachers like Dainin Katagiri Roshi are not actually Zen masters?

Eco

**by Nonin** on Sat May 22, 2010 4:47 pm

Eco wrote:

Nonin wrote:

There is a strong and growing priest and also monastic tradition in Western Zen.

Obviously there are Zen priests being trained etc in the West. Don't know how you could show "strong and growing."

Can you list any Western Soto Zen monastic communities that require, for instance, that the monastics be celibate? And I do not mean just during retreat intensives.

Shasta Abbey, Throssel Hole Priory, and Tassajara Zen Monastery (for a certain time), to name three.

I show "strong and growing" thusly: The Soto Zen Buddhist Association, an organization of priests in the US, has been showing a marked increase in membership over the past ten years. Also, as chairperson of the American Zen Teachers Association's Membership Committee, I've seen our membership grow substantially over the years. Rinzai Zen priest teachers have especially increased, as have both Soto and Korean tradition priest-teachers.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.



Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Carol** on Sat May 22, 2010 7:56 pm

Thirty five years ago I was the "student" in a "teacher/student" relationship with a Vipassana meditation teacher. I met this teacher at a meditation program he offered for students in training at a psychology program.

I look back on the relationship and the person involved with fondness and good memories. He was a lovely person. We were both unmarried consenting adults. I did not feel taken advantage of or in any way manipulated or abused in or by the relationship. The relationship was open, our friends and colleagues in our social circle and training program knew about it.

I do believe there are a wide range of tricky circumstances that can come into play in these kinds of relationships. But this relationship was remarkably free of projections and power-imbalance, unlike some other relationships I had in my youth that were not with teachers. I believe that circumstances alter cases, and that love appears where it does and not where we might think it ought to.

Probably the relationship would not occur today, given the past 30 years or so of learning about teacher/student relationships gone bad or causing trouble, scandal, and disruption in the sangha. But I'm not in the least bit sorry for it, and in fact am very glad to have had such a wholesome friend and lover at a time in my life when we were free to enjoy it.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by MattJ** on Sat May 22, 2010 8:14 pm

I used to think this way. I don't anymore. One needs in part to separate the teaching from the person. People fail, even Zen masters. Since embarking on this path, I have "sinned"

in certain ways, but I have done so with full awareness of what I was doing. I can no longer ignore or rationalize my wrongdoings away. The sun shines as brightly on the sinner as it does the saint, and I think wakefulness is the same way. Being awake can help one to become morally pure, but it does not guarantee it, just as a pleasant day does not mean a day free from crime and violence.

Almost every major spiritual teacher has been accused of or admitted to some form of wrongdoing: Chogyam Trungpa, Ramesh Balsekar, Krishnamurti, Muktananda, Osho, Maezumi Roshi, Yogananda, Seung Sahn Soen Sa Nim, etc. For those willing to be disabused on their notions, look up Stuart Lachs and his writings on abuses in Zen centers.

Yet these people obviously had a level of spiritual realization.

Dan74 wrote:

All I have a problem with is calling someone who hasn't mastered basic ethics, "a Zen master." Just like I wouldn't call someone who hasn't mastered calculus, "a mathematician." If that makes me judgmental, then so be it.

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<http://zenanddao.blogspot.com/>

MattJ

**by Eco** on Sat May 22, 2010 8:19 pm

Nonin wrote:

Eco wrote:

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Shasta Abbey, Throssel Hole Priory, and Tassajara Zen Monastery (for a certain time), to name three.

Basically the OBC from what I can gather. Is that it?

I show "strong and growing" thusly...

You have already said, show means show the actual numbers or some kind of documentation. This doesn't pertain to the topic however so please don't bother.  
Eco

**by genkaku** on Sat May 22, 2010 9:57 pm

Matt: Yet these people obviously had a level of spiritual realization.

And you know this ("obviously") how?

Dan74 wrote: All I have a problem with is calling someone who hasn't mastered basic ethics, "a Zen master." Just like I wouldn't call someone who hasn't mastered calculus, "a mathematician." If that makes me judgmental, then so be it.

Dan -- It certainly is to be hoped. And certainly at the same time that various groups can beat the drum for "a lineage all the way back to Shakyamuni Buddha," there are frequently specific or implied virtues and a certain uprightness that is implied within 'transmission' and the like.

Teachers sometimes exemplify such characteristics even as students long for those qualities and rely on them ... someone that stands as a role model and wise consort...someone who will nudge and inspire us. Such, in one sense, is the nature of Zen training.

But it is also the nature of Zen training to stand, like a growing child, on our own two feet. Sons and daughters do not somehow magically erase the parents who raised them, but they do learn to walk on their own path and in so doing, become the 'Zen master' they may have revered in the past.

Not quite sure what I am saying here. I am not saying "caveat emptor," though that's not a bad idea. I think like you that without some basis in moral and honest behavior, Zen masters become like wonderful cars that are missing their tires -- they ain't goin' nowhere, no matter how shiny they look.

genkaku

**by Nonin** on Sat May 22, 2010 9:58 pm

Eco wrote:

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Basically the OBC from what I can gather. Is that it?

I show "strong and growing" thusly...

You have already said, show means show the actual numbers or some kind of documentation. This doesn't pertain to the topic however so please don't bother.

You asked questions; I answered them. You don't like my answers, so ask someone else.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Dan74** on Sat May 22, 2010 10:05 pm

Eco wrote:

All I have a problem with is calling someone who hasn't mastered basic ethics, "a Zen master." Just like I wouldn't call someone who hasn't mastered calculus, "a mathematician." If that makes me judgmental, then so be it.

You are suggesting that because of their indiscretions, teachers like Dainin Katagiri Roshi are not actually Zen masters?

I have no idea of the indiscretions of Katagiri Roshi and whether they were breaches of basic ethics or mistakes of a more subtle kind.

From the evidence at hand, what I said was more applicable to Eido Shimano.

Dan74

**by Nonin** on Sat May 22, 2010 10:53 pm

I don't know if it's clear to all of us or not that the allegations about Eido Shimano are more than fifteen years old and that many of Eido's students, current and past, say that there have been no new allegations since, so it seems as if he changed his behavior. Part of the reasons for this may have been the work behind the scenes by members of the American Zen Teachers Association, but I can't be sure. I didn't become active with the group until just after this issue was addressed.

One priest who's been working with Eido for the past fifteen years tells me that he's not seen nor heard of any sexual misconduct for those fifteen years.

We all have karmic baggage that we are working out. It seems that Eido Shimano has been working on his, as I have been working on mine. His past behavior is not excusable in my view, and no one that I know of is currently denying it, although Eido and some sangha members did deny it when it first occurred many years ago. However, all of us can and sometimes do change. Eido's past behavior has created many adverse karmic consequences for him and for his sangha, and he and they are living the consequences right into the present day.

Also, one of Eido's long-term students regards the latest round of postings on the internet as nothing more than "sanctimonious vilification." Most of it has been circulated by Stuart Lachs, who was a long-term student of a teacher whose sangha exploded as the result of the teacher's sexual misconduct. Stuart has put a great deal of effort over the past years in trying to discredit not only specific Zen teachers but also the dharma transmission process itself. I don't even bother to read what Stuart writes anymore because he has too many personal axes to grind. Another person behind the recent internet postings has had a running feud with Eido and his sangha for many years over a variety of issues. I know the person, and I wouldn't trust what he says on this issue.

I have no idea why Robert Aitken is bringing this issue up again at this time. As I said earlier, the events described in the letters that have been released and posted on the internet and the subsequent postings discussing them describe events that are over fifteen years old.

Another of Eido's long term students writes: It makes more sense "to look at our present generation's teacher-student relationships with a keen eye rather than reaching into the

past to point accusatory fingers at our Asian teachers." I wholeheartedly agree, and I would add that it would also serve us all well to point those fingers at ourselves and take a good look at our behavior in all areas, not only sexual misconduct but also pointing fingers at and judging others.

Hands palm-to-palm,

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Nonin

**by Dan74** on Sat May 22, 2010 11:09 pm

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Amen.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Carol** on Sat May 22, 2010 11:16 pm

Dan74 wrote:

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Amen.

\_/\\_

Amen, again.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by genkaku** on Sun May 23, 2010 2:35 am

Nonin: I don't know if it's clear to all of us or not that the allegations about Eido Shimano are more than fifteen years old and that many of Eido's students, current and past, say that there have been no new allegations since, so it seems as if he changed his behavior.

Genjo Marinello, a Dharma heir of Eido Shimano, commented here :

This news is 15 years old. Having worked with Eido Shimano Roshi these last 15 years and having not seen nor heard of any misconduct in this time, I can only conclude he changed his alleged behavior some time ago, perhaps because of the the confrontations made to him above.

Published on 2010-04-10

Yes, it's 15 years old. Yes, people change their behavior. I guess we can forget about it and focus on our 'deep samadhi' or something similar. Of course those who ached and may continue to ache are not of any real concern. If they were, Mr. Shimano might have issued a no-nonsense, full-frontal apology -- one that took personal responsibility for what may (or may not) be 15 years old. I have never seen such an apology, then or now ... but I suppose it's not necessary ... it's 15 years old after all.

In 2000, 27 years after founder Yasutani Roshi's death, the Sanbo Kyodan order issued an apology for Yasutani's statements and actions during WWII -- a time when many Buddhists took a stand behind the politically extreme, nationalistic and discriminatory approaches of the Japanese government. It was 27 years after the fact ... and I suppose Sanbo Kyodan might just as easily have forgotten about it... much as the Turks might forget about the killing of Armenians, as the Russians might forget the slaughter at Katyn, the Catholic Church's sometimes hopeful attitude towards its victimized parishioners ... etc.,etc., etc.

In citing these historical cases, I am not trying to elevate Eido Shimano's actions or failures to act to some cosmic level. As the original post pointed out, there are situations that Zen students face that are not entirely pleasant or laudable and those unpleasant events sometimes begin at what might be called "the top." History teaches us that forgetting is a sometimes-pleasant medium through which to view our hopes and beliefs. Historians may be willing to forget, but I think Zen students forget at their peril. Vilification is not the point. Clarity about the tableau of our good effort is. Responsibility is a pivotal point in our practice ... the kind of responsibility that can apologize for what deserves an honest apology and, yes, revise behavior.

Stuart Lachs, like the Rev. Nonin, has an axe to grind. But, like the Rev. Nonin, he does it with care and with sometimes pungent reminders. I see nothing wrong with grinding an axe that could probably use a little grinding if it is not to become rusty and smug.

Well ... it's 15 years old and I guess the whole discussion can be laid to rest by the passage of time. I'm sure those who felt or may continue to feel the sting will understand. But in the same way a Zen student would be ill-advised to forget what happened 15 years ago in his or her own life, so I think Zen students would be ill-advised to gloss over or grow too comfortable about or ignore the roots -- all of the roots -- that grow the tree. We all harm others from time to time, sometimes quite badly. We are lucky if we can not just revise our behavior but also stand up four-square for our responsibilities in whatever time. I did this or that in all its gory particulars and ... I am sorry.

On the other hand, I suppose we could all emulate the fictional commentator Emily Litella (comedienne Gilda Radner) who was so often heard saying, "Oh well, never mind!"  
genkaku

**by Nonin** on Sun May 23, 2010 3:00 am

genkaku,

The sting that you feel is yours, no one else's, and you alone are responsible for what you are carrying. Eido Shimano is no longer stinging you. Take responsibility for your pain and own it. If you still are carrying the sting of events fifteen years old, you need to work them out, either on your own -- through zazen and other spiritual practices such as metta meditation -- or with the help of a mental health professional.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.



Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by genkaku** on Sun May 23, 2010 3:05 am

Nonin -- You are right.

I hope that is enough for you.  
genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Sun May 23, 2010 5:11 am

This discussion had been dormant until genkaku posted a link to Aitken Roshi's blog...

genkaku wrote:

Received in email today: Robert Aitken Roshi's open letter to Eido Tai Shimano

So, while yes this is "old news" i do think genkaku's points concerning the role of formal apologies in situations such as this is relevant and important, something that many are concerned with...

As others have mentioned American Zen has made great strides in regards to bringing sexual misconduct out of the darkness and into the light, but it's far from being a resolved issue.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Eco** on Sun May 23, 2010 5:26 am

christopher::: wrote:

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As others have mentioned American Zen has made great strides in regards to bringing sexual misconduct out of the darkness and into the light, but it's far from being a resolved issue.

Dear Christopher:::

This issue will be resolved if we take responsibility for our feelings as Nonin suggests and own them.

Eco

**by Carol** on Sun May 23, 2010 5:36 am

Relevant to this discussion ... from the Avatamsaka Sutra

Great enlightening beings give their bodies to those who come ask for them; when they give, they engender a humble mind, a mind like the earth, a mind enduring all suffering without changing or wavering, a mind to serve sentient beings tirelessly, a mind regarding all sentient beings like a benevolent mother, turning over all their virtues to them, a mind of forgiveness for the various impositions and aggressions of ignorant evil beings, and rest on the foundations of goodness, diligently performing service (Book Twenty-Five: Ten Dedications: p. 608).

This isn't talking about someone else, it's talking about you and me ... those of us on the Bodhisattva Path, although we have not fully realized or actualized it, this is the way the Sutra teaches us to follow.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
**by christopher:::** on Sun May 23, 2010 5:54 am

Excellent point, Carol. Though, unfortunately, the karmic consequences of failure to fully actualize and live these ideals seems to be greater for those who take responsibility to teach and transmit them to others...

As Rev. Nonin pointed out....

Nonin wrote:

Eido's past behavior has created many adverse karmic consequences for him and for his sangha, and he and they are living the consequences right into the present day.

Also, one of Eido's long-term students regards the latest round of postings on the internet as nothing more than "sanctimonious vilification." Most of it has been circulated by Stuart Lachs, who was a long-term student of a teacher whose sangha exploded as the result of the teacher's sexual misconduct. Stuart has put a great deal of effort over the past years in trying to discredit not only specific Zen teachers but also the dharma transmission process itself...

Teachers such as Aitken Roshi and long-term practitioners like genkaku and Stuart Lachs who continue to bring these issues to our attention should be thanked, imo, not pushed aside or blamed as messengers.

BUT (as you, Eco, Rev Nonin and others also point out) in the end it also comes back to our own actions, our own challenges to forgive others, let go of the past, live the Dharma, move in tune with the Way...

Both perspectives have validity. Quite a Paradox..!

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by **Carol** on Sun May 23, 2010 6:19 am

christopher::: wrote:

Excellent point, Carol. Though, unfortunately, the karmic consequences of failure to fully actualize and live these ideals seems to be greater for those who take responsibility to teach and transmit them to others...

Chris, There aren't any ifs, ands, or buts about it. The teaching is for us to realize and actualize -- when it is most difficult is when it is most important, most transformative, and with the greatest potential for healing ourselves and others.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,

and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by christopher:::** on Sun May 23, 2010 6:26 am

Yes. This is so.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher::  
Founding Member

**by Nonin** on Sun May 23, 2010 2:31 pm

genkaku wrote:  
Nonin -- You are right.

I hope that is enough for you.

No, that's not my concern. My concern, and hope, is that you see your way through your suffering in a positive way. It never helps to blame others and try to make them responsible for the continuation of suffering. You are the only one who can end it.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Top

**by christopher:::** on Sun May 23, 2010 2:40 pm

Nonin wrote:

No, that's not my concern. My concern, and hope, is that you see your way through your suffering in a positive way. It never helps to blame others and try to make them responsible for the continuation of suffering. You are the only one who can end it.

Hi Rev. Nonin. Perhaps i'm alone here on this, but the above seems to be saying something different then the below...

Nonin wrote:

Eido's past behavior has created many adverse karmic consequences for him and for his sangha, and he and they are living the consequences right into the present day.

Also, one of Eido's long-term students regards the latest round of postings on the internet as nothing more than "sanctimonious vilification." Most of it has been circulated by Stuart Lachs, who was a long-term student of a teacher whose sangha exploded as the result of the teacher's sexual misconduct. Stuart has put a great deal of effort over the past years in trying to discredit not only specific Zen teachers but also the dharma transmission process itself...

Are not beings often linked in karmic relationships, with responsibilities being shared? I have taken genkaku and Stuart's writing as giving voice to others who are not speaking up. And all of them connected with the teachers who's behavior "created" these adverse karmic consequences...

If we should not blame others (in this case, the teachers) how can we blame genkaku, or stuart, for the suffering that has been experienced?

Last edited by christopher::: on Sun May 23, 2010 2:53 pm, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief ::::: Keys of Zen Mind ::::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Dan74** on Sun May 23, 2010 2:53 pm

genkaku wrote:

Responsibility is a pivotal point in our practice ... the kind of responsibility that can apologize for what deserves an honest apology and, yes, revise behavior.

This (and the rest of the post) made me rethink my earlier response.

It is all too easy to wish something away or relegate it to the gripes of the pathologically disgruntled.

I know that when I see a shade of the tyrant in my old man, very painful old and half-forgotten feelings come flooding in and it takes a lot of effort to keep them at bay.

The man has mostly changed, but he has never truly acknowledged the hurt he caused. Never really understood it either. Sure I've made many steps and healed as much as I could heal, certainly enough for his shadow not to loom large over my life. But an acknowledgment would've been nice. For all of us.

The biggest step was when I realized how much I could do. But we are not islands onto ourselves. And though zazen, metta and counseling can all do wonders, it takes two people to patch up. Two people to lay the old pain to rest. So I am not sure we can conveniently close the door on the past. Apologies have their place and for a good reason too.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by MattJ** on Sun May 23, 2010 3:55 pm

Initially, the same way a non-athlete knows a good basketball player when they see one. Later, the way an amateur basketball player sees a pro.

genkaku wrote:

Matt: Yet these people obviously had a level of spiritual realization.

And you know this ("obviously") how?

<http://zenanddao.blogspot.com/>

MattJ

**by Carol** on Sun May 23, 2010 4:06 pm

Dan74 wrote:

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\_/\\_

I wasn't free until I quit longing for an apology or understanding from my mother. At some point, after many years of work on it, I let it go (or it let go of me). Compassion and forgiveness then arose for my mother and me together -- both of us and the karmic dance we had done together. Strange things happened after that. My mother appeared to be healing and forgiving me for the pain I had caused her. We never talked about it. But on her deathbed she said to me, "I love you. I don't know what happened." It was more than enough. And I believe she died in peace.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Dan74** on Sun May 23, 2010 4:24 pm

Carol,

I can identify with most of what you wrote (except the death of a parent).

There is a lot of letting go. But in my experience (with these and other matters like deep relationships), both people have to make certain steps for the situation to be resolved completely. And by completely I mean, no residue, complete healing. Sometimes these old wounds can lie dormant or manifest in a completely different way.

Now that I am a father, the situation with my old man seems to have entered a new turn of the spiral. Perhaps there is more healing to come.

In any case, I do think there is room for apology. Our government apologised for taking Aboriginal children away from their families, a tragedy that is more than 30 years old. People were elated that their suffering was finally acknowledged. It created a lot of good will.

An apology is a way of acknowledging the suffering of another. It validates the suffering that we often doubt the cause and the nature of. It brings it out into the open, into the shared space where it can heal for good.

We know the healing power of apology, so as much as it is clear that all of us can (and do) work on these issues, I say it is fair enough to ask of people who are supposedly spiritual beacons, to acknowledge past misdeed and make amends.

MattJ wrote:

I used to think this way. I don't anymore. One needs in part to separate the teaching from the person. People fail, even Zen masters. Since embarking on this path, I have "sinned" in certain ways, but I have done so with full awareness of what I was doing. I can no longer ignore or rationalize my wrongdoings away. The sun shines as brightly on the sinner as it does the saint, and I think wakefulness is the same way. Being awake can help one to become morally pure, but it does not guarantee it, just as a pleasant day does not mean a day free from crime and violence.

Almost every major spiritual teacher has been accused of or admitted to some form of wrongdoing: Chogyam Trungpa, Ramesh Balsekar, Krishnamurti, Muktananda, Osho, Maezumi Roshi, Yogananda, Seung Sahn Soen Sa Nim, etc. For those willing to be disabused on their notions, look up Stuart Lachs and his writings on abuses in Zen centers.

Yet these people obviously had a level of spiritual realization.

Dan74 wrote:

All I have a problem with is calling someone who hasn't mastered basic ethics, "a Zen master." Just like I wouldn't call someone who hasn't mastered calculus, "a mathematician." If that makes me judgmental, then so be it.

\_/\\_

I think we have very different understanding of what being awake means. To me, it is not just increased awareness. Being awake to me means having seen through the delusion that sustains the separate self and its desires.

For the names that you have listed there have been and continue to be many more who lived their lives blamelessly and shared compassion with many beings. As for these teachers, I wouldn't judge them. I just wouldn't call them "Zen masters."



\_/\\_

Dan74

**by partofit22** on Sun May 23, 2010 4:31 pm

for some, change is not enough- an apology, in words, for some reason offers more than righted action for some people- but the fact of the matter is that even after an apology is given past pain continues to rise up- yet for some reason after an apology is given it seems to be believed that the cause or blame of the pain is transmitted to self- simply because someone said "sorry"- weird- it's very strange what people choose to drag to their last days, like others old bones- most especially when every opportunity is given for them to forgive and drag nothing at all other than their own old bones- weird-  
partofit22

**by Eco** on Sun May 23, 2010 6:08 pm

Dan74 wrote:

Eco wrote:

All I have a problem with is calling someone who hasn't mastered basic ethics, "a Zen master." Just like I wouldn't call someone who hasn't mastered calculus, "a mathematician." If that makes me judgmental, then so be it.

You are suggesting that because of their indiscretions, teachers like Dainin Katagiri Roshi are not actually Zen masters?

I have no idea of the indiscretions of Katagiri Roshi and whether they were breaches of basic ethics or mistakes of a more subtle kind.

From the evidence at hand, what I said was more applicable to Eido Shimano.

Is it a matter of degrees then? Make one, "huge mistake," as Nonin describes it, and Dainin Katagiri Roshi is still a Zen master. Make several huge mistakes and he is not a Zen master?

Eco

**by So-on Mann** on Sun May 23, 2010 8:52 pm

Shoshaku jushaku!

I guess it's about Praxis. Zen priests can master the teachings, but don't always embody them and act accordingly. When they're not acting in accordance with the dharma, they are an empty shel. Yet they can be filled up again with the Dharma through repentance.

But even with repentance, sange, one still must pay the Piper.

I do find it sad that Shimano has not been fully held accountable for his actions. There are karmic repercussions nevertheless.

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sun May 23, 2010 8:59 pm

So-on Mann wrote:  
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But even with repentance, sange, one still must pay the Piper.

I do find it sad that Shimano has not been fully held accountable for his actions. There are karmic repercussions nevertheless.

I had suspected that all along.

An apology, given the evidence, is certainly warranted. I wonder though, about the legalities of it all. I hate be overly practical, but an apology might be construed as a legal admission of guilt, and therefore open himself and possibly many others to legal action. Sometimes life isn't so simple, I suppose.

Keith  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Carol** on Sun May 23, 2010 9:12 pm

Dan74 wrote:

Now that I am a father, the situation with my old man seems to have entered a new turn of the spiral. Perhaps there is more healing to come.

I had to work at my own baggage a loooooooooooooong time, including 3 years of my mother and I not speaking, so don't give up. It was such a blessing when it let go of me, but I was 40 and had gone through divorce & being a parent of teenagers! That was a big source of insight into my mother's troubles.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by So-on Mann** on Sun May 23, 2010 9:42 pm

an apology might be construed as a legal admission of guilt, and therefore open himself and possibly many others to legal action.

True, but who knows if he has taken sange in a private setting. Having said that, with sincerity comes the willingness to take one's lumps.  
Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann  
Global Moderator

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sun May 23, 2010 10:11 pm

So-on Mann wrote:

an apology might be construed as a legal admission of guilt, and therefore open himself and possibly many others to legal action.

True, but who knows if he has taken sange in a private setting. Having said that, with sincerity comes the willingness to take one's lumps.

Indeed, I am sure there is lot that we don't know. It's a sad situation.  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Eco** on Sun May 23, 2010 10:30 pm

When they're not acting in accordance with the dharma, they are an empty shel.

When someone is not acting in accordance with the teachings or religion of the Buddha they are an empty shell? I hope you are kidding, there are other religions in the word. You should not rate others by their adherence to your belief system.

Eco

**by partofit22** on Mon May 24, 2010 3:48 am

this gets me to thinking if forgiveness comes with conditions- conditions that come with lumps- and who decides the severity of those blows? and what if those blows cause more harm than good? what if they draw blood?

partofit22

**by Christopher** on Tue May 25, 2010 1:11 pm

genkaku, you need [...] the help of a mental health professional.

Well that provided my morning chuckle!

Christopher

**by Anders Honore** on Tue May 25, 2010 1:34 pm

Dan74 wrote:

All I have a problem with is calling someone who hasn't mastered basic ethics, "a Zen master." Just like I wouldn't call someone who hasn't mastered calculus, "a mathematician." If that makes me judgmental, then so be it.

I'm fine with people changing for the better and second chances.

What I find a bit problematic about sich situations is the logic of it that often seems to say:

A. This guy is screwing his students over (literally or metaphorically). Ergo, he's not a real Zen master as this is plain unethical and 'Zen master' and 'unethical' don't go together.

B. Screwer of students then repents.

C. Said screwer should now be allowed to 'go back' to being a Zen master as we shouldn't dwell on the past.

What I find strange about this is that obviously this such a person wasn't a qualified Zen master in the first place, having not learned the basics of morality before he started teaching. Are we to assume that having corrected this huge/minor error, all the other stuff is of course completely kosher Zen teaching? Does it work that way, that we can really believe that 'apart from the depraved morality, this guy knew what he was talking about?'

Personally I'd find it more trustworthy if such a person actually stopped teaching for a while to get his act together as a whole and maybe genuinely qualify as a Zen teacher for the first time.

Of course this doesn't apply to Shimano as he never publically repented, but I've seen this pattern in other cases like it.

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Anders Honore

by **Dan74** on Tue May 25, 2010 1:47 pm

I agree but I think it goes further.

The few local Zen practitioners I've spoken with seem to separate enlightenment and ethics altogether. One put it this way:

Q: "What happens if an asshole gets enlightened?"

A: "You get an enlightened asshole."

Well while I can't say that my anus sees much light of day, I kind get the whiff that enlightenment (and hence being a "Zen master") means different things to different people. Always has. Maybe that's where the problem lies.

\_/\\_

Dan74

by **Linda Anderson** on Tue May 25, 2010 5:24 pm

Dan74 wrote:

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Q: "What happens if an asshole gets enlightened?"

A: "You get an enlightened asshole."

Well while I can't say that my anus sees much light of day, I kind get the whiff that enlightenment (and hence being a "Zen master") means different things to different people. Always has. Maybe that's where the problem lies.

\_/\\_

Isn't that the rub, enlightenment, so called- hate the word, connects one to one's natural essence... be that a saint or a sinner... to all possibility. Some of us carry difficult and illegal or violent patterning which is not generally seen in spiritual leaders. People of heart recognize that harm can be done, thus ethics are established.

What feels icky to me is the energy of punishment and shaming... take a break, bad boy/girl. Are we brave enough to live with the human condition, not push it away in defense. Actually, I've never seen it, but I dream... sitting together with what is.

Linda

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

by **partofit22** on Tue May 25, 2010 8:37 pm

a cat walked across the backyard today- when it did, birds and squirrels cried out- i assume due to its bad reputation- maybe it shouldn't have been born or reborn a cat until it was clawless-

partofit22

by **bukowski** on Tue May 25, 2010 9:09 pm

Hi all.

Interesting debate. I think Anders raised a good point, that i would like elaborate on from a slightly different perspective.

I'm a dad, and to be a good dad i believe it's important to be a good person.

Good person = good parent so to speak.

I remember from my own parents that how they behaved had a much bigger impact upon me than how they told me to behave.

Of course i, just like my parents screw up and make mistakes. Their are a whole host of reasons for my failings, with ego and intolerance being high on the list.

However, if i can accept my failings as both the dad and the person that i want to be, say sorry to my little boy, gain a little humility and honesty, and try not to make the same mistakes again then there is still hope that i can do a good job for and with my son.

The only way to fully decide who is a worthwhile master, teacher, leader etc.. is to see how they deal with screwing up.

Everyone screws up. What we do after we screw up is the key.

Zen master or road sweeper are irrelevant titles in this respect. How we get back up after we have fallen down denotes the strength of our character and the depth of our understanding.

Metta, bukowski.

"All descriptions of reality are limited expressions of the world. Yet we attach to the descriptions and think they are reality. This is a mistake."Shunryu Suzuki.

bukowski

by **Nonin** on Tue May 25, 2010 10:42 pm

bukowski wrote:

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Nice, bukowski. This says it all.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by **christopher:::** on Wed May 26, 2010 12:35 am

I could be wrong, but it seems like this topic is being kept alive here (and in the larger Zen community) because there has been no resolution, probably because no clear mechanism for resolution exists presently.

When sexual misconduct occurred in the San Francisco Zen Community the teacher (Robert Baker Roshi) was asked to step down by community members. There have since been processes and procedures for dealing with teacher misconduct put into place by Soto Zen organizations. Rev. Nonin described these in detail many months ago.

Is this what is lacking within Rinzai Zen? Robert Aitkin Roshi is part of the Sanbo Kyodan school, as such seems powerless to do anything beyond what he has done which is make his private letters and correspondances known and issue public statements such as he did a few weeks ago.

Stuart Lachs and Adam (genkaku) are simply sharing what Aitkin Roshi has made public. But everyone seems to be powerless to do anything, all waiting for Shimano sensei to speak up, which he hasn't.

Please correct me if wrong, but if Shimano sensei were a Soto priest, or a Theravadan ajahn, there would have been efforts made to have him disrobe and give up his position long ago, no?



~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by **Nonin** on Wed May 26, 2010 12:51 am

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Eido Shimano has spoken for the past fifteen years. He's been teaching the dharma, building a strong lay and ordained sangha, maintaining a vibrant monastery, ordaining priests, transmitting them, and, as far as I and his closest disciples know, has changed the behavior that got him in trouble so many years ago. In other words, he has kept his nose clean as regards sexual relationships with students. If Robert Aitken, Stuart Lachs, and Adam cannot let this go after so many years, it's their problem.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by genkaku** on Wed May 26, 2010 1:40 am

If Robert Aitken, Stuart Lachs, and Adam cannot let this go after so many years, it's their problem.

Nonin -- I freely acknowledge my complicity -- my problem, which is far from simply black or white in my mind -- in this matter.

But as I acknowledge my complicity and the fact that my problem does not toe the establishment mark, I wonder to what extent you might as well be willing to acknowledge your complicity as regards the people who have been wounded.

Don't worry. I'm not holding my breath.

Yes, these matters are all in the past and the past cannot be grasped or resurrected. But to separate past and present strikes me as too facile by half.

genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Wed May 26, 2010 3:11 am

I don't see how pointing the finger of blame at genkaku, lachs, aitken roshi or rev. nonin does any good. Probably most of us here could do with a bit of therapy and counseling. At the very least it might be worth reading up a bit on dysfunctional family/group systems, codependency, sex addiction and related factors....

<http://www.hopelinks.net/addiction/family/roles.html>

As Rev. Nonin said a few days ago...

Nonin wrote:

"Eido's past behavior has created many adverse karmic consequences for him and for his sangha, and he and they are living the consequences right into the present day..."

Yep.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Huifeng** on Wed May 26, 2010 4:21 am

bukowski wrote:

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Metta, bukowski.

Nice post, Master Daddy!

Bhikṣu & Mahāyāna bodhisattva ordination by Ven Master Hsing Yun (星雲大師) (et al) of Foguang Shan Monastery (佛光山寺) Taiwan, Qixia (棲霞) branch of the Linji Chan lineage (臨濟禪宗). <http://www.fgs.org.tw> Blog: <http://wisdom.buddhistdoor.com/huifeng/>

Huifeng

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers

by **Anders Honore** on Wed May 26, 2010 10:10 am

Nonin wrote:

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Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

In other words, apart from the depraved sexual morality, Shimano was always a bona-fide Zen master?

I am not trying to be pushy, but I can't help but think that this pov expresses what Dan formulated quite succinctly: When an asshole gets enlightened, you get an enlightened asshole.

Is morality simply an adjunct to proper realisation (ie, the kind of awakening that would qualify one as a Zen master) that needs to be tacked on to the Zen master package because it's needed, or should we assume that such a degree realisation does in fact come with a certain sense of morality?

Shimano may have been 'keeping his nose clean' for the past 15 years, but is what he is transmitting any different now than before? Has keeping his nose clean instantly made him 'more realised' for him to teach others, or was he, apart from the fact that he abused students, just as realised beforehand?

Those are the questions I think would merit being addressed if someone is going to approve of Shimano.

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Anders Honore

**by Anders Honore** on Wed May 26, 2010 10:12 am

Linda Anderson wrote:

What feels icky to me is the energy of punishment and shaming... take a break, bad boy/girl. Are we brave enough to live with the human condition, not push it away in defense. Actually, I've never seen it, but I dream... sitting together with what is.

Linda

It's not a question of punishment for me, as much as a question of 'was he ever qualified to teach if he was doing this stuff?'

Obviously, the blind shouldn't be leading the blind.

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

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Anders Honore

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
**by Christopher** on Wed May 26, 2010 10:41 am

christopher::: wrote:

there would have been efforts made to have him disrobe

I gather that not too much effort would have been required.

Christopher

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
**by genkaku** on Wed May 26, 2010 11:04 am

Christopher wrote:  
 christopher::: wrote:  
 there would have been efforts made to have him disrobe

I gather that not too much effort would have been required.

genkaku

**by Nonin** on Wed May 26, 2010 12:00 pm

genkaku wrote:  
 If Robert Aitken, Stuart Lachs, and Adam cannot let this go after so many years, it's their problem.

Nonin -- I freely acknowledge my complicity -- my problem, which is far from simply black or white in my mind -- in this matter.

But as I acknowledge my complicity and the fact that my problem does not toe the establishment mark, I wonder to what extent you might as well be willing to acknowledge your complicity as regards the people who have been wounded.

People who are wounded need to heal their wounds, and if they can't do it by themselves they need to get some help. If zazen, metta practice, and other practices don't do it for them, I suggest that they seek professional help from a good counselor or therapist.

Blaming others for our problems only compounds suffering.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
 Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by partofit22** on Wed May 26, 2010 12:27 pm

that's what i was thinking- trying to heal someone elses wound for them only seems to continue the hurt-  
i don't know any of these women personally, but if i forgave someone for wrong conduct and someone else continued to try to heal my wound for me by continuing to pour salt in it so they could look like a hero i'd be mighty pissed off-  
partofit22

**by genkaku** on Wed May 26, 2010 12:49 pm

To the extent that the issue only revolves around sexual engagements, I agree with your suggestion, partofit.  
genkaku

**by Dan74** on Wed May 26, 2010 12:50 pm

Nonin wrote:

genkaku wrote:

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Blaming others for our problems only compounds suffering.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

In other words it has nothing to do with the perpetrator? It is a totally internal affair - just up to the "wounded" to get over it. Probably was just up to the wounded to get wounded in the first place. "Mind is the forerunner", right?

Of course if the mind is untrammelled, empty and free where can the wound reside?

Is anyone here like this?

Speak! Speak!

For my part, it is perhaps more useful to show some compassion and understanding for the suffering rather than barricade oneself behind a position, but I may be missing the point here. There may be things unsaid, politics or other intentions that are not really clear.

Maybe some light can be shed on this?

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by partofit22** on Wed May 26, 2010 2:16 pm

Dan74 wrote:

Nonin wrote:

genkaku wrote:

If Robert Aitken, Stuart Lachs, and Adam cannot let this go after so many years, it's their problem.

Nonin -- I freely acknowledge my complicity -- my problem, which is far from simply black or white in my mind -- in this matter.

But as I acknowledge my complicity and the fact that my problem does not toe the establishment mark, I wonder to what extent you might as well be willing to acknowledge your complicity as regards the people who have been wounded.

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Maybe some light can be shed on this?

\_/\\_

dan, my dad was an asshole- one day he just up and dropped dead from an aneurysm- for as relieved as i felt that the pain of his existence would no longer continue i continue to miss him- he put his bad foot forward as many times as he didn't- i forgave him even though he couldn't forgive himself- one time my brother grabbed him by the neck and slid him up a wall and told him that if he laid another hand on me in bad temper as he had been that he would kill him- the barricade of his position as parent was broken and transferred to me- and the man never hit me again- i was rescued- but at what cost? they barely ever spoke after that- they never worked out their indifference- they hated each other more than they previously did- and till this day i still wonder if my brother protected me out of love or if he acted upon his hatred for our dad- i say that because he continues to venomously hate the man as if our father's body were still in motion distributing blows-

i can think of many terrible things that can happen to person in life- having sex with a confused zen master who eventually learned to take a shining to the precepts instead of sex isn't one of them- somewhere in one of these posts on this forum carol's mom said something like

""i don't know what happened""- personally, i don't think it gets any more clarifying, heartfelt or forgiving than that- people here use the term it isn't my concern what others do but evidently it is or this thread wouldn't exist-  
partofit22

by **Dan74** on Wed May 26, 2010 2:34 pm

.....

On the subject of fathers, there is this from our former contributor rev kobutsu:

Kobutsu wrote:

I was blessed with a domineering, mean spirited father who never once gave me a complement. He also taught me how not to raise my kids. My oldest son was born at a Zen Monastery, he became a Rinzai Monk. My younger son did not go that route, he works as an electrician. They both have loving hearts and provided me with the opportunity to practice unconditional love and respect.

I bow to my father, I bow to my sons.

I am truly blessed,

Kobutsu

But of course all of this is

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by **goddess** on Wed May 26, 2010 3:19 pm

Anders Honore wrote:

In other words, apart from the depraved sexual morality, Shimano was always a bona-fide Zen master?

I am not trying to be pushy, but I can't help but think that this pov expresses what Dan formulated quite succinctly: When an asshole gets enlightened, you get an enlightened asshole.

Is morality simply an adjunct to proper realisation (ie, the kind of awakening that would qualify one as a Zen master) that needs to be tacked on to the Zen master package because it's needed, or should we assume that such a degree realisation does in fact come with a certain sense of morality?

Shimano may have been 'keeping his nose clean' for the past 15 years, but is what he is transmitting any different now than before? Has keeping his nose clean instantly made him 'more realised' for him to teach others, or was he, apart from the fact that he abused students, just as realised beforehand?

Those are the questions I think would merit being addressed if someone is going to approve of Shimano.

I thought I would just give my opinion in response to this Anders.

There are a few pieces which I would try to articulate and they are difficult to say.

The first is that there are no innocent victims. That is to say that the women manifested this situation. Probably to show that they were playing out victim roles in the situation and so they have an opportunity to clear it. But that is an educated guess. When you have victim consciousness, you manifest tyrants. When you have a tyrannical consciousness you manifest victims. I have witnessed this process many times in my life as I face it all and let it burn away and don't make it real, people like this disappear out of my life. For example my mother who was very difficult for me has apparently transformed but not for my sisters. It is like having an immune system. I would imagine in these lecherous old teachers (who by the way I find totally repulsive) if they are awake, that from their point of view they are giving this person an opportunity and that all the stuff is their stuff.

Secondly I personally I would not take it for granted that someone who is known as a master is awake. If the person is known to be awake and does not say it, the first question from the student should surely be, 'Are you awake?' If the answer is no and you want an awakened teacher then move on. I think that would save a lot of suffering. If it is embarrassing for the teacher then the teacher is dubious. That isn't to say that many on their way teachers are not of great value.

Lastly is this. I'll relate my own experience here .... I once had a temporary experience where all the veils were lifted and I experienced my consciousness as non dual and there was no sense of an individual in here. What I noticed was that my old ego was still present in the form of thoughts which would arise. I simply had perfect discernment and could say oh that's that old ego of mine and then choose. I could see the structure of this world perfectly and the weirdest part was that when I closed my eyes it was light instead of dark!! While this was a temporary experience in my case I have considered if some people have this experience. In other words awakened awareness or whatever but they have not made everything conscious. What happened to me was ai went to visit my father and something got me unawares and I next thing I was back on this old side! So it is possible that if an awakened teacher could possibly not have completed the work of making their entire ego conscious and so something cropped up, they lost mindfulness and it is gone. A loss of mindfulness in this state would automatically lead to a fall back into the unawake state. So they say the buddha was perfectly enlightened but maybe this guy wasn't. What is clear to me also is that some of the most unconscious pieces are on the other side of the gender divide, so it is not surprising that he slipped up here.

As for him still having students and being respected. Well that is really a reflection of his students and those who respect him. It seems highly likely to me that his students find

sexual misconduct of this sort ok. Either to hide their own pain and victimhood or to cover over their own misconduct and tyranny.

goddess

**by Nonin** on Wed May 26, 2010 5:45 pm

Dan74 wrote:

Nonin wrote:

People who are wounded need to heal their wounds, and if they can't do it by themselves they need to get some help. If zazen, metta practice, and other practices don't do it for them, I suggest that they seek professional help from a good counselor or therapist.

Blaming others for our problems only compounds suffering.

Hands palm-to-palm,

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In other words it has nothing to do with the perpetrator? It is a totally internal affair - just up to the "wounded" to get over it. Probably was just up to the wounded to get wounded in the first place. "Mind is the forerunner", right?

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Maybe some light can be shed on this?

\_/\\_

Dan,

No one in this thread has condoned or excused Eido Shimano's past behavior. Organizationally, it wasn't handled properly at the time at either of the places where the alleged misconduct occurred.

You said:

"In other words it has nothing to do with the perpetrator? It is a totally internal affair - just up to the wounded to get over it."

No one here has said anything like this. The organization has a responsibility to deal with sexual misconduct issues when they arise. It is the organization's responsibility to investigate the matter, to discipline the wrongdoer, and to see that whoever is "wounded" is helped to heal.

You also said:

"For my part, it is perhaps more useful to show some compassion and understanding for the suffering rather than barricade oneself behind a position, but I may be missing the point here."

If you go through the posts on this thread, you'll find that no one is showing a lack of compassion and understanding of anyone's suffering. Also, If you read our temple's ethics statement, you'll find that it stems from compassion and from an understanding of the suffering that sexual misconduct, and other kinds of misconduct, can cause.

You are missing the point here, which is: What good does it do at this point in time to re-hash events from fifteen years ago? Things are the way they are, and it's up to all of us to deal with things as they are. If someone is carrying ill-will, hard feelings, or whatever from events fifteen years past, he or she has to deal with them, and if an apology never came or is not forthcoming, he or she has to deal with that. If Zen practice (zazen, metta practice, pastoral counseling, etc.) has not helped the person move on, seeing a counselor or therapist is in order. Some psychological issues need the kind of help provided by a professional. Many of us who teach Zen recommend this kind of help when necessary.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by partofit22** on Wed May 26, 2010 5:52 pm

genkaku wrote:

To the extent that the issue only revolves around sexual engagements, I agree with your suggestion, partofit.

adam, have you considered visiting with with mr shimano alone to speak with him face to face?

partofit22

**by genkaku** on Wed May 26, 2010 7:19 pm

partofit22 wrote:

genkaku wrote:

To the extent that the issue only revolves around sexual engagements, I agree with your suggestion, partofit.

adam, have you considered visiting with with mr shimano alone to speak with him face to face?

Partofit -- This is an utterly reasonable and utterly intelligent and utterly cogent and utterly sound suggestion. And you will pardon me if it also made me laugh out loud. Neville Chamberlain, the former British prime minister, comes inescapably to mind.

The laundry list of people who tried this in the past is truly extensive... each with good will, each convinced that a loving discussion would solve and settle things, each supportive and bearing no ill-will, some with considerable Zen 'rank,' some with none at all. What about the women? What about the money? What about the sangha?

It is all in the long-ago and faraway -- 15 years old as various people point out. And yet this morning, out of the blue, I got a note from someone I do not know -- no doubt another vindictive fool who lacks understanding of the True Dharma -- suggesting without detail that things were not at all so old ... as if 'old' were the arbiter of cogent concern.

**Moderator's note:**

I have removed 2nd-hand anonymous quotations. This is a serious matter, and ZFI administration requires that serious charges be presented in a credible manner by persons who are identified.

Carol  
genkaku

**by genkaku** on Wed May 26, 2010 8:33 pm

Thanks Carol. I was about to do the same, though for different reasons.  
genkaku

**by partofit22** on Wed May 26, 2010 8:56 pm

genkaku wrote:

partofit22 wrote:

genkaku wrote:

To the extent that the issue only revolves around sexual engagements, I agree with your suggestion, partofit.

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adam, i'm happy i provided you with a laugh ...

but ...

i wasn't asking about other's laundry lists or failed attempts- i asked if "you" considered visiting the man -- and you didn't answer ...

"What about the women? What about the money? What about the sangha?" no, what about you? i think my question was fair- either yes or no-

i know you have said that you like chocolate and do not like anchovies- i do not know if you eat chocolate or do not eat anchovies- i don't know for a fact that you've ever tried either- especially the anchovies ... but i could assume ...  
partofit22

**by genkaku** on Wed May 26, 2010 9:24 pm

Yes is the answer, partofit. And that visit was part of the impetus for the letter I later wrote and (much later) posted on my blog.

genkaku

**by So-on Mann** on Wed May 26, 2010 11:13 pm

The first is that there are no innocent victims. That is to say that the women manifested this situation.

Again, goddess this is your opinion and does not represent the Buddhist view on cause and effect. This is something more like "The Secret."

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by christopher:::** on Thu May 27, 2010 12:29 am

So-on Mann wrote:

The first is that there are no innocent victims. That is to say that the women manifested this situation.

Again, goddess this is your opinion and does not represent the Buddhist view on cause and effect. This is something more like "The Secret."

There's concern that some magical thinking of this sort may exist within the various schools of Buddhism as well...

"The idealization inherent in the terms "dharma transmission," "roshi" and "monk," has contributed to the problems we have experienced in American Zen. By the very nature of the roles the student ascribes to the titles, he routinely gives trust to the teacher that he would not give to anyone else. This trust is often quite complete and natural, because the wearing of the robes traditionally signifies the turning away from selfish motivations, the vow to save all sentient beings and not to inflict harm. To an observer not familiar with this type of religious practice, the extent to which a student surrenders can appear astonishing. Many people accept this kind of trust in spiritual practice, but it leads to problems when the teacher is not emotionally mature or disciplined enough to assume the



responsibility for guiding students. Though the teacher may have some level of attainment, it is too often far from the idealized view of the student or from that promoted by the Zen institutions. "In the Ch'an tradition, the rhetoric maintains that each transmission is perfect, each successor is the spiritual equivalent of his predecessor... the primary feature is its participatory nature; to receive certification of enlightenment from a Ch'an/Zen master is to join the succession of patriarchs and enter into dynamic communion with the sages of ancient times. One either belonged within the lineage of enlightened masters or not; there is no in-between category i.e. 'almost enlightened' or 'rather like a master'".

In Zen, one can identify a two-fold process, looking-in and looking-out. Looking-in includes the process of meditation; looking-out includes taking the teacher as a model for living and as an inspiration for practice. As is common in Gnostic-type religious practice, the teacher in Zen is the final arbiter of reality. Not only does the teacher judge the student's level of insight/wisdom, but, for closer students at the least, will often comment and judge on every aspect of the disciple's daily life. However, as we have seen, there is often a serious disparity between the student's view of the teacher and the teacher's actual life. The students don't hold the teacher to any standard of conduct not merely because they feel they themselves lack the authority to make such judgments about the teacher. They also fear that criticisms which undermine the teacher's authority would cast doubts on the value of their years of practice under that teacher. Some have also come to feel protective of immature Zen institutions in the United States, and hesitate to contribute to the damage that public scandal could cause. Others fear their own rise to a position of teacher would be jeopardized."

~Stuart Lachs  
Coming Down From the Zen Clouds

Of course, we shouldn't accept a view such as this uncritically. Lachs and others who criticize the institutions of Zen may simply have an axe to grind...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~  
christopher:::

**by Carol** on Thu May 27, 2010 1:33 am

christopher::: wrote:  
Of course, we shouldn't accept a view such as this uncritically. Lachs and others who criticize the institutions of Zen may simply have an axe to grind...

No doubt some who have been disappointed or hurt do have axes to grind. That's human nature. Doesn't mean they don't have legitimate complaints too.

As I see it, a few high profile Zen scandals brought to light the fact that Zen teachers are not "enlightened", and put that whole mythos into doubt. A very good thing, IMO. That means we can practice Zen with more realistic expectations, more humility, and more compassion for the transgressions of all of us.

I do think we're very fortunate in this country that these high profile scandals brought about a lot of discussion (that doesn't take place in Japan or China) and that we're much the better for it. The codes of ethics and procedures that have become quite widespread here in the US are a very good thing.

While I don't minimize the hurt and betrayal that people feel when their teacher(s) fall off their pedestals, I think the worst sexual misconduct I've heard of in Buddhism recently is the refusal of the Thai monks to permit nuns/Bhikhunis to be ordained. Good for the Aussie renegade who has broken ranks and gone ahead and done it. But he's been "excommunicated" for it, so it may be awhile before this deepy entrenched misogyny changes.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by christopher:::** on Thu May 27, 2010 3:23 am

Hi Carol,

Yes, the attitude of Thai Theravadan leaders toward female nuns/bhikhunis is shocking, especially from a modern Western point of view.

Concerning Shimano roshi one might wonder why Stuart Lachs, Robert Aitken roshi, Adam (genkaku) and others are still so concerned. From one perspective (as given by Rev. Nonin), action was taken and Shimano roshi has changed his behavior. Isn't that enough?

I guess it all comes down to issues of trust and mistrust. Since the Aitken-Shimano letters were shared in May of 2009 many of those who had contact with and knew Shimano personally seem concerned that he has never publicly made a statement, has not stepped down or been asked to disrobe. He's still in control, in NY, still in a position of power and influence, the people around him (who say everything is fine now don't worry) he has selected himself.

This causes many to still be concerned, not only for the mental health of women who have been harmed in the past but for the very health and credibility of Shimano's NY Zen sangha and lineage. To transmit the dharma, to ordain clergy, one needs to have mastered the dharma to a great extent, embody the dharma, no? A Roshi doesn't need to be fully enlightened but if they are actually less enlightened than the average Joe on the street, what are they transmitting?

Unfortunately many of the same social and institutional mechanisms which serve to transmit the dharma can instead (or simultaneously) pass on dysfunction...

Many of us here experienced a "virtual" taste of sangha dysfunction over at the "grey forum." These experiences led to the formation of E-sangha Watch, a website and effort many here have supported.

As i see it, ex-students and colleagues of Shimano roshi who have made information about his past public and continue to seek his removal are doing something similar, and should be commended, not told to "drop" the issue.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by partofit22** on Thu May 27, 2010 5:10 am

genkaku wrote:

Yes is the answer, partofit. And that visit was part of the impetus for the letter I later wrote and (much later) posted on my blog.

thank you, adam-

if i understand you correctly "Yes is the answer, partofit." means you considered visiting mr shimano and "And that visit was part of the impetus for the letter I later wrote and (much later) posted on my blog.[/quote]" means you did pay him a visit- did he speak to you when you did? i read your letter as carefully as i'm able- but i didn't read anywhere in it that you visited with mr shimano face to face to discuss with him the feelings you expressed in your letter- i could have missed it, and if i did i would appreciate you pointing it out to me- you made references to people standing outside his door but i couldn't figure out if they actually stood outside his door waiting to speak to him or if you placed them there metaphorically- i couldn't tell- partofit22

**by partofit22** on Thu May 27, 2010 5:28 am

christopher::: wrote:  
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As i see it, ex-students and colleauges of Shimano roshi who have made information about his past public and continue to seek his removal are doing something similar, and should be commended, not told to "drop" the issue.

if mr shimano never makes a public statement or is removed before his death, what will those who seek his removal and statement be commended for after he dies?  
partofit22

**by Carol** on Thu May 27, 2010 6:16 am

christopher::: wrote:

As i see it, ex-students and colleauges of Shimano roshi who have made information about his past public and continue to seek his removal are doing something similar, and should be commended, not told to "drop" the issue.

AS I see it, it's usually best not to tell other people what to do or not to do. Sometimes, someone asks for help or calls out for it in some way, then some advice may or may not be helpful or appreciated. Otherwise, I try to respect peoples' judgment and process even when I disagree.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
**by christopher:::** on Thu May 27, 2010 7:05 am

Hi Carol & partofit22,

Apologies... itt probably wasn't clear, i was speaking specifically in regards to the advice given by Rev. Nonin one page back, that Robert Aitken, Stuart Lachs, and Adam should "let go of this" and if they can't it's "their problem."

Nonin wrote:

Eido Shimano has spoken for the past fifteen years. He's been teaching the dharma, building a strong lay and ordained sangha, maintaining a vibrant monastery, ordaining priests, transmitting them, and, as far as I and his closest disciples know, has changed the behavior that got him in trouble so many years ago. In other words, he has kept his nose clean as regards sexual relationships with students. If Robert Aitken, Stuart Lachs, and Adam cannot let this go after so many years, it's their problem.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

But you do make a good point, Carol, that even when we disagree with others we should be careful about telling them what they should or shouldn't do.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by goddess on Thu May 27, 2010 8:48 am

It is perfectly possible to have let go of something, an inner situation and then still to take action in the world for the sake of all beings. It is completely erroneous to think that people who continue with certain actions have problems. And even if there is an axe to grind, personally I have never come across an invalid axe. Even if the person is all hooked up in it and not entirely clear there is always a seed of truth. One of the biggest problems in the world today is all the invalidation of other peoples pain. It makes people feel like they are loopy, when they are actually perfectly sane. This is one of the things that happens regularly to women in a patriarchy so I for one am delighted with the men who are prepared to say that abusive men are jerks, be they spiritual teachers or otherwise. My feeling is that someone who seeks out a teacher with a record like this (if they are male) likes to have their misguided entitlement reinforced and if they are female they are in denial about the pain that they feel.

I just read Adam's blog, the guy sounds like a total creep. I find the current institutions appalling for upholding this kind of thing and it's not just zen. Every single traditional institution on this planet is infused with this kind of crap. Actually if you have some wisdom, it makes a mockery of them and shows you exactly what to avoid. It strips all robes and titles of their validity, which is sad because some people with robes are cool. On the other hand I'll never forget the monk who said to me 'I like patriarchy'. I think he was theravadin but look how they behave, look at this ex-communication issue with is it Ajhan Brahm? I would think anyone still upholding the institution in any way would be blocking their own enlightenment.

I love this simple truth from G's blog, a quote from one of the women:  
 "Personally, I found his (your) seductions very distracting and jarring during the first Kessei...I wonder now if I would not have been a better student in the long run without it. ... And last year (1978) during my second stay at Dai Bosatsu, it hurt me that he treated me very distantly for quite a while. When he warmed up, it became sexual again. That kind of either/or situation made it very difficult for me (or, I would think, any woman)"

Isn't this an archetypal women's story, in this sorry fallen state in which we live?

Anyway some time back I read about the 'shambala war' in some obscure thesis. It seemed to refer to a time when the dharma as in Truth would be separated from the BS. Personally I think we are living this now. It is time to step into our own authority and make choices based on Truth and not rely on some tradition because a lot of others do. It is an abdication of personal responsibility.

christopher::: wrote:

In Zen, one can identify a two-fold process, looking-in and looking-out. Looking-in includes the process of meditation; looking-out includes taking the teacher as a model for living and as an inspiration for practice. As is common in Gnostic-type religious practice,

the teacher in Zen is the final arbiter of reality. Not only does the teacher judge the student's level of insight/wisdom, but, for closer students at the least, will often comment and judge on every aspect of the disciple's daily life. However, as we have seen, there is often a serious disparity between the student's view of the teacher and the teacher's actual life. The students don't hold the teacher to any standard of conduct not merely because they feel they themselves lack the authority to make such judgments about the teacher. They also fear that criticisms which undermine the teacher's authority would cast doubts on the value of their years of practice under that teacher. Some have also come to feel protective of immature Zen institutions in the United States, and hesitate to contribute to the damage that public scandal could cause. Others fear their own rise to a position of teacher would be jeopardized."

~Stuart Lachs  
Coming Down From the Zen Clouds

[/quote]

isn't pulling in all the projections of authority an integral part of waking up? Not to mention an excellent thing to do for the world, for the benefit of all beings.

And back onto the topic of clearing up the mess between men and women .... I really like the renegade Tibetan buddhist monk here... Michael Roshi. I think he is holding the clear light for this whole situation. (BTW he is also probably one of the world experts on magic as it has been loosely defined in this thread... just read his translation of 'the diamond cutter') Of course people don't like him, he threatens the power of the institution.  
goddess

**by Anders Honore** on Thu May 27, 2010 9:53 am

goddess wrote:

And back onto the topic of clearing up the mess between men and women .... I really like the renegade Tibetan buddhist monk here... Michael Roshi. I think he is holding the clear light for this whole situation. (BTW he is also probably one of the world experts on magic as it has been loosely defined in this thread... just read his translation of 'the diamond cutter') Of course people don't like him, he threatens the power of the institution.

Sorry, this guy?

Really, there's just no way someone who has taken vows of celibacy should be in a sexual relationship and claim that he is still a fully and validly ordained bhikshu. And that's besides the exceedingly weird stuff he says about Buddhism & Christianity. He really is as crazy as a bag of spanners.

It's not that he threatens the power of the institution. He's free to do what he wants really. People don't like him because he clearly breaks with the precepts of the institution he professes to be a part of, yet still makes claim to all the perks of being associated with it. If he wants to do his own thing, he should just go ahead and call it his own thing. But he's not.

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

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Anders Honore

**by goddess** on Thu May 27, 2010 10:34 am

I don't think he has a sexual relationship. It is a celibate partnership as far as I know but hey I could be wrong.  
goddess

**by Anders Honore** on Thu May 27, 2010 1:49 pm

goddess wrote:  
I don't think he has a sexual relationship. It is a celibate partnership as far as I know but hey I could be wrong.

It's definitely not celibate. There wouldn't be a fuzz otherwise. This is one of his claims: That as an irreversible Bodhisattva, he can 'take a consort' (ie, have crazy tantric sex with his gal, or 4 of them as seems to be the case now) without defeating his ordination vows.

Which of course, no one else agrees with. So no one else but himself and his followers recognise him as a bhikshu anymore.

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Anders Honore



**by Dan74** on Thu May 27, 2010 1:53 pm

Yeah... the pitfalls are many and varied. But luckily for us they are a danger only to those who actually walk the path.

Those of us who are already in a rut, don't face much danger in falling further!

Dan74

**by partofit22** on Thu May 27, 2010 1:56 pm

is there some kind of vatican type of thing overseeing the branch that mr shimano practices? some kind of head person(s) or board or panel of people that have the authority to remove him? were any of the women mr shimano seduced married or in other types of monogamous relationships? did any of the sexual encounters involve minors? were any of the women raped? was anything he did with the women punishable by law? did these women know each other? did any of them have sex with mr shimano on the same day, during the same week, month or year? did any of them exchange information of their sexual encounters with mr shimano with each other? if they did, did they continue to have sex with him anyway? how is it that such things could happen yet the man remains untouchable? what exactly is it that is keeping him from being removed especially if it's hinted that such encounters continue? has anyone ever organized a group to picket with "sexual predator inside" type signs outside his temple? what would happen if he were caught in the act?

partofit22

**by partofit22** on Thu May 27, 2010 1:59 pm

Dan74 wrote:

Yeah... the pitfalls are many and varied. But luckily for us they are a danger only to those who actually walk the path.

Those of us who are already in a rut, don't face much danger in falling further!

ha! how far is down, dan?! it's the stuck part that seems more like luck ...

partofit22

**by Seigen** on Thu May 27, 2010 2:07 pm

From the office of the Dalai Lama, requesting that Michael Roach not appear (found here <http://www.diamond-cutter.org/dalai-lama-office/dalai-lama-office-denounce.html>) :

We have gone through your long explanation but still do not support your coming to Dharmasala. If you have reached the path of seeing, as you claim in your letter, you should then be able show extraordinary powers and perform miracles like the Siddhas of the past. Only then will the followers of Tibetan Buddhists be able to believe and accept your claims.

Otherwise, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the Spiritual and Temporal leader of Tibet having responsibility over the welfare of Tibetan Buddhism many have often complained to Him that He should be strict with those who are not adhering to the general norms of discipline according to our tradition. And your coming to Dharmasala will be seen by many as His Holiness condoning your behavior and practice.

It does seem that in this case the Dalai Lama is looking beyond a suspected broken vow of celibacy and sees egregious behavior overall. I recall a video, however, of the pair describing the intimacy of their celibate life as lived in what is basically a shared tent. It may be that the writer of the letter from the Dalai Lama's office has seen this video too, and in their knowledge of humanity expect that if this celibate arrangement is true, then Michael Roach "should then be able show extraordinary powers and perform miracles like the Siddhas of the past." Who knows.

But what this brings to light for me is that those who present such distorted thought and egregious action as Michael Roach are shunned by those who are protecting Buddhadharma. This does not need to be official, people can plant the red flags in the ground, as the website referred to is clearly doing, in order to protect others from misinformation, deceit, manipulation and abuse. In no way do I see the efforts of others to expose egregious action as efforts that are selfish, misguided and immature.

It is true that people can change, but it is also true that we are not just talking about individuals but lineages here, a lineage does carry forward the voice and actions of its teachers, and in the comments to Genkaku's website post is concern expressed about the behavior of another from this lineage - "the apple never falls far from the tree." I take this very seriously.

Last edited by Seigen on Thu May 27, 2010 2:20 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen  
Global Moderator

by **Anders Honore** on Thu May 27, 2010 2:15 pm

Seigen wrote:

It may be that the letter from the Dalai Lama's office has seen this video too, and in their knowledge of humanity expect that if this celibate arrangement is true, then Michael Roach "should then be able show extraordinary powers and perform miracles like the Siddhas of the past." Who knows.

That's the claim that's made of those who engage in tantric sex and are actually getting more than laid from it. Ie, they "should then be able show extraordinary powers and perform miracles like the Siddhas of the past." Not of those who 'merely' sleep under the same roof as a member of the opposite sex and miraculously remain celibate.

He's definitely engaging in tantric practices (=sex). That's what it means to 'take a consort' and that's why he's claiming that it's not really a defeat because he's an irreversible bodhisattva on the 8th bhumi (and on his way to Buddhahood; that's why he's stopped shaving his head and started wearing jewels too).

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

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Anders Honore

by **christopher:::** on Thu May 27, 2010 2:30 pm

partofit22 wrote:

is there some kind of vatican type of thing overseeing the branch that mr shimano practices? some kind of head person(s) or board or panel of people that have the authority to remove him? were any of the women mr shimano seduced married or in other types of monogamous relationships? did any of the sexual encounters involve minors? were any of the women raped? was anything he did with the women punishable by law? did these women know each other? etc...

Were any of the women raped? It does not appear that anyone ever made that accusation, but that he tried to seduce sangha women (in the 1960s) while they were hospitalized after having psychological breakdowns sounds pretty close.... and... seems at the very least to raise VERY serious concerns about his roshi and teacher credentials.

These letters (kept private until last year) also raise questions about the way Shimano's situation was handled by the Zen "establishment" over the last 40 years. I think that's why Aitkin Roshi released all this information last May....

See: The Aitken-Shimano letters

You can also read genkaku's description of problems in the early 1980's here, as well as a letter from a female student (posted in response) from 1993...

Genkaku's blog: Eido Tai Shimano

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by goddess** on Thu May 27, 2010 2:46 pm

Anders Honore wrote:

goddess wrote:

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It's definitely not celibate. There wouldn't be a fuzz otherwise. This is one of his claims: That as an irreversible Bodhisattva, he can 'take a consort' (ie, have crazy tantric sex with his gal, or 4 of them as seems to be the case now) without defeating his ordination vows.

Which of course, no one else agrees with. So no one else but himself and his followers recognise him as a bhikshu anymore.

oh ok, then it seems he might have stuffed it all up. I think for what I thought he was doing to work, it would have to be celibate.

Seigen wrote:

From the office of the Dalai Lama, requesting that Michael Roach not appear (found here <http://www.diamond-cutter.org/dalai-lama-office/dalai-lama-office-denounce.html>) :

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It does seem that in this case the Dalai Lama is looking beyond a suspected broken vow of celibacy and sees egregious behavior overall. I recall a video, however, of the pair

describing the intimacy of their celibate life as lived in what is basically a shared tent. It may be that the writer of the letter from the Dalai Lama's office has seen this video too, and in their knowledge of humanity expect that if this celibate arrangement is true, then Michael Roach "should then be able show extraordinary powers and perform miracles like the Siddhas of the past." Who knows.

But what this brings to light for me is that those who present such distorted thought and egregious action as Michael Roach are shunned by those who are protecting Buddhaharma. This does not need to be official, people can plant the red flags in the ground, as the website referred to is clearly doing, in order to protect others from misinformation, deceit, manipulation and abuse. In no way do I see the efforts of others to expose egregious action as efforts that are selfish, misguided and immature.

It is true that people can change, but it is also true that we are not just talking about individuals but lineages here, a lineage does carry forward the voice and actions of its teachers, and in the comments to Genkaku's website post is concern expressed about the behavior of another from this lineage - "the apple never falls far from the tree." I take this very seriously.

Thanks for sharing this tidbit from the DL, because I would so like to find him trustworthy and I just couldn't if he came forward with a kind of rules are rules statement.

Anyway it seems that there is confusion about whether MR is celibate or not. If he is doing what he could be doing the miracles will manifest in due course. I'm sure we will hear about it is due course.

Anyway sorry everyone for this little diversion off the main theme.  
goddess

**by Seigen** on Thu May 27, 2010 2:55 pm

I hope that in the context of this thread this will not be seen as off topic, but I am struck by the fact that a female teacher is involved in the Michael Roach controversy (I do understand him to be disingenuous), and the politics surrounding this in a Tibetan context. There have been strong women who have left Buddhism for this, strong female teachers who have emerged from harmful relationships with a teacher, and there are female teachers who remain in partnership with their own teachers, having to bust through a cloud of confusion about their role and ability. This, pr from Diamond Mountain, but still (from here - <http://diamondmountain.org/roots/gettoknowus.html>):

How did Christie become a lama? Are women allowed to become lamas?

The Tibetan word "lama," for over a thousand years, has referred to any senior spiritual teacher, whether they are a man or woman, ordained or not ordained. Christie has

completed studies under a number of major Buddhist teachers at Kopan Monastery in Nepal; Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery; and the Asian Classics Institute of New York—as well as obtaining a western degree in literature and philosophy at New York University.

She is one of the founders of Diamond Mountain University in the United States, and a professor of ancient literature and philosophy. She has written a number of popular books on Buddhist philosophy and yoga, including *How Yoga Works* and a new translation of the ancient Sanskrit classic, *The Yoga Sutra* (Doubleday/Random House, 2005).

Christie's popular translations from ancient Sanskrit and Tibetan include other important works by luminaries such as Master Nagarjuna (200 AD); Master Kamalashila (700 AD); and His Holiness the First Panchen Lama (1567-1662). She teaches thousands of people around the world every year during her speaking tours. (Left, Lama Christie delivers a talk on spiritual partners to an audience of 1,000 at City Hall, Taipei)

Christie has over 150 regular senior students at Diamond Mountain. In September 2006, a large group of them completed a special multi-year course of traditional Tibetan studies under her guidance, and began training in what is called the "Diamond Way," sort of a Tibetan post-graduate program. At this point, by Tibetan custom, the teacher has truly earned the title of "lama"; and by a mutual consensus of Christie's own teachers, her fellow professors, and her students, she became one of the first women to be awarded this title.

Lama Christie has made an immense contribution towards the training of over 100 senior female teachers within the WorldView umbrella of spiritual, educational, and service organizations. Their achievement is especially significant when we consider the historical position of women in Buddhist societies.

In the five centuries of the geshe degree, no woman in Tibet was ever allowed to undertake these studies; in fact, very few women were even taught to read or write. Nuns, by monastic requirement, were considered inferior to all monks. Of the 4,500 classical works of the Buddhist canon, less than 10 were written by women; and among the many thousands of major lamas produced in Tibet, less than 10 have been women.

The very word for "woman" in Tibetan is kye-men, or "inferior person." Lama Christie and her WorldView colleagues have helped break down this barrier, as have a good number of Tibetan monks and geshe who have come to the West to teach, and been exposed to the idea of gender equality.

Last edited by Seigen on Thu May 27, 2010 3:10 pm, edited 2 times in total.  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen  
Global Moderator

by partofit22 on Thu May 27, 2010 2:57 pm

Seigen wrote:

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as a rule, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree- that's gravity- but what happens to that apple after it falls is endless possibilities- if that weren't true, change wouldn't take place-

i support simple, responsibly placed straightforward warning signs, ones that are direct without evasion-

or

if not placed properly, like next to the danger for example, they aren't very effective and are cause for questions like "what hell?" "what ice?"-  
partofit22

by partofit22 on Thu May 27, 2010 3:18 pm

christopher::: wrote:

partofit22 wrote:

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Were any of the women raped? It does not appear that anyone ever made that accusation, but that he tried to seduce sangha women (in the 1960s) while they were hospitalized after having psychological breakdowns sounds pretty close.... and... seems at the very least to raise VERY serious concerns about his roshi and teacher credentials.

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See: The Aitken-Shimano letters

You can also read genkaku's description of problems in the early 1980's here, as well as a letter from a female student (posted in response) from 1993...

Genkaku's blog: Eido Tai Shimano

nothing "sounds like" rape but rape itself- and trying to make anything but rape sound like rape is accusation and misleading information-  
 is waiting 40 years to release information right action? do you think he didn't release the info in his younger days due to fear of ramifications  
 to his living and practice? does his delay make it seem that he cared more about protecting himself than others?  
 partofit22

**by Seigen** on Thu May 27, 2010 3:31 pm

re: apples falling and the tabloids:

<http://www.nypost.com/pagesixmag/issues/20100211/Monk+y+Business+Controversial+NYC+guru+Michael+Roach>

Last summer Christie left Geshe Michael for another man. Ian Thorson, a young student who had once served as the couple's attendant and delivered them food and robes, had come between them.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by christopher:::** on Thu May 27, 2010 3:35 pm

partofit22 wrote:

nothing "sounds like" rape but rape itself- and trying to make anything but rape sound like rape is accusation and misleading information-

I did not see anyone else use the word, so - i agree - i should not have made such an assessment...

is waiting 40 years to release information right action? do you think he didn't release the info in his younger days due to fear of ramifications  
 to his living and practice? does his delay make it seem that he cared more about protecting himself than others?



I don't know. You would have to ask Aitkin roshi, or someone who knows him those questions...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Seigen** on Thu May 27, 2010 3:49 pm

partofit22 wrote:

nothing "sounds like" rape but rape itself- and trying to make anything but rape sound like rape is accusation and misleading information-

Just a reminder, but many women my age remember all too well a time when there was no such thing as date rape. This doesn't change your address to Christopher, exactly, but it does place emphasis on how things do change.

Last edited by Seigen on Thu May 27, 2010 3:57 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by goddess on Thu May 27, 2010 3:54 pm

and there was that institutionalised rape thing ... conjugal rights!!!  
goddess

**by partofit22** on Thu May 27, 2010 4:04 pm

christopher::: wrote:

partofit22 wrote:

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to his living and practice? does his delay make it seem that he cared more about protecting himself than others?

I don't know. You would have to ask Aitkin roshi, or someone who knows him those questions...

i don't know either- or any of the people involved- a lot can happen in 40 years- it seems long enough for wounds to heal but maybe what these people are dealing with aren't wounds but permanent damage that they've yet to adapt to- something about this ordeal reminds me of the death sentence- how even though the person who committed the crime dies it doesn't close the book for the survivors-  
partofit22

**by christopher:::** on Thu May 27, 2010 4:17 pm

Which is i think what Rev. Nonin was getting at. Anyone still suffering from these experiences needs to take care of themselves, see a therapist, focus on their own healing... irrespective of Shimano roshi repenting, apologizing...

Just i think talking about it, making injustices known publicly, seeking community acknowledgment of what happened, can also be a part of the healing process...

In the end though, if we don't forgive others, we only perpetuate our own suffering...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher::  
Founding Member

**by partofit22** on Thu May 27, 2010 4:31 pm

Seigen wrote:

partofit22 wrote:

nothing "sounds like" rape but rape itself- and trying to make anything but rape sound like rape is accusation and misleading information-

Just a reminder, but many women my age remember all too well a time when there was no such thing as date rape. This doesn't change your address to Christopher, exactly, but it does place emphasis on how things do change.

the date rape law is a change i'm thankful for- but considering christopher's post, about the women, it doesn't reveal if mr shimano had sex with them when they were medicated- also, he wasn't the one to medicate them, so i don't know how or if the date rape law would address that situation had he had sex with them-  
partofit22

**by partofit22** on Thu May 27, 2010 4:35 pm

christopher::: wrote:

In the end though, if we don't forgive others, we only perpetuate our own suffering...

seems we need to forgive ourselves as well ... or else continue to suffer ...

partofit22

**by Carol** on Thu May 27, 2010 6:21 pm

Whenever our happiness is dependent on someone else changing, we're in deep sh\*t. This is a practice issue of the first order.

In fact, the entire Zen lineage coming out of Japan is "suspect" for having supported Japanese nationalist wars of aggression -- as Brian Victoria's book *Zen at War* clearly documents. From what I have seen and read, there is no Buddhist sect or lineage that when scrutinized carefully does not have its spots and stains.

What does this mean for our practice?

For those of us who actually practice Zen, what does this mean for our practice? How do we respond when we see wrongdoing, or harm being done? Don't think good, don't think evil, what is your original face before your parents were born? What does this mean in practice?

It is deeply tempting to judge and condemn. Sex, especially, tempts us. The puritanical and prurient impulses are stimulated. Witch hunts frequently ensue fueled by salacious (delicious) rumor and innuendo (some of it true, some of it probably whipped up). Where does it end? In an auto de fe?

Still, we are living in human society, and there are rules and boundaries we need to maintain to keep good order and as much as possible to restrain ourselves, in our delusions, from harming one another. What is sufficient? In this case what is sufficient?

I believe, but I could be wrong, there is only one body that could require Eido Roshi to step down, and that is his lineage at Daitaku-ji in Japan (one of 14 independent Rinzai branches in Japan). It is my understanding that Soen Nakagawa Roshi, who gave dharma transmission to Eido Roshi, was appealed to and declined to act. He has been dead since 1984. Whether there is someone else who could do so now, I do not know.

I've spent some time reading the website at The Zen Studies Society, and have read much there that is inspiring. I believe even flawed vessels can point the way -- probably it has mainly been flawed vessels pointing the way since the time of Shakyamuni. I'm grateful for those who have done so, even or especially those who have done so despite their own personal karmic entanglements (that's all of them!)

My friend David Chadwick (author of Crooked Cucumber, a biography of Suzuki Roshi) has recently been visiting Richard Baker Roshi in Germany. He found much to admire there, and he believes it's time for the folks at San Francisco Zen Center to "get over it" too.

I'm reminded of the koan: "Why are perfectly enlightened bodhisattvas attached to the red thread?" I just googled it and found this teisho by Subhana Barzaghi Roshi "Red Thread Zen - the Tao of Love, Passion and Sex". There is much here to contemplate, to take us deeper than our views and judgments and attachments to them, to a deeper place of healing, insight and wisdom. That is my wish for all involved in this painful story, and for all of us.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Nonin** on Thu May 27, 2010 8:12 pm

Carol said:

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Carol et al,

I could be wrong, but I don't think that anyone at Daitoku-ji or anybody in Japan has the authority to require Eido Shimano to step down.

Except for small sitting groups, Zen Buddhist practice places in the US are legally constituted Religious Corporations under IRS code 501 c3. This means that they are tax-exempt organizations, like any church or temple. Donations to these organizations are tax-exempt. To maintain tax-exempt status under 501 c-3, these organizations have to

fulfill obligations under the tax code, which include, but are not limited to, having a functioning Board of Directors, instituting and maintaining by-laws, and keeping Board Minutes and accurate financial records. Board Members are ultimately legally responsible for the direction and the activities of the organization, its leadership, and its members when they are acting in the name of the organization. Also organizations must request a continuation of tax exempt status, and they must update and register Board Members with the state either every year or two years. Here in Nebraska, we request a continuation every year and file updated records every two years.

Each Religious Corporation has its own rules and regulations, which are listed in its by-laws. Appointment and removal of a Head Priest or Abbot varies according to each corporation's by-laws. I serve as Abbot of our temple at the discretion of the Board. If I screw up and violate our Ethics Statement or do not perform my duties according to our by-laws, it's the Board's responsibility to intervene, for Board Members are ultimately responsible in case of any legal judgments levied against the organization; they are at the top of our organizational structure.

Some states allow what is called Corporation Sole, which allows for one person to be above the Board (for instance, the Abbot) and have the final say in decision-making, but some states have outlawed this type of structure. Corporation Sole is illegal in the state of California, for instance.

I don't know how the Zen Studies Society (of which Dai Bosatsu Monastery is a part) is structured, so I don't know how the Abbot of the organization is selected and what procedure is in place to allow for his or her removal. Most places put that power in the hands of the Board of Directors and most places have these selection and removal procedures in place. If there are none, the Board of the organization has been seriously remiss in performing its duties.

For your information, here are the sections in Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple's By-laws that cover these areas:

**3.4 POWERS AND DUTIES.** The President shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation and shall, subject to the control of the Board of Directors and the Head Priest, have general supervision, direction and control of the business of the corporation. The Vice President shall have such powers and perform such duties as the Board of Directors and the Head Priest may prescribe. In the absence of ability of the President to act, the Vice President shall perform all duties and may exercise any of the powers of the President, subject to the control of the Board of Directors and the Head Priest. The Secretary shall give written notice of all meetings of the Board of Directors as may be required and shall keep minutes of such meetings. He or she shall carry on the correspondence and keep the records of the corporation. The Treasurer shall have charge of the finances of the corporation, subject to the power and authority of the Board. She or he shall keep, or cause to be kept accurate records and accounts of the contributions to and receipts of the corporation, its investments, bank deposits, earnings of funds and all disbursements. He or she shall open and maintain bank accounts of the corporation in

such banking institutions as the Board of Directors may direct, and shall deposit funds of the corporation therein, subject to withdrawal only by checks signed by individuals approved by the Board, in consultation with the Head Priest. Whenever the Board shall request it, an account of all his or her transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the corporation, shall be presented to the Board.

#### ARTICLE IV

##### Head Priest

**POWERS, DUTIES AND SUCCESSION.** The Head Priest shall have such power as is prescribed in these By-Laws. The Head Priest has full authority to establish the practice and to implement the practice schedule without Board approval. The Head Priest shall normally be a fully-transmitted member of the Order of the Prairie Wind and after consulting with the Board of Directors, shall designate an Assistant Head Priest, who also shall be a fully-transmitted member of the Order of the Prairie Wind and who will assume the position of Head Priest when it becomes vacant. In the event that no member of the Order is able to assume the Office of Head Priest, the Board of Directors, after consulting with the members of the Order, shall fill the vacancy with a fully-transmitted Soto Zen Priest not a member of the order. Approval of an Assistant Head Priest or a Head Priest either a member or not a member of the Order shall be by two-thirds vote (2/3) of the full Board. Notification of the meeting at which this vote will be taken shall be given to current voting members at least a week in advance. The designation of a successor to the Office of Head Priest shall be for a specified period of time. The Head Priest may be removed from office, upon due consideration of Article I 1.7 CONSENSUS CLAUSE and after consulting with members of the Order of the Prairie Wind, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **Carol** on Thu May 27, 2010 8:33 pm

Thanks for the info, Nonin. That makes sense.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

by **Dan74** on Fri May 28, 2010 3:18 am

Carol wrote:

I'm reminded of the koan: "Why are perfectly enlightened bodhisattvas attached to the red thread?" I just googled it and found this teisho by Subhana Barzaghi Roshi "Red Thread Zen - the Tao of Love, Passion and Sex". There is much here to contemplate, to take us deeper than our views and judgments and attachments to them, to a deeper place of healing, insight and wisdom. That is my wish for all involved in this painful story, and for all of us.

I agree and most if not all of us could benefit from a healthier relationship with our sexuality. For me it has been a long journey and it has taken unexpected twists and turns.

What I heard from my teacher who has been a celibate nun for some 30 years is that in her monastery in Korea, sexuality was not repressed, rather they would be clearly aware of the sexual urge. But if the commitment to being a monastic was strong enough, there would be no question of acting it out, and the urge itself would naturally transmute. And in the case where attraction (physical, emotional, etc) was stronger then people disrobed, like Martine and Stephen Batchelor who were with her at Ssongwan-Sa. It is the honest thing to do. I guess that celibacy was about commitment to being a part of that community, a question of priorities (and there is some evidence that on many levels it is conducive to practice.) But it doesn't mean that the person represses his or her sexuality rather one learns to experience sensuality in a different way.

This is not to say that monastic communities are sexually enlightened. Of course people come to this practice with their baggage and they don't always deal with it in the best possible way. So shining light on the issues is always a good thing. But it is also possible to belabor them and that's not so helpful.

I guess there is a point in practice where even sexuality and all the attendant feelings are seen to be empty, without real essence, a light show of consciousness. Then it is no longer such a big deal but just another things we can do when appropriate. Whether we are there or not, we should not reify sexuality or believe it to be a fixed static need, like air to breathe. Otherwise how can we ever see clearly?

\_/\\_

Dan74

by Carol on Fri May 28, 2010 3:37 am

Dan74 wrote:

I guess there is a point in practice where even sexuality and all the attendant feelings are seen to be empty, without real essence, a light show of consciousness.

Then it is no longer such a big deal but just another things we can do when appropriate. Whether we are there or not, we should not reify sexuality or believe it to be a fixed static need, like air to breathe. Otherwise how can we ever see clearly?

\_/\\_

PS Incidentally there is an interesting talk on the subject by a Theravadin nun who visited us some years ago. It can be heard here:

<http://awakeningtruth.org/audio/Taming%20the%20Tigers%20-%20Right%20Effort%20and%20fear,%20aggression,%20sexuality.mp3>

Thanks for the link, Dan. (Oops, I just went to play it and it's not working. I see you've removed the link from your post in the meantime. If you find a working link, please post it.)

I think the topic of sex is ripe for discussion among Western Buddhists. David Loy has a new book out: Money, Sex, War, Karma: Notes for a Buddhist Revolution. I haven't read it yet, but it's on my list. Here's the blurb for the book:

David R. Loy has become perhaps the greatest advocate of the Buddhist worldview's ability to transform the sociopolitical landscape of the modern world. In this, his most accessible work to date, he offers clear presentations of oft-misunderstood Buddhist staples — the working of karma, the nature of self, the causes of trouble on both an individual and societal scale — while also inviting readers to examine topics closer to home, such as “Why We Love War” and the real reasons behind the sense of never having enough time, money, sex, security, or anything else. His “Buddhist Revolution” is nothing less than a radical change in the ways readers can approach their lives, the environment, the collective delusions that pervade modern culture, and even spirituality itself. Bracing yet ultimately hopeful and empowering, Money, Sex, War, Karma offers positive tools for contributing to societal change.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol



by **Dan74** on Fri May 28, 2010 3:41 am

No worries!

She starts on it in the last third of the talk. Sexuality is a big subject for her and she has also spoken about it in monastic Theravada context, and she has some criticism of the lack of teachings on the subject. I don't have the talk (or the link) handy though.

\_/\\_

Dan74

by **Anders Honore** on Fri May 28, 2010 6:41 am

Seigen wrote:

re: apples falling and the tabloids:

<http://www.nypost.com/pagesixmag/issues/20100211/Monk+y+Business+Controversial+NYC+guru+Michael+Roach>

Whoa, Really going off the deep end, it seems. Don't understand why he doesn't just disrobe. Much less to criticise if he just did that, instead of perpetually living a life of broken precepts.

goddess wrote:

Anyway it seems that there is confusion about whether MR is celibate or not. If he is doing what he could be doing the miracles will manifest in due course. I'm sure we will hear about it in due course.

From the article above, the horse's own mouth:

"We are not allowed to have sex, but in yoga there are practices that involve joining with a partner," he explains. "They are secret, and you are not allowed to disclose them. You might think of them as sex, but their purpose is to move inner energy. It takes very strict training. There would be penetration, but no release of semen."

So not celibate.

My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

Anders Honore

**by Christopher** on Fri May 28, 2010 8:25 am

There would be penetration, but no release of semen.

He and Bill Clinton should get together and discuss what constitutes sexual relations.

Christopher

**by Dan74** on Fri May 28, 2010 8:52 am

Christopher wrote:

There would be penetration, but no release of semen.

He and Bill Clinton should get together and discuss what constitutes sexual relations.

I am sure that would be very therapeutic!

Those two getting stuck in an elevator for 11 hours would lead to some interesting exchanges (but not of bodily fluids i hope).

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Seigen** on Fri May 28, 2010 11:35 pm

It's great that David Chadwick, and many others in their lineage as well, have made the pilgrimage to Richard Baker or have otherwise made their own amends to that past. And in reading Street Zen, written by Chadwick in 1993, I'm grateful for the the openness that Issan Dorsey had in support of Baker at that time. But let's not forget that it was a suicidal husband who in his pain outed Baker, that Baker lied about the extent of other relationships until other women began to come out of the woodwork, etc. etc. It is not in any way puritanical to say so when a sexual predator is in the dokusan room, and not just individuals but institutions and lineages are going to be damaged by this, we know it.

In the early '90s I was invited to counsel women who had been raped. There were several of us together and our role was to change the culture of a private university by, when appropriate, encouraging those who had been raped to reach outside of the institution and file charges. At the very least, with the female student's care, trust, and personal agency at

the very center of our motivations, we were to negotiate and draw attention to the boundaries and differences between "disciplinary actions" in a private school and the public face of the law. It was in this mood - created largely by the watchfulness and action of female faculty, administration and staff - that fraternities were disbanded shortly thereafter. Fraternities returned years later, but the same empowered culture of violence against women (among so many other things!) that they manifested in earlier years did not. There was something there that had taken root for generations, involving printers, bars and other local businesses - from what I saw of it truly evil - that had to be completely severed and removed long enough for the concept of "the fraternity" to ever become acceptable again.

I say this only to underscore the role of the institution, and the people within it, rather than to place emphasis on individuals alone.  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by genkaku** on Sat May 29, 2010 1:26 am

Received in email today:

Today - a new, expanded version of the Shimano Archives web page was posted at:

<http://www.hoodiemonks.org/ShimanoArchive.html>

The new page contains 317 document entries from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Archives; an increase of 170 documents over the initial posting. The new files are primarily Zen Studies Society documents dealing with the machinations of the Society in handling the various incidents surrounding the "Shimano Problem," related letters to and from the Board, Shimano, and others.

genkaku

**by Anders Honore** on Sat May 29, 2010 4:06 am

genkaku wrote:

Received in email today:

Today - a new, expanded version of the Shimano Archives web page was posted at:

<http://www.hoodiemonks.org/ShimanoArchive.html>

From that website:

On July 29, 2008 Aitken, Rōshi issued an order unsealing a section of his archives. In a message to Lynn Ann Davis, Head of the Preservation Department of the library, Aitken, Rōshi states:

“You will recall that my archives at Hamilton Library includes a folder marked ‘Eido Shimano—Do not open.’ I am moved by circumstances to request that that this seal be removed, and that the contents be made as available as other material in my archives.”

Did Aitken elaborate on what circumstances moved him to open it at this point in time?

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Anders Honore

**by christopher:::** on Sat May 29, 2010 6:28 am

Anders Honore wrote:

Did Aitken elaborate on what circumstances moved him to open it at this point in time?

It doesn't look like he's gone into detail, publicly. From what he shared (those archive files) and written in the last few years Aitken roshi seemed to have expected a full blown scandal. When nothing happened perhaps he wanted to make all papers in his control "transparent" and open, to assist others in the future who might look into this? Perhaps he'll say more in the near future.

BTW, thank you all for the insightful posts made on this page, especially Carol, Seigen and Dan74.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Carol** on Sat May 29, 2010 6:52 am

Seigen wrote:

I say this only to underscore the role of the institution, and the people within it, rather than to place emphasis on individuals alone.

I do agree that it's important to look at the institutions, the culture, the times, and all relevant factors, rather than simply focussing on individuals. How can we learn from these things? What can we learn?

What I have learned from 63 years of life is that there is always more to the story than I know, even when the story is my own. When I was young -- and not so young -- I made some horrific mistakes. I caused terrible, irreconcilable pain to those closest to me. Pain for which I have never been able to make amends. My understanding of what I was doing at the time was partial. It still is, though I have looked deeply at it. I was in a role of responsibility and trust, and I betrayed that trust out of selfishness, and ignorance, and all the ancient twisted karma.

I'm not going to go into all the factors that contributed to sex and power scandals involving Buddhist teachers who came to this country from Asia. It doesn't excuse it, but it might help to understand some of the culture shock that was operating, as well as different attitudes about sex. There was a lot of confusion in this culture, too, in the 60's-80's -- the "sexual revolution" was occurring, with all the craziness that entailed.

My generation really was thrown into a seething hotbed of sex, we threw out all the rules for awhile, and had to rediscover what made sense from a new perspective.

Then we "discovered" date rape and institutional sexism and feminism, and the next generation carried that ball forward -- thank you very much.

But, as a result, I just don't see things in black and white. I see the pain and suffering, the confusion, the pitfalls and traps, and the good efforts of many I don't even know about. And I know there is much to these stories that I don't know, that I will only ever hear partial truths. So, with respect and sincere regret for the pain of all concerned, I do think it is best whenever possible for people to make their peace, to forgive, even or especially when reconciliation isn't possible and a separate peace is required. I think that's the only way to end the torment and torture and to pass on a better world.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by franf** on Sat May 29, 2010 7:15 am

Very heartfelt post Carol....Thank You. I agree, it is time to move on. I do think improvements have been made in different Sangha's and there is a much higher awareness on the "teachers" taking "advantage" of their students sexually and actually in

other ways..... Where there is absolute power, it is easy to misuse that power. The sexual revolution was a reaction to the behind the door, puritanical, male controlled version of power over "everything". It has passed and we are better off for it. A lot of mistakes were made, it seems by all of us. I hope we have all learned and our sexuality can be expressed in a much more responsible and free way, of which i think it is. When there are instances of abuse, they cause troublesome karma. They should not be swept under the rug. But for the most part, people should practice living in the present, and give those who have erred along the way "forgetfulness". It is the best atmosphere for the people involved in past scandals and those that were affected a chance to practice again in fullness. We have many issues that effect us now, and we need all our faculties to deal with them.

Abbot/monk of an Intentional Buddhist Community

<http://members.socket.net/~oldfree>

My late teacher requested that his identity not be disclosed

franf

**by Seigen** on Sat May 29, 2010 11:12 am

The efforts to make public are being made by those who are close to the institution and its events - Aitken, Genkaku, and these hooded monks who parented and were born there. My advice is to stand back and let them do what they very strongly feel compelled to do, not tell them to "get therapy" (who is it that automatically assumes anyone hasn't?) or stand above them as the one who forgives (who says there hasn't been forgiveness? to act in this way and to forgive are different things done for different reasons.).

Acknowledging these efforts comes from not knowing (motivations, intended result, actual result etc.) as much as anything else does, and not knowing doesn't mean you just throw your hands up in the air. No, it's not so black and white.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by partofit22** on Sat May 29, 2010 12:25 pm

Seigen wrote:

The efforts to make public are being made by those who are close to the institution and its events - Aitken, Genkaku, and these hooded monks who parented and were born there. My advice is to stand back and let them do what they very strongly feel compelled to do, not tell them to "get therapy" (who is it that automatically assumes anyone hasn't?) or stand above them as the one who forgives (who says there hasn't been forgiveness? to act in this way and to forgive are different things done for different reasons.).

Acknowledging these efforts comes from not knowing (motivations, intended result, actual result etc.) as much as anything else does, and not knowing doesn't mean you just throw your hands up in the air. No, it's not so black and white.

do you realize how that sounds? out of one side of your mouth you say your advice is to stand back and let them do what they strongly feel compelled to do and out of the other side of your mouth say not to tell them to get therapy- the advice you're offering is to tell others not to offer advice unless the results they offer dittos yours-

efforts are being made to make public of events- where are the efforts being made to forgive? is throwing your hands up in the air a sign of forgiveness? and if not so black or white why choose one color over another?  
partofit22

**by Seigen** on Sat May 29, 2010 12:54 pm

The main point, partofit22, is that these men are close to the institution, and we are not. We do not know the circumstances as they do, and there is an effort among themselves to make that right. In the spirit of not knowing and out of respect, I do find it very immature, in fact, to suggest they get therapy. I realize quite fully what I'm saying.

As for sexuality in a spriritual context as not being black and white, of course it isn't. Neither is any form of abuse - many women are deeply in love with their abusers, and I do not in a any way see this as a weakness in them, or refuse that love as an impossibility in such a relationship. Love is a very real thing. But so is abuse, or extorted consent in s spiritual context.

I love the story of Ikkyu, I think it's an important reference with regard to the value of sexual life. But even his biographer seemed to hem and haw a little about the language Ikkyu used to describe women in a brothel (I don't have the book so I can't point to the reference) as compared to that of his last true love. Let's not forget that Ikkyu's sexual life, so celebrated by Zen community, was built on the backs of women whose actual situation we can never ever know. There have been postings here on sexual slavery in our own time, what do we know of Ikkyu's? Was he on the monk's discount? I for one don't know a thing. Not so black and white to point at Ikkyu as the red thread of Zen, though, is it?

Last edited by Seigen on Sat May 29, 2010 1:41 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Carol** on Sat May 29, 2010 1:24 pm

Seigen wrote:

The main point, partofit22, is that these men are close to the institution, and we are not. We do not know the circumstances as they do, and there is an effort among themselves to make that right. In the spirit of not knowing and out of respect, I do find it very immature, in fact, to suggest they get therapy. I realize quite fully what I'm saying.

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I have found no better advice than Torei Zenji's (Hakuin's disciple):

Even though someone may be a fool,  
we can be compassionate.  
If someone turns against us,  
speaking ill of us and treating us bitterly,  
it's best to bow down:  
this is the Buddha appearing to us,  
finding ways to free us from our own attachments—  
the very ones that have made us suffer  
again and again and again.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by Seigen on Sat May 29, 2010 1:32 pm

I would not assume that there is ANYONE here affected by such events who has not been doing this bowing, who in fact has not even been bowed thoroughly by it.  
Sweetcake Enso



Seigen

**by Carol** on Sat May 29, 2010 1:36 pm

Seigen wrote:

I would not assume that there is ANYONE here affected by such events who has not been doing this bowing, who in fact has not even been bowed thoroughly by it.

Neither would I, including, of course, Eido Shimano Roshi.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by partofit22** on Sat May 29, 2010 2:19 pm

Seigen wrote:

The main point, partofit22, is that these men are close to the institution, and we are not. We do not know the circumstances as they do, and there is an effort among themselves to make that right. In the spirit of not knowing and out of respect, I do find it very immature, in fact, to suggest they get therapy. I realize quite fully what I'm saying.

As for sexuality in a spiritual context as not being black and white, of course it isn't. neither is any form of abuse - many women are deeply in love with their abusers, and do not in any way see this as a weakness in them, or refuse that love as an impossibility in such a relationship. Love is a very real thing. But so is abuse, or extorted consent in a spiritual context.

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if that's the case, the main point is that you offered advice that conflicts with the advice offered by others closer to the circumstances and institution than yourself-

it's the "get what you have coming to you" attitude that rubs me- the shaming- the venom with which the effort makers letters are written- their deep-seated expectations for past efforts made- and to the focus placed on one individual where so many others were/are involved-

mr aitken waited a very long time to release his information- no reason or rhyme needed as to why- yet, mr shimano is expected to have had to stop being mr shimano many yesterdays ago-  
partofit22

**by christopher:::** on Sat May 29, 2010 2:34 pm

The new expanded archive link that genkaku gave has over 300 entries. Of these # 241 is quoted more extensively then the rest. It's minutes from a meeting of 12 Sangha women, in October of 1993. I think their conversation relates to many of the points that have been made here.

The women did not seem to come to a unified consensus on the "bad/evil nature" of their teacher. Rather there were a wide range of views presented, many dealing with the situational, cultural and institutional variables that were "enabling" or contributing in some way...

Blaming only one individual doesn't seem to fit with the complex factors that contributed to what happened. Many of the posts that Rev. Nonin has made appear to be attempts by the American Zen Teachers Association to address these sorts of factors....

As are the efforts being made by Aitken roshi, Stuart Lachs and Genkaku, imo...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by partofit22** on Sat May 29, 2010 9:16 pm

no effort being made on mr shimano's part i guess- seems his name rarely winds up in a sentence with the word effort in it- and that seems strange-  
partofit22

by **Dan74** on Sun May 30, 2010 4:11 pm

Seigen wrote:

The efforts to make public are being made by those who are close to the institution and its events - Aitken, Genkaku, and these hooded monks who parented and were born there. My advice is to stand back and let them do what they very strongly feel compelled to do, not tell them to "get therapy" (who is it that automatically assumes anyone hasn't?) or stand above them as the one who forgives (who says there hasn't been forgiveness? to act in this way and to forgive are different things done for different reasons.).

Acknowledging these efforts comes from not knowing (motivations, intended result, actual result etc.) as much as anything else does, and not knowing doesn't mean you just throw your hands up in the air. No, it's not so black and white.

I feel the same way.

\_/\\_

Dan74

by **genkaku** on Thu Jun 03, 2010 1:14 pm

In a more generalized way, here is an appreciation of the scene  
genkaku

by **Christopher** on Thu Jun 03, 2010 1:44 pm

NellaLou wrote:

During serious discussions some people are so uncomfortable in their lack of maturity to discuss such topics that they attempt to derail the conversation into a childish playground. [...] This happens often at ZFI. What are you, 10 years old?

Thirty-seven and a half, thank you very much!

Christopher

by **christopher:::** on Thu Jun 03, 2010 2:06 pm

NellaLou wrote:

## Types of Reactions/Responses/Rationalizations

A lot of this is avoidance behavior.

**Denial** “No way would that happen or did it happen. People aren’t like that.” Whole situations are dismissed as implausible or impossible mostly because one can’t imagine themselves in such a situation. There is an assumption that everyone else thinks and acts the same way we do.

**Willful Ignorance** “I never saw that therefore it never happened.” This is a bit of a faulty conclusion unless the speaker is omniscient. The see no evil approach is probably the easiest to take up in the short term. It limits any involvement but is hard to sustain if evidence becomes overwhelming.

**Forgetfulness or selective memory** “I don’t remember any such thing happening.” This calls into question the veracity of those who do remember or were involved.

**Confrontation as a form of retribution** “Bring it all out. Video tape the reaction.” Motivations for confrontations often have the purpose to shame/punish which doesn’t really resolve a situation.

**Blame the Victim** “She shouldn’t have stayed if that was happening.” “She must have wanted that on some level.” This can get a little complicated. In the section below called Big Daddy Syndrome I go into it more thoroughly.

**Blame the Perpetrator** “He must have a psychological issue.” “He doesn’t know how to behave in that circumstance.” These statements may be true but there are numerous contributing factors in these situations. If the community standards are low or non-existent then a person in power may be operating within those parameters. If someone feels victimized and does not react against their abuser it may be assumed that the behavior is acceptable. Some people are really clueless at reading social cues or empathizing with others. Sometimes they have to be told explicitly.

**Idealize** “We’re all human. There are no perfect Zen masters any more.” This sets up an illusion of perfection to prove it’s own impossibility thereby in a roundabout way justifying odious behavior. Since a particular standard is impossible, all standards become unattainable.

**Personalize** “Something like this happened to me. Well not exactly like this but listen...” This is all about me and my issues and derails the discussion into personal history that may or may not be relevant.

**Generalize** “In our practice we must be mindful of others.” This is spouting platitudes to no useful end.

Idolize Culture “Our Asian teachers should just be left alone.” This kind of worship/aversion distancing which broaches no criticism primarily based on the race of the teacher is both patronizing and a type of avoidance behavior...

etc, etc...

Some valid observations, but our first grade teachers taught us to write with dark ink on white or light colored backgrounds for a reason.

That was very hard to read. My eyes gave up about half way through....

Avoidance behavior, perhaps?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Linda Anderson** on Thu Jun 03, 2010 5:14 pm

you can change the color Christopher...

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by partofit22** on Thu Jun 03, 2010 6:10 pm

more valid observations to add to the already bazillion valid observations previously offered-

adding more propaganda to propaganda- using a bellows, adding more coal- how about a bucket of water or cold shower?

The “what should be” never did exist, but people keep trying to live up to it.

There is no “what should be,” there is only what is. Lenny Bruce

what is:

everyone is one step away from acting upon desire- nobody is exempt-

i've read that lenny bruce also said yadda yadda yadda or some form of it-

I'm writing about this because I care about the Buddhadharma and it's implementation in convert communities,  
because I care about people who have been hurt and still do hurt and because I care about justice.

nobody is exempt from hurt:

When your day is long and the night, the night is yours alone,  
When you're sure you've had enough of this life, well hang on  
Don't let yourself go, 'cause everybody cries n everybody hurts sometimes

Sometimes everything is wrong. Now it's time to sing along  
When your day is night alone, (hold on, hold on)  
If you feel like letting go, (hold on)  
If you think you've had too much of this life, well hang on

'Cause everybody hurts. Take comfort in your friends  
Everybody hurts. Don't throw your hand. Oh, no. Don't throw your hand  
If you feel like you're alone, no, no, no, you are not alone

If you're on your own in this life, the days and nights are long,  
When you think you've had too much of this life to hang on

Well, everybody hurts sometimes,  
Everybody cries. And everybody hurts sometimes  
And everybody hurts sometimes. So, hold on, hold on  
Hold on, hold on, hold on, hold on, hold on, hold on  
Everybody hurts. You are not alone-

The one word that does not seem to emerge in these discussions is the word justice.

blatant nitpicking ...

if the word justice was never used, it was implied many times over-

Textual Insertions "Buddha said..." "Dogen said..." Quotations without explanation appear at random and may or may not be relevant to the discussion. If used to give guidance, further the discussion or clarify a point they may be helpful. But without explanation their utility is often lost.

the way it is: it's possible to get to the point/clarification without lengthy explanations-

Many of the instances cited have not even gotten past the first issue of investigation and a lot people

are calling for forgiveness. This generally can only happen after a process of acknowledgement and restoration.

this reminds me of the question "which came first, the chicken or the egg?"  
 who is responsible for doing the acknowledging?

Forgiveness is not possible without having wrestled with the justice question. Premature forgiveness is simply repression of events and effects. It is an act to soothe others and does not address the actual suffering involved.

it seems a person should first decide if an act is even forgivable in their book- if it is, why spend time wrestling with justice and acknowledgment when they already know they are willing to forgive? seems like a whole lot of unnecessary wrestling for one person to endure if they are of the midset "i will forgive this person "if"- "if" what? what if the "if" they are waiting for never happens?  
 then what? they don't forgive?

It's not like sex was invented yesterday.

true! but a user friendly sexual side effects pamphlet has yet to be invented-  
 Last edited by partofit22 on Fri Jun 04, 2010 1:38 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
 partofit22

**by Gregory Wonderwheel** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 2:19 am

AlasdairGF wrote:

Second - the ability to question authority, to demand accountability of our teachers and leaders, what a wonderful gift we cynical moderns/Westerners bring to Buddhism! Can you imagine all the people over the past 800 years who have been in various ways taken advantage of by less-than-scrupulous Zen teachers, monks, nuns, whoever? (The same is true of other religions, in our own culture too, of course). The critical perspective is something we need to nurture and cherish, even if (especially if!) it means we have to abandon some of our romantic ideals about what Zen is. I really recommend that everyone have a look at the 'critical' section of The Zen Site. Question everything!

I agree that questioning it an important and necessary part of the process. It is necessary to question the whole relationship and institution of the Buddhist priesthood and monastic roles. When the monasteries and temples are primarily supported by catering to people's superstitious fears, does that mean that the people are just getting what they are asking for or are the monastics and priests feeding and encouraging the false beliefs for their self interest of the economic maintenance of their institution? There are no simple answers and just beginning the dialogue is difficult enough as we have all seen.

We in the West are having to deal with these issues either directly (if we are fortunate) or indirectly as each local sangha explores how to be economically viable as a community.

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, “The recognition of the one vehicle (一乘) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness.” ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

**by NellaLou** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 5:00 am

Some valid observations, but our first grade teachers taught us to write with dark ink on white or light colored backgrounds for a reason.

That was very hard to read. My eyes gave up about half way through....

Avoidance behavior, perhaps?

The style of the blog is set to black writing on a white background. And I've checked it in several browsers. Perhaps it didn't load fully in your browser. Try refresh and see if that improves the situation.

NellaLou

**by Seigen** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 12:47 pm

This was an excellent essay by NellaLou - my only issue with Nella Lou's "take on things" is that I am not so quick to condemn post-feminism (or to give Camille Paglia credit for it.) You can think of post-feminism as "after [optional: the achievements of] feminism", or you can think of post-feminism as a radical critique of identity, the very ground of feminism, and embracing a broader view of the distribution of power. It is true however that in the broader cultural sphere "postfeminism" is a lot closer to Camille Paglia, and you have artists like Vanessa Beecroft glamourizing anorexia. I've found more success in the work of Glenn Ligon, who identifies as post-black, most famously in the piece "I feel most black when I am against a white ground." As with being post-black, being post-feminist doesn't mean that anyone ignores gender or race, rather it can become an even more thorough investigation of social construction in terms of both value and of experience, of how lives are considered worthy or unworthy. In this understanding of it post-feminism does not, as you claim, presuppose "that the objectives of first and even second wave feminism have been reached and therefore issues such as inequality and unequal power balances have been addressed."



And so I was very grateful for your making Jessica Roemisch's article available to us – it is to my mind the grossest distortion of female sexuality as it has emerged in the context of patriarchy, and reveals to me (once more) why the popularity of the evolutionary consciousness movement is in fact dangerous. A few quotes from the article (<http://www.enlightennext.org/magazine/j26/women-who-sleep.asp?page=1>)

“If your husband's a doctor, then you're special. If you're with Mick Jagger, you're special. If you're sleeping with your Tibetan lama, you're special. It's seen as a status symbol,” explained Catherine\* over the phone one afternoon. “It gives you status, and it plays into women's sexual identity. Women identify themselves based on who they sleep with!” Having been the consort of a prominent Tibetan lama, Catherine was speaking from firsthand experience. And with this conversation, I entered headlong into a series of disarmingly candid and illuminating dialogues with women who have slept with their spiritual teachers.

“You want to align yourself with a man who has the kind of power that you want. And in this case it's dharma power!” said Annie, a student and former lover of one of the most influential Japanese Zen masters to bring the Buddha's teachings, or dharma, to the West. “Women love men who are at the top and have for at least four million years, and they continue to everywhere in the world,” explained anthropologist and author Dr. Helen Fisher, her evolutionary view on sexual attraction providing a refreshing and vast perspective on the most intimate realm of human experience.

Indeed, a woman elevated to the highest status in a spiritual community through a sexual relationship with the teacher can reap the benefits of being most favored, most powerful, and most spiritual. As Heyn acknowledged, “That's the prize in that community, and I think that it's the most compelling possible situation a woman could be placed in.”

As NellaLou writes, "The article typifies some of that group's philosophy, much of which strikes me as borderline sociopathic..." To take it further, the rhetoric of evolutionary enlightenment as all too often an empowerment exercise that masks over the truer fact of our precariousness, that all of life is precarious and that words like "freedom" are ideological manipulations of psyche to shore up the privileging of individual rights over and above collectivity.

There is another issue raised that I feel is an important one, having to do with notions of private and public. To great extent it is true that one can't really privately forgive anyone, as the person forgiven must know they have been forgiven, and accept what they have been forgiven for, for true forgiveness to be achieved. So while on the one-hand we can say that in our own hearts we have forgiven, it can also be said that for forgiveness to be fully achieved it must be shared with the one forgiven. But this can only occur when the one who is to be forgiven is ready to receive that forgiveness, and this is rarely the case.

An example: It is often the case that one who has caused serious harm to another will want to make amends in later life. But in the case of sexual abuse this can be an opportunity for the abuser to regain lost intimacy, to "get off" on their access to the one

who has been harmed. This will occur in a private setting. A more public setting involving a third party helps to prevent a distortion of intimacy and power from happening.

I say this with caution around notions of "private" and "public," for example I do not think we can have "private languages," we do not fully possess our own thought as "private."

Oh, and here is a disembodied quote, as though it actually means something:

"...the norm functions precisely by way of managing the prospect of its undoing, an undoing that inheres in its doing things." Judith Butler, 2009  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by christopher:::** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 1:49 pm

Many excellent insights, Seigen.

NellaLou wrote:

The style of the blog is set to black writing on a white background. And I've checked it in several browsers. Perhaps it didn't load fully in your browser. Try refresh and see if that improves the situation.

Thank you. I found that if I highlight everything the background becomes lighter and the lettering dark.

Seigen wrote:

And so I was very grateful for your making Jessica Roemisch's article available to us – it is to my mind the grossest distortion of female sexuality as it has emerged in the context of patriarchy, and reveals to me (once more) why the popularity of the evolutionary consciousness movement is in fact dangerous. A few quotes from the article (<http://www.enlightennext.org/magazine/j26/women-who-sleep.asp?page=1>)

excerpt:

Jessica Roemischer

“Kiss me . . . here,” he said with a thick Korean accent, pointing to his lightly pursed lips. He turned to make sure no one could see us as we stood just inside the front door of my house, out of sight of the neighbor who, only a few dozen feet from us, was making her way to the car. And in the private and highly charged space he created between us,

although I had been far more physically attracted to other men in my life, I felt an intrigue and affirmation I had never before experienced.

I had met him just ten days earlier. When my turn came, I entered the serene atmosphere of the large open room in the meditation center that was sponsoring his visit. It was my first private audience with a spiritual teacher. Sitting on a raised dais bathed in the warm light of late afternoon, he exuded a quiet equanimity, a mysterious and powerful depth, and a penetrating clarity and insight that seemed to transcend the temporal confines of the present, reaching far back in time and far forward into the future. And there I was, kneeling before him, as he brought that power and wisdom to bear . . . on me.

What he proceeded to say so directly penetrated me, so thoroughly resonated with my own deepest knowing, that it seemed to meld with the very cells of my being. He read my deep past; he anticipated far ahead into my future. “You have done no harm in past lives and have no heavy karma to make up for,” he reassured me. “But now you must overcome all your fears. You have high spiritual ability and the chance to be a spiritual teacher in this life and to help many others through the spiritual practice I can give you.” Dams and locks in my psyche that I had not even been aware of suddenly opened, and I was flooded with the mysterious sense of my own karma—an overarching destiny and purpose that had shaped a long succession of lifetimes. A vast universe arose in my awareness, and with it a feeling of infinite potential. In that moment, the vacant and gnawing space I had grown used to living with since my youth was filled with inner knowing and certainty. And what had been a long-evasive spiritual possibility suddenly became real. In the presence of this one man, I found myself overwhelmed by unconditional love and the deepest peace I had ever known.

A week later, he asked if he could stay with me for a few days in the small house I occupied in the mountains of upstate New York. I had only one bedroom, I explained. But he insisted that he would sleep on the futon couch in the living room. On the second night, I was suddenly stricken with a bout of food poisoning, and from the bathroom I heard him ascending to the second floor. He told me to lie back on my bed. Through a mysterious combination of deep guttural chanting and hand movements in the air above me, he miraculously and almost instantaneously alleviated my discomfort. Then he took my hand in his. “You don’t have to worry anymore, Jessie,” he assured me. “I will help you if you ever get sick. I’m the best health insurance you can have. May I lie next to you . . . here?” He motioned near my prone body. In a strange mixture of relief, flattery, and confusion, I said, “Okay.” And that was the beginning of my special connection with this powerful and charismatic shaman, yogi, and Zen master.

Oy vey.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by partofit22** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 2:56 pm

Seigen wrote:

An example: It is often the case that one who has caused serious harm to another will want to make amends in later life. But in the case of sexual abuse this can be an opportunity for the abuser to regain lost intimacy, to "get off" on their access to the one who has been harmed. This will occur in a private setting. A more public setting involving a third party helps to prevent a distortion of intimacy and power from happening.

wow, this seems such a shame, to exercise caution and suspicion to the point that forgiveness and healing have no opportunity to take place-  
is the process of forgiving a sexual transgression different from every other harm? does each harm have it's own unique process to follow accordingly in order for it to be forgiven? the process you mention can muddy a contrite heart- why then bother to make amends if it's accepted that one who in the past sexually abused doesn't possess the nature for a true confession? that their right effort is a ploy or yet another sexual snare set to "get off" as you say? in the case of mr shimano, how much more valid would it make his confession with a third party or panel present? how would his remorse be judged? what gestures would they be looking for? and what if after his long awaited confession some of the women didn't forgive him? that they just wanted to watch him to be humbled in the presence of others as a form of personal revenge? should there be yet another party or panel present to question the women of their intentions prior to them entering the room where he would deliver his confession? it seems it would be just to have a panel to protect him too-  
partofit22

**by Seigen** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 3:09 pm

How distorting is it, partofit22, to call this a "panel"? Many Zen centers actually do have a grievance policy that involves a third party, is this a "panel" to you?  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by partofit22** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 3:29 pm

i've nothing against third parties or panels, seigen- providing they're present for more than solely helping to prevent a distortion of intimacy and power from happening- the way you stated it makes it sound to me like the third party would be present to protect the harmed and not the confessor-

but i do have problem with complicating and distorting the process of forgiveness-  
partofit22

**by Seigen** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 3:49 pm

the way you stated it makes it sound to me like the third party would be present to protect the harmed and not the confessor-

No, but this is the way you read it.  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Nonin** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 3:52 pm

Jessica Roemischer's article is an excellent one. It has been around for quite a while. However, it only covers one psychological aspect of a teacher / student sexual relationship: how connecting intimately with a man in a power position ensures the woman of the status and protection afforded by him, and by extension, by the children that result from her connection with the alpha male. This is not a new phenomenon. It especially plays out in primitive cultures and anthropologists have traced this into more advanced cultures, such as our own. This is not only limited to current religious cultures but also in other cultures as well, such as corporate culture.

In my many years of participation in the American Zen Teachers Association and the Soto Zen Buddhist Association, I've come across a variety of teacher / student sexual relationships, and I regard all of them as sexual misconduct because it's the teacher's responsibility not to enter into such a relationship. That said, there are many different kinds of these relationships, and this must be taken into account when we try to sort things out and restore (if possible) the participants to their previous positions in the community. I've worked with teachers who've transgressed, and this can be a long and difficult process.

The above case is only one kind of teacher / student relationship. This occurs when a woman student seeks a relationship with the alpha male teacher. In this case, the woman initiates the relationship, and she would rarely see herself as a victim if or when it blows up.

Another case occurs when the teacher is a serial sexual predator. In this case the woman usually is and sees herself as a victim. This case has certainly occurred in Western Zen

Buddhism, but my experience has been that it's uncommon. In one instance, a teacher was relieved of his duties as Abbot and left the sangha.

Another case occurs when the teacher and the student fall in love. I have found this to be the most common instance of sexual misconduct. When this happens, there are ways to legitimize the relationship in a sangha setting, and it is the teacher's responsibility to set the process in motion in an acceptable way. However, few do. Instead, as the relationship develops, usually over time, they follow their emotions and their hormones and end up in bed. Then, somewhere along the line, all hell breaks loose! Also, there are mitigating factors that determine how heavy the hell. If the teacher and student are both single, it can be lighter. If either party is married or involved in a long-term relationship it can be devastating to all involved and very difficult to sort through, not only for those intimately involved but also for the sangha at large. Some of these teacher / student relationships end up lasting over the long-term; some don't. It's very difficult to keep a relationship going after such an inauspicious start.

Another case occurs when a single teacher acts out of loneliness and isolation and begins a relationship with a single student. Very few Zen Buddhist teachers take vows of celibacy, and most of their personal contacts are within the sangha, so their chances for intimate relationships are limited. On the surface, both are free, but there is a power imbalance in such a relationship and again, the teacher is responsible for not entering it. Many sanghas now have Ethics Statements that provide ways to end the student / teacher relationship and after a time, the teacher and the student can enter an intimate relationship if they want to. Some follow the procedures; some don't, usually with negative results.

There are other cases that I could cite, but I won't. One thing that I want to mention before closing is that women are not always victims in these situations. It depends on the situation and the circumstances surrounding them. Seeing the woman always as the victim and all women as perpetual victims is not only misguided but also degrades all women

The point of all of this is that each case of teacher sexual misconduct is in some way unique, and it has to be treated as such. There are some Zen teachers in the US that have been trained in mediation and conflict resolution, and they have been asked to help resolve the messes that occur after sexual misconduct occurs. The Soto Zen Buddhist Association is currently working on its own Ethics Statement and intends to provide a list of trained persons to help all sangha members -- both teachers and students -- resolve issues that arise from not only sexual misconduct but also from other misconduct, such as misuse of power and financial irresponsibility.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by partofit22** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 4:11 pm

Seigen wrote:

the way you stated it makes it sound to me like the third party would be present to protect the harmed and not the confessor-

No, but this is the way you read it.

yes, it is way i read it -- which is what i said- i now know it isn't what you meant-  
partofit22

**by Seigen** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 4:25 pm

Jessica Roemisch's article is an excellent one. It has been around for quite a while. However, it only covers one psychological aspect of a teacher / student sexual relationship: how connecting intimately with a man in a power position ensures the woman of the status and protection afforded by him, and by extension, by the children that result from her connection with the alpha male. This is not a new phenomenon. It especially plays out in primitive cultures and anthropologists have traced this into more advanced cultures, such as our own. This is not only limited to current religious cultures but also in other cultures as well, such as corporate culture.

Nonin, do you think that seeking such a relationship to power in our time is a healthy spiritual path, that it is a continuing evolutionary development of "empowerment" progress, as the article seems to put forth?  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by christopher:::** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 4:35 pm

It might be worth exploring the relationship of Sexuality to Spirituality and Liberation, to the Dharma and Awakening, cause the sense i get is that many of us, including those we look to as "teachers" -- have a rather muddled understanding...

Ajahn Chah worked it out for himself by walking around in the jungle with an erection, till he was able to "let lust go"...

Buddha worked sensual lust out while sitting, he watched and observed and observed and observed until he understood and found liberation from his desires...

If we don't have people leading us who understand how to do that, isnt it a bit like the blind leading the blind?

Last edited by christopher::: on Fri Jun 04, 2010 4:38 pm, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Nonin** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 4:36 pm

Seigen wrote:

Jessica Roemisch's article is an excellent one. It has been around for quite a while. However, it only covers one psychological aspect of a teacher / student sexual relationship: how connecting intimately with a man in a power position ensures the woman of the status and protection afforded by him, and by extension, by the children that result from her connection with the alpha male. This is not a new phenomenon. It especially plays out in primitive cultures and anthropologists have traced this into more advanced cultures, such as our own. This is not only limited to current religious cultures but also in other cultures as well, such as corporate culture.

Nonin, do you think that seeking such a relationship to power in our time is a healthy spiritual path, that it is a continuing evolutionary development of "empowerment" progress, as the article seems to put forth?

No, it's not a healthy spiritual path, and for me, the article doesn't put forth what you say it "seems" to.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA



<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Nonin** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 4:44 pm

christopher::: wrote:

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Ajahn Chah worked it out for himself by walking around in the jungle with an erection, till he was able to "let lust go"...

Buddha worked sensual lust out while sitting, he watched and observed and observed and observed until he understood and found liberation from his desires...

If we don't have people leading us who understand how to do that, isnt it a bit like the blind leading the blind?

Sexuality is a matter of physical and emotional attraction and hormones, Chris; it has no more relationship to Spirituality and Liberation, to the Dharma and Awakening, than eating or drinking.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Carol** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 4:52 pm

I think NellaLou's comments (which you can read on her blog in full here) are the most insightful that I have read, and give us an opportunity to take the discussion to another level. If you haven't read it yet, I recommend you take the time. She certainly nailed my number, and she might have nailed yours too.

How can the impulse for forgiveness, retribution or justice be reconciled? If they cannot be reconciled, then what?

As I think about it, it seems these three things are what the "victim" may be oriented towards. Some of us here (myself especially) have been advocating forgiveness as the means of healing for the "victim." Others have seemed more oriented towards retribution as a means of correcting the wrong. NellaLou says, and I agree with her, that "premature forgiveness" without justice can just be repression.

She points out that: "Retributive justice and adversarial formats disconnect the effected parties from each other and from the larger community. Yet they are often seen to represent the larger community, particularly the prosecution side of things. Do they really do that? Do you feel any better when prosecutors get convictions? Do you even follow courtroom proceedings? Does it make your community safer, and I don't just mean feel safer? "

On the other hand, she proposes other models for justice, in particular "restorative justice." She says, "The purpose of restorative justice is to address not only an injustice but to allow an offender and victim to be acknowledged by the community, to resolve differences and emotional pain and to provide social healing in the larger context."

She then goes on to list several things that need to happen for restorative justice to be effective.

Having recently been through a situation where neither the "victim" nor the "offender" wanted to engage in a process of restorative justice -- both just wanted people to line up and take sides, for or against -- while the organization, itself, lacked the cultural will to require that some process be attempted to move beyond that. Most people just wanted to take sides. So I chose to leave the organization, not because I was on one side or the other, but because such an organization just isn't healthy for people and other living things.

It appears to me that many Zen groups have adopted the "restorative justice" approach through admirable policies and procedures aimed at accomplishing precisely these aims: "to address not only an injustice but to allow an offender and victim to be acknowledged by the community, to resolve differences and emotional pain and to provide social healing in the larger context."

That's a very good thing for Zen in the West in general. It's also worth noting that ZCLA actually did address the issues with Maezumi Roshi in this manner. It helped them to get through it and survive. But, even so, many left and carried a lot of pain with them. The current Abbot, Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao, talks about their process with depth and candor in an interview she gave. It's online & I'll see if I can find the URL -- worth listening to for anyone troubled by these issues.

But it doesn't help those who are left with unreconciled pain from other organizations that did not or will not engage in such a process. And my comments so far have mainly been addressed to that situation ... how can we deal with that pain or help others who must deal with such pain? In the absence of restorative justice, is retributive justice the only response left to us? As a society, I really think we can see that it doesn't work.

It's a very hard thing when you're stuck with someone who "gets away with it", who appears to have more power or social standing, or whatever ... so that he or she is never made to pay a price (that you can see) for the wrong that they did to you. What then? How do we help our friends in that situation?

It's clear from the documents that there have been several confrontations with Eido Shimano Roshi over the years, board meetings, blowups in the sangha, board members and other people leaving and so on ... This was no secret, it was widely known. So, there has been a price paid in loss of reputation and respect in many quarters. But there has also never been a public self-abasement or submission to a restorative justice type of proceeding by Eido Roshi, and his board has never mustered a majority vote to require it of him. (And the minority board members resign from the board when they find the lack of sufficient cultural will in the institution.)

I seriously doubt that anything Stuart Lachs publishes, or Aitkin Roshi publishes, or anyone else publishes, will have any effect on the culture at the Zen Studies Society while Eido Roshi lives.

So, where does that leave our friend, Genkaku? He has brought his pain here to share it with us. What can we do to help him?

Also, many of us share a common interest in Zen in the West. This is our community. What do we want for it? What would help ... public shaming and driving someone out of the community? Sometimes I think that's what Lachs is after ... but I could be wrong about that. Quite frankly, I don't think that's possible. There is no "authority" that can do that. Despite his tarnished reputation, Eido Roshi's lineage continues and there are some extraordinarily good teachers who have emerged from that lineage (and, reportedly, some other problems teachers as well).

I don't want to trivialize, I don't think it's a trivial problem at all, but I do believe these kinds of problems have been with the transmission of Buddhism from the beginning, and they are with us here and now, and will persist into the future -- the good, the bad, and the ugly.

I hope the container is large enough ...

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by christopher:::** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 5:04 pm

Nonin wrote:

Sexuality is a matter of physical and emotional attraction and hormones, Chris; it has no more relationship to Spirituality and Liberation, to the Dharma and Awakening, than eating or drinking.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Carol wrote:

I don't want to trivialize, I don't think it's a trivial problem at all, but I do believe these kinds of problems have been with the transmission of Buddhism from the beginning, and they are with us here and now, and will persist into the future -- the good, the bad, and the ugly.

I hope the container is large enough ...

These kinds of problems have been with the transmission of Buddhism from the beginning, but Buddha himself was pretty clear that sexuality is indeed different from eating and drinking. Buddhist monks who set their sights on liberation continue to eat and drink, but look upon sexual desires as fetters and hindrances. Thich Nhat Hanh is one current Zen teacher who seems to feel this way, there may be others. Many Tibetan and Theravadan Buddhists make these distinctions. They have all the same problems, but they don't treat sex as being the same as eating and drinking, for those who dedicate their lives to teaching the dharma. I don't see how these surface problems can be addressed without dealing with the deeper issues of sexuality and spirituality, which give rise to them...  
 ~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Carol** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 5:19 pm

Carol wrote:

How can the impulse for forgiveness, retribution or justice be reconciled? If they cannot be reconciled, then what?

As I think about it, it seems these three things are what the "victim" may be oriented towards.

I meant to follow up on this thought, but got sidetracked.

If the "victim" is interested in forgiveness, retribution or justice, or if those are the options available to him/her, what is the orientation of the "offender?"

I think that's a VERY important question, because perhaps the major obstacle to some process of "restorative justice" is getting the offender to participate in it. The blame and shame game doesn't seem to do it. So, I think some inquiry into the needs of the offender would be very helpful here.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Linda Anderson** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 5:43 pm

Carol... ..

Yes, taking it to the next level of discussion. I also see that in addition to retribution and restorative work, we can always trust karma to find it's own level. The way of karma doesn't necessarily bring healing to the bystanders when restorative intentions fall upon the impervious. Then, it's another path for us. I'm on mine. Yes, I find the light is indeed found in the midst of the challenge. Shattering my innocence of a perfect world view in spirituality isn't all bad. And, it's true that awakening doesn't require the absence of anything... I sometimes think of it as a living Bardo... where nothing is external.

As to Seigen's question about development. The pattern of one acquiring status and protection in an unequal relationship can pretty much be viewed as a Jungian style father-daughter relationship. Since the power relationship is unbalanced and unconscious, the relationship will likely be disempowering and is nearly impossible to transcend to a healthy one. These kinds of parental relationships exist in every aspect of life, including spiritual communities, until we become conscious.

I do think that a healthy relationship can be a path to spiritual development. Healthy relationships are waking up to the unconscious dynamics of attachment and attraction. This is nearly unknown in this world, yet the consciousness work is beginning. (read Richard Moss (esp) and Gay & Kathlyn Hendricks). To be with the suchness in

relationship is a matter for a Bodhisattva... to be in the relationship but not of it. For lay people, it seems a way for many who want to go beyond sexual politics. From what I've seen in some teacher-student relationships, they contain enough unconscious dynamics as to be questionably healthy also. Forgive my limited view and experience. A mature relationship of collaboration is something else entirely.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Carol** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 6:15 pm

christopher::: wrote:

These kinds of problems have been with the transmission of Buddhism from the beginning, but Buddha himself was pretty clear that sexuality is indeed different from eating and drinking. Buddhist monks who set their sights on liberation continue to eat and drink, but look upon sexual desires as fetters and hindrances. Thich Nhat Hanh is one current Zen teacher who seems to feel this way, there may be others. Many Tibetan and Theravadan Buddhists make these distinctions. They have all the same problems, but they don't treat sex as being the same as eating and drinking, for those who dedicate their lives to teaching the dharma. I don't see how these surface problems can be addressed without dealing with the deeper issues of sexuality and spirituality, which give rise to them...

We'll just have to disagree, Christopher, what Thich Nhat Hanh may or may not feel notwithstanding.

A teaching that regards sexuality as fetters and hindrances is a limited Dharma, a partial and perhaps expedient teaching for some in some circumstances ... but it is not the Dharma which shines in all things.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

**by Seigen** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 6:53 pm

Nonin, true, I was caught up in and bogged down by the rhetoric of power that pervades this essay, even to the last quote from Mathew Arnold. But there is also:

...we can reach for a higher morality that doesn't bind us but rather frees us and that we can now embrace in light of a genuinely new possibility. That possibility is a new women's liberation born of taking responsibility for our spiritual journey beyond self-serving desires [for power?], facing directly and honestly into what we have brought to the situation, and consciously disengaging the age-old structures [of power? ] that no longer serve us.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Nonin** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 7:39 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Nonin wrote:

Sexuality is a matter of physical and emotional attraction and hormones, Chris; it has no more relationship to Spirituality and Liberation, to the Dharma and Awakening, than eating or drinking.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Carol wrote:

I don't want to trivialize, I don't think it's a trivial problem at all, but I do believe these kinds of problems have been with the transmission of Buddhism from the beginning, and they are with us here and now, and will persist into the future -- the good, the bad, and the ugly.

I hope the container is large enough ...

These kinds of problems have been with the transmission of Buddhism from the beginning, but Buddha himself was pretty clear that sexuality is indeed different from eating and drinking. Buddhist monks who set their sights on liberation continue to eat and drink, but look upon sexual desires as fetters and hindrances. Thich Nhat Hanh is one current Zen teacher who seems to feel this way, there may be others. Many Tibetan and Theravadan Buddhists make these distinctions. They have all the same problems, but they don't treat sex as being the same as eating and drinking, for those who dedicate their lives

to teaching the dharma. I don't see how these surface problems can be addressed without dealing with the deeper issues of sexuality and spirituality, which give rise to them...

Zen Buddhist practitioners do not look upon sexual desires as fetters and hindrances, only those who choose to live celibate lives. The vows that I took during priest ordination do not include celibacy. When I was a monk, I chose this path because it was part of the monastery rules.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Nonin** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 7:43 pm

Carol wrote:

I seriously doubt that anything Stuart Lachs publishes, or Aitkin Roshi publishes, or anyone else publishes, will have any effect on the culture at the Zen Studies Society while Eido Roshi lives.

So, where does that leave our friend, Genkaku? He has brought his pain here to share it with us. What can we do to help him?

I tried to help him by giving him my best advice based on my experience, but he brushed me off.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin



by **Carol** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 7:43 pm

Ah, here it is. I see I posted it in this very thread back in November.

Carol wrote:

There is a profoundly moving interview with Wendy Engokuo Nakao Roshi, the current Abbot at Zen Center of Los Angeles, where she discusses without flinching the damage done when Maezumi Roshi had his sexual affairs and alcohol problems. She also discusses with heartfelt clarity what they did at ZCLA to repair the damage. Deeply moving stuff, especially when she discusses Maezumi Roshi's years after the scandal. Much more interesting to me than salacious gossip. I do believe even the worst mistakes can be transformed into Buddha's teachings. Perhaps that's because of the mistakes I have made in my life. I just never can believe anyone is beyond redemption.

Part 1 is the early part of her spiritual development/path. Part 2 is a very moving discussion of Maezumi Roshi and what happened at ZCLA. Part 3 is a very interesting discussion of ZCLA and its horizontal/circle leadership structure ... and how the healing happened. Each part is about 1 hour. Worth listening, especially parts 2 & 3.

If anyone's interested here are the links:

Part 1: <http://www.urbandharma.org/mp3/ZCLA-1.mp3>

Part 2: <http://www.urbandharma.org/mp3/ZCLA-2.mp3>

Part 3: <http://www.urbandharma.org/mp3/ZCLA-3.mp3>

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Nonin** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 9:39 pm

Seigen wrote:

Nonin, true, I was caught up in and bogged down by the rhetoric of power that pervades this essay, even to the last quote from Mathew Arnold. But there is also:

...we can reach for a higher morality that doesn't bind us but rather frees us and that we can now embrace in light of a genuinely new possibility. That possibility is a new women's liberation born of taking responsibility for our spiritual journey beyond self-serving desires [for power?], facing directly and honestly into what we have brought to the situation, and consciously disengaging the age-old structures [of power? ] that no longer serve us.

This is a key to her point of view. I'm assuming that the "power?" that you put in brackets are your additions, Seigen; is this so? I would say that this makes sense but that Jessica Roemischer is also talking about "self-serving desires" other than power, such as "status, and that "the age-old structures" also refer to "male dominance" or "hierarchical power."

Some Japanese Zen Buddhist structures do not serve us well in the West; some do. In the United States, Zen Buddhists value democratic governance, gender equity, and horizontal power sharing, for instance. In Japan, these are not important.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by partofit22** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 9:50 pm

“You will not be punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger”

“To understand everything is to forgive everything”

-- Buddha

"you cannot forget what they said any more than you cannot feel the wind when it blows- but if you let the wind blow through you, you will take away its power to blow you down-"

-- from The Lakota Way

Nine Steps to Forgiveness:

# Know exactly how you feel about what happened and be able to articulate what about the situation is not OK. Then, tell a couple of trusted people about your experience.

# Make a commitment to yourself to do what you have to do to feel better. Forgiveness is for you and not for anyone else. No one else even has to know about your decision.

# Understand your goal. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciliation with the person that upset you, or condoning of their action. What you are after is to find peace. Forgiveness can be defined as the "peace and understanding that come from blaming that which has hurt you less, taking the life experience less personally, and changing your grievance story."

# Get the right perspective on what is happening. Recognize that your primary distress is coming from the hurt feelings, thoughts and physical upset you are suffering now, not what offended you or hurt you two minutes - or ten years -ago.

# At the moment you feel upset practice the a simple stress management technique to soothe your body's flight or fight response.

# Give up expecting things from other people, or your life, that they do not choose to give you. Recognize the "unenforceable rules" you have for your health or how you or other people must behave. Remind yourself that you can hope for health, love, friendship and prosperity and work hard to get them. However, you will suffer when you demand these things occur when you do not have the power to make them happen.

# Put your energy into looking for another way to get your positive goals met than through the experience that has hurt you. I call this step finding your positive intention. Instead of mentally replaying your hurt seek out new ways to get what you want.

# Remember that a life well lived is your best revenge. Instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving the person who caused you pain power over you, learn to look for the love, beauty and kindness around you.

# Amend your grievance story to remind you of the heroic choice to forgive.

-- Frederic Luskin

partofit22

**by franf** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 10:08 pm

Nonoin says....

Some Japanese Zen Buddhist structures do not serve us well in the West; some do. In the United States, Zen Buddhists value democratic governance, gender equity, and horizontal power sharing, for instance. In Japan, these are not important.

It seems to me that democratic governance, gender equity, and horizontal power sharing ARE very important in Japan.....or maybe it is just Zen Buddhists there who do not care. Am I misunderstanding what you are trying to say? For instance go to this web page and see for your self.....

[http://www.gender.go.jp/english\\_contents/index.html](http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/index.html)

These are just the "topics" one can explore there.....

October 5, 2009 White Paper on Gender Equality 2009

February 3, 2010 (Pamphlet) Women and Men in Japan

April 7, 2010 Kick-off Seminar towards 2010 APEC WLN Meeting in Japan (March 24, 2010)

What's a Gender-equal Society?

Activities of the Government for Realizing a Gender-equal Society

The Organizational Structure of the National Machinery in Japan

The Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society (Law No. 78 of 1999)

Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims[PDF]

Beijing+10

Women2000(Beijing+5)

CEDAW

The 2nd East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting(6-7 December 2007)

East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting(30 June-1 July 2006)

White Paper, Report and National Plan of Action

(Pamphlet) Women and Men in Japan (2010)

(Pamphlet) Women and Men in Japan (2009)

(Pamphlet) STOP THE VIOLENCE (2008)[PDF:497KB]

(Pamphlet)Gender Equality in Japan (2006, 2007)

"Women in Japan Today"(1996-2006)

International Comparison of the Social Environment regarding the Declining Birthrates and Gender-Equality

Abbot/monk of an Intentional Buddhist Community

<http://members.socket.net/~oldfree>

My late teacher requested that his identity not be disclosed

franf

by **Carol** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 10:14 pm

Thanks for the links, franf. That is quite surprising, given my reading and understanding of Japanese culture. My guess is that the West is moving East at the same time that the East is moving West. Duh! Of course, that is bound to be the case.

As I cross the bridge, the bridge flows, the water is still.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **franf** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 10:29 pm

Carol says....

As I cross the bridge, the bridge flows, the water is still.

Lovely sentence! I think it applies to this whole discussion/topic also....

Abbot/monk of an Intentional Buddhist Community

<http://members.socket.net/~oldfree>

My late teacher requested that his identity not be disclosed

franf

by **Nonin** on Fri Jun 04, 2010 11:23 pm

franf,

I was speaking about "Zen Buddhist structures" when I said that "Some Japanese Zen Buddhist structures do not serve us well in the West; some do. In the United States, Zen Buddhists value democratic governance, gender equity, and horizontal power sharing, for instance. In Japan, these are not important." I guess that I should have added, "in Zen Buddhist institutions."

The links that you provided are to papers that are relatively new. These are new developments in Japanese Society, and as far as I know have not made their way into Zen Buddhist culture, which in Japan is culturally and politically very conservative. In fact,

one of my teachers there said that when I came to the monastery directly from the airport, I didn't come to Japan, I came to medieval Japan.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by franf** on Sat Jun 05, 2010 12:03 am

Thanks for the clarification. I remember that someone said it was very difficult to go about their monastic life as a monk in Viet Nam when the war was going on. Of course we all remember the picture of the monk that immolated himself in the street to protest the war and the horrible treatment of the citizens of his country. It would seem that people in a monastery would be more in touch with human suffering if they were practicing the Dharma. I know the history of male dominance in Japanese society. I find it astounding that Zen Buddhism in Japan is so isolated from the goings on in their own society and the human suffering caused by male dominance. This is on subject also, because this male dominance and insensitivity is still a problem with many Buddhist teachers/priests in America. Many of the problems happen because they position them self in authority over others and then take advantage of their position. This kind of behavior is demoralizing at best, and completely insensitive and callous. If they would step down from their lofty positions, and join the rest of humanity, then they would not incur such scrutiny that this endless topic has produced. When i look around the forest we live in, sexual activity is constant. It is natural. It is the unnatural positions of teacher/student that can and does cause an unending dialogue. It would be much better to form a relationship of spiritual friends, and mutual respect and love to pass on the Dharma. Maybe Buddhism will adapt to the strong cultural propensities in America of sexual equity, and level a "teacher's" authority over others.

Abbot/monk of an Intentional Buddhist Community

<http://members.socket.net/~oldfree>

My late teacher requested that his identity not be disclosed

franf

**by christopher:::** on Sat Jun 05, 2010 12:43 am

I've been living here in Japan since 1994. Over that time there's been a very noticeable change concerning recognition of sexual harassment and social condemnation of it. Posters warning against harassment in schools, workplaces, in subway stations and government buildings. Talk on television and most importantly changes in laws protecting women and actively making certain formally "acceptable" sexist behavior illegal or at the very least socially unacceptable. It took some high profile cases to shake things up, initially.

Largest Sexual Harassment Award Made in Japan (1999)

BBC: Harassment claims soar in Japan (2000)

I think women feel more secure and protected, much clearer lines have been drawn about what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Not that the problems have been completely solved....

Sexual harassment still a big problem (2006)

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Carol** on Sat Jun 05, 2010 2:24 am

fran wrote:

Carol says....

As I cross the bridge, the bridge flows, the water is still.

Lovely sentence! I think it applies to this whole discussion/topic also....

It is one of the "miscellaneous koans" collected by the Sanbo Kyodan school from the various koan collections handed down from the Zen Masters of China, Korea and Japan, and used for beginning students both in the Sanbo Kyodan school and its descendant the Diamond Sangha to help them settle back on the ground again after an initial opening experience.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Seigen** on Sat Jun 05, 2010 2:40 pm

Nonin wrote:

This is a key to her point of view. I'm assuming that the "power?" that you put in brackets are your additions, Seigen; is this so? I would say that this makes sense but that Jessica Roemischer is also talking about "self-serving desires" other than power, such as "status, and that "the age-old structures" also refer to "male dominance" or "hierarchical power."

Yes, those bracketed power question marks are my own insertions. In the very beginning, and in a description of her own relationship with a teacher, she is setting up sexuality and spirituality as a relationship to and of power, with the aim of dressing up female sexual power in such relationships. I see in your comment the desire to parse out some important distinctions, status does not always equal power for example. And it is important to do this, as how one speaks of power in one spiritual tradition is different than in another, right? Contemporary Zen practioners might dismiss the reliquaries that exist in their own tradition while Tibetans might carry bones with them wherever they go.

What I see in Roemischer's article, and what I believe NellaLou is also seeing when she uses the word sociopath, is that in the context of a trendy new age grasping of spirituality as empowerment (just think of the title, *The Power of Now*, for example) the language in this article endorses the path of those who are seeking power as their spiritual inspiration and goal without putting serious pressure on what it might mean to do so. That is how I see it.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct

by **christopher:::** on Sun Jun 06, 2010 1:48 am

Insightful posts, Seigen. As soon as human social hierarchies develop, power becomes an issue, so i don't think this is just a "new age" trend. Unfortunately there are many who stay away from formal teachers and organized religion for that very reason. Just as there are many that are drawn to such settings, for the same reason.

It's a shame, cause power and sex are two of the issues that spiritual practice is meant to help us unravel and understand, and teachers who recognize this (are free of unhelpful patterns) will be able to help their students much more then those who struggle or in denial, imo.

Interesting article here on some of the history of Soto Zen Buddhism. The sames kinds of issues have arisen with Tibetan Buddhism, Rinzai, all the various schools. As soon as you start setting up a history with systems of transmission and leaders, temple buildings that need to be financed, etc, all these issues start to arise...



I think the Soto Zen Teachers Association is moving in the right direction to address these problems. Nonin's honesty and forthrightness on this topic is wonderful. Gregory has said some insightful things about this, and i think Stuart Lachs writing is very important. Lachs probably makes many formal teachers uncomfortable but its important to remember he was an insider, he's not just speaking and writing as an uninvolved critic or academic...

Two very good audio interviews with him over at Zen Geeks....

Zen Masters: Dressing the Donkey with Bells and Scarves

The Darker Side of Zen: Institutions Defining Reality

I think the challenge is to be critical and honest but also not to fall into a dualistic view about this. These are very human problems and if we face up to difficulties and accept help when we need it we should be able to untie knots and figure things out...

All of us can benefit from that approach with our own "issues," no?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by genkaku** on Wed Jul 14, 2010 2:16 pm

Edited to delete until partofit's apt observations are addressed. I apologize for not being more careful in passing along what I still think (but can't prove) is an appropriate email. Last edited by genkaku on Wed Jul 14, 2010 4:18 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
genkaku

**by partofit22** on Wed Jul 14, 2010 3:43 pm

hi adam- i clicked on the link you provided- what you quoted was right there at the top but it didn't say anything about him stepping down- this is what it says:

here: <http://www.zenstudies.org/ethical.html>

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted

the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld. The board also wishes to begin a process of reconciliation. If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee.

is the information about him stepping down on another page of the zen studies site?  
partofit22

**by Seigen** on Wed Jul 14, 2010 4:32 pm

His proper name is at the very top of the page, above the ethical guidelines: Abbot Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by genkaku** on Wed Jul 14, 2010 4:47 pm

On July 13, 2010, the following was posted at Zen Studies Society

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld. The board also wishes to begin a process of reconciliation. If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee. On July 4, 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi and Aiho-san Shimano, who served the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors for the past forty-two years, voluntarily stepped down from the board to facilitate a smooth transition of both temporal authority and spiritual legacy.

By July 14, 2010, the text had been revised to read:

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld. The board also wishes to begin a process of reconciliation. If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee.

As noted by Seigen, "Eido Shimano Roshi" remains abbot of Zen Studies Society.  
Last edited by genkaku on Wed Jul 14, 2010 4:52 pm, edited 1 time in total.

genkaku

**by partofit22** on Wed Jul 14, 2010 4:49 pm

adam, could he remain abbot and not a board member?  
partofit22

**by genkaku** on Wed Jul 14, 2010 4:54 pm

partofit22 wrote:  
adam, could he remain abbot and not a board member?

I don't know, but I doubt it.  
genkaku

**by Carol** on Wed Jul 14, 2010 5:19 pm

genkaku wrote:  
partofit22 wrote:  
adam, could he remain abbot and not a board member?

I don't know, but I doubt it.

Yes, unless their bylaws specify that the abbot must be a board member. There is no legal requirement one way or the other. Quite often the "chief executive" or "executive director" of a non-profit serves on the board of directors, and perhaps more often s/he does not.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by christopher:::** on Thu Jul 15, 2010 12:28 am

In Japanese culture for persons in positions of power to admit to deceptions and wrongdoing is to lose face, completely. You then have to apologize publicly, step down from your position, bow down on your knees and show remorse. Some commit suicide.

When not forced into apologizing people tend to remain in denial, imo, as the other option, of transparency and public shame, is just too painful to consider. Spouses and close associates can also get pulled into the maintenance of a facade, as their pride, social position and public image is tied directly to that of the person who's suspected of wrongdoing.

~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~

christopher:::

by genkaku on Thu Jul 15, 2010 6:58 pm

I posted this today on Robert Aitken Roshi's blog:

Posted by Zen Studies Society:

"If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee."

1. The implication of this invitation is that those who may have felt badly-treated in the past can now trust that they will receive good treatment. But why should they assume that? Because it is written in a statement? From the point of view of those who may have felt misused or denigrated, which is more convincing -- a 40-year track record or a newly minted statement of concern?
2. Who is on the ethics committee and to what extent should those who feel wounded and discarded believe that these members are not now, as they have been in the past, Mr. Shimano's obedient surrogates?
3. Is it possible that an ombudsman -- probably someone from outside the Zen Studies Society framework -- could be engaged to hear both sides of the story and be granted the authority to mete out decisions and, possibly, penalties?
4. To what extent is the Ethics Committee serious in its promises and to what extent are their 'caring' assertions little more than a subterfuge exercised so effectively in the past?
5. I fear that without spelling things out in greater detail, what was posited as 'ethical' will simply devolve into more of the same old 'unethical.'

July 15, 2010 5:29 AM

genkaku

by **partofit22** on Thu Jul 15, 2010 9:07 pm

mr shimano's name doesn't appear on the zss board member list-

at the zss site, current members of the board are listed:

The current members of the ZSS Board are:

Carl Yuho Baldini  
 Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat  
 Joe Soun Dowling  
 Seigan Glassing  
 Genjo Marinello  
 Chris Shoteki Phelan  
 Randy Banko Philips  
 Richard Zenshin Rudin  
 Jim Togen Streit

<http://www.zenstudies.org/ethical.html>

it doesn't list the members of the ethics committee-

is the zss board above the same as the board  
 they are referring to here:

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld. The board also wishes to begin a process of reconciliation. If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee.

?

is there a bigger, more important board not mentioned? like the board of directors mentioned in the supposed deleted statement?

"On July 4, 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi and Aiho-san Shimano, who served the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors for the past forty-two years, voluntarily stepped down from the board to facilitate a smooth transition of both temporal authority and spiritual legacy."

it's strange that an important sentence, such as the one above, would be so weirdly placed- like at the end of the statement in the quote box above-

partofit22

by **Carol** on Fri Jul 16, 2010 12:08 am

partofit22 wrote:

mr shimano's name doesn't appear on the zss board member list-

at the zss site, current members of the board are listed:

The current members of the ZSS Board are:

Carl Yuho Baldini

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat

Joe Soun Dowling

Seigan Glassing

Genjo Marinello

Chris Shoteki Phelan

Randy Banko Philips

Richard Zenshin Rudin

Jim Togen Streit

<http://www.zenstudies.org/ethical.html>

it doesn't list the members of the ethics committee-

is the zss board above the same as the board  
they are referring to here:

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld. The board also wishes to begin a process of reconciliation. If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee.

?

is there a bigger, more important board not mentioned? like the board of directors mentioned in the supposed deleted statement?

"On July 4, 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi and Aiho-san Shimano, who served the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors for the past forty-two years, voluntarily stepped down from the board to facilitate a smooth transition of both temporal authority and spiritual legacy."

it's strange that an important sentence, such as the one above, would be so weirdly placed- like at the end of the statement in the quote box above-

"The board" means the board of directors in this context. The board of directors is the ultimate authority in any non-profit organization as to governance and management.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by christopher:::** on Fri Jul 16, 2010 1:26 am

I just went through the posts at Robert Aitken Roshi's blog, that genkaku linked. This post jumped out for me, not that i agree completely with Brenda's view, but the "life koan" she describes is worth considering. Will Shimano's confession or retirement fix everything? The institutional culture there now is toxic, needs to be changed, but healing will only come from forgiveness and is something people have to do on their own, individually.

Dr Brenda Shoshanna said...

Thank you for your thoughtful and wise response. To begin to respond, the hierarchy that you mention in the organization, those who were close to Eido Roshi was never a constant. Many, many left, sooner or later. Many tried to publicize these facts and undertook all kinds of action. And the zazen practice, our true teacher, that which we return to endlessly, went on and on.

Secondly, what you say about forgiveness is certainly valid on one level. We can forgive and also choose not to stay in a toxic situation, there is certainly wisdom to that. This kind of forgiveness is conditional based upon the individual's confession of wrong doing. . based upon the individual doing as we wish. And yet, to me, Zen practice goes beyond the practical, psychological response to our distress. There is also unconditional forgiveness available - a great act of love, in my view. This is the forgiveness offered by not being willing to focus upon the darkness in an individual. This does not mean not seeing it, but not making it primary, not making it all of who the person is. This is seeing beyond the personality into the core of who we all are. I believe it is similar to the forgiveness Christ offered and tried to teach. He said to the woman, "Go and sin no more." But if she did sin and returned, I believe he would have forgiven again.

Perhaps the best way to describe this is to share what happened to me when I learned about Eido Roshi's affairs. It was three or four years after I'd been practicing at the NY

Zendo, many years ago. I was shocked, stunned, couldn't eat or sleep for several days. Besides myself, I talked about it to a dear sangha member, Kushu, (no longer alive). We were up at Dai Bosatsu Mountain. I said to him, "How can this be? The Zen practice here is so profound, the zazen so powerful, the teisho's incredible...the dokusan piercing. I don't understand it. I loved Eido Roshi so much, and now this!!" Kushu's answer was very straightforward and simple. It changed my life.

He said, "You only think you loved him. But you only loved your dreams about him. When you can see not just your dreams about a person, not just what you want him to be, but all of who he truly is, and still love him, then you're doing something! That's love." That became my life koan. I returned home from the mountain that day forever changed. That is my practice....to see everything about a person and still love and accept them. Eido Roshi has shown great, great patience with me, and with others. Our zazen practice is hard. We all fall down over and over. Doesn't he deserve great patience as well?

Deep, heartfelt gasshos to all,

Eshin Brenda Shoshanna

June 7, 2010 7:03 AM

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Dan74** on Fri Jul 16, 2010 2:08 am

Doesn't it cut both ways, though?

Accepting the abuser, the liar, the hypocrite, just as he is (with all his other qualities and I am sure there are many), do we not accept our hurt and anger at what he had done?

Is there not an impartiality in what is accepted, taken into the fold?

On the other hand, there is a confusion going on, isn't there? In the ultimate sense even Hitler is just emptiness and we are responsible for our reaction, rather than him. Of course he is forgiven, as a deluded human being, one who brought about immense suffering and suffered himself. And ultimately he was not a self but a coming together of many causes and conditions, so it makes as much sense to hate Hitler as hurricane Katrina.

But in a relative sense, as human beings, it is not only our conditioning but our duty to expose and fight injustice. On this level, forgiveness equals apathy and anger when handled properly can lead to great results. Also our personal conditioning, in the sense that we respond so much more to situations involving another being, is very deep, and until one is deeply enlightened, such situations push buttons more than anything else. It is naive to believe oneself immune to this, I think.



Basically as a practitioner, I am responsible for my feelings and the use I put them to. It's work in progress, isn't it? It is life's koan and we should respect it enough not to anticipate its solution.

\_/\\_

Dan74

by christopher::: on Fri Jul 16, 2010 3:07 am

Yes!!

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Christopher** on Fri Jul 16, 2010 11:41 am

genkaku wrote:

these members are not now, as they have been in the past, Mr. Shimano's obedient surrogates?

I remember visiting the New York Zendo for the first time after coming back from Ryutaku-ji, maybe in 2001. I hadn't heard a thing about Eido, but found it strange that he didn't seem to uphold much of a relationship with his alma mater in Japan, preferring to send any DBZ people to Shogen-ji instead. It just seemed a little bizarre, especially when his dharma brother - and current abbot of Ryutaku-ji - also ran a zen group practically down the street in Soho. So in all my naiveté I asked the guy running the Zendo why he thought this was. And he just shrugged and said "I guess Kyudo and Eido just don't like each other!"

Now I don't know what I personally would have said in the poor guy's position, but in retrospect it does kind of seem like he was denying the elephant in the room!

Christopher

**by Seigen** on Fri Jul 16, 2010 1:38 pm

Here is Robert Aitken on formal repentance and reconciliation, interesting to read as Aitken has been such a player in all of this:

#### SANGE

The dharma wheel can also be turned with sange, or confession, a practice to be distinguished at the outset from Christian, particularly Roman Catholic, confession.<sup>41</sup> There is no original sin to be forgiven by God, but rather a shared realization of the essential purity of shunyata as the nature of all things. With this realization in peak experience, all the evil of the past is purified. This is mushosen (C h. wu-sheng-chang), repentance on realizing the unborn-that all is pure from the beginning.<sup>42</sup> Buddhist literature does not give transgressors a circumscribed place after they are redeemed, as the moon was assigned by Dante in his Paradiso, priests and nuns who have broken their vows and forgiven. Rather, the Buddha Way is full redemption in the realization of the vacancy of karma and the purity of essential nature, and then renewed realization with renewed confession.<sup>43</sup>

Here is the sange gatha that is part of every Rinzai and Soto Zen Buddhist sutra service, as recited in Diamond Sangha centers:

All the evil karma, ever created by me since of old, on account  
of my beginningless greed, hatred, and ignorance,  
born of my conduct, speech, and thought,  
I now confess openly and fully.<sup>44</sup>

Dogen Kigen says, "If you repent in this way, you will surely have the assistance of the invisible Buddhas and ancestors."<sup>45</sup> Hee-Jin Kim comments, "These acts of repentance and confession are performed in the nondual context of the I who confesses and the Buddhas who receive the confession.... Ultimately one confesses, repents, and is forgiven in the non-dual purity of the self and Buddha."<sup>46</sup> The sange ceremony-in the simple form of repeating the gatha at daily sutra services, and in more elaborate form of repeating the gatha at daily sutra services, and in even more elaborate forms in full-moon ceremonies - is a reminder that the peak experience of realization and redemption must be sustained. Moreover, the process does not stop there. Public confession and repentance are classically a part of conflict resolution in the Buddhist community. See, for example, Thich Nhat Hanh's *Old Path White Clouds*, for the ceremony called *Saptadhikarana-samanthhae*, *Seven Practices of Reconciliation*.<sup>47</sup>

From:

\*Formal Practice: Buddhist or Christian

\* Robert Aitken

\* *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 22, (2002), pp. 63-76

\* Published by: University of Hawai'i Press

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by **Linda Anderson** on Fri Jul 16, 2010 2:29 pm

Seigen wrote:

Here is Robert Aitken on formal repentance and reconciliation, interesting to read as Aitken has been such a player in all of this:

#### SANGE

The dharma wheel can also be turned with sange, or confession, a practice to be distinguished at the outset from Christian, particularly Roman Catholic, confession.<sup>41</sup> There is no original sin to be forgiven by God, but rather a shared realization of the essential purity of shunyata as the nature of all things. With this realization in peak experience, all the evil of the past is purified. This is mushosen (C h. wu-sheng-chang), repentance on realizing the unborn-that all is pure from the beginning.<sup>42</sup> Buddhist literature does not give transgressors a circumscribed place after they are redeemed, as the moon was assigned by Dante in his Paradisoto, priests and nuns who have broken their vows and forgiven. Rather, the Buddha Way is full redemption in the realization of the vacancy of karma and the purity of essential nature, and then renewed realization with renewed confession.<sup>43</sup>

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rom:

\*Formal Practice: Buddhist or Christian

\* Robert Aitken

\* Buddhist-Christian Studies, Vol. 22, (2002), pp. 63-76

\* Published by: University of Hawai'i Press

Thank you. This is very meaningful to me. I am glad to see that there is an equivalency in Buddhism and that karma can be put to rest... that this is part of community. Singing that very chant all these years... and yet.

Linda

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by partofit22** on Fri Jul 23, 2010 4:33 pm

We are grateful beyond words for the incomparable gift of Eido Roshi's Dharma treasure, and for his unstinting efforts to root Rinzai Zen Buddhism in American soil. Ever at home in the unconditional realm, he spurs us to go beyond the relative vista.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the world of causation; each of our actions has a result.

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld.

On July 4, 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi and his wife, Aiho-san Shimano, stepped down from the board of directors of the Zen Studies Society (ZSS). This was prompted when an inappropriate relationship was revealed. The ZSS is committed to fully investigating, clarifying and bringing resolution to this matter.

It was with deepest gratitude and respect for their years of service to this organization and their efforts to assist us in honestly processing this matter, that their resignations from the ZSS Board were accepted.

After discussion with senior members of the American Zen Teachers Association, the ZSS Board has decided to seek outside professional assistance to move this process forward with openness and compassion for all.

If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact the ethics committee.

The Ethics Committee can be reached at  
zsethicscom@gmail.com.

The ZSS Board can be reached at  
zssboard@gmail.com.

The Zen Studies Society Ethical Guidelines  
updated June 2010

The Buddhist Precepts are a fundamental part of Zen Buddhist practice. They help create a safe and supportive environment for all. It is each person's responsibility to follow and honor the tradition. The precepts are:

- \* Honor life, don't kill
- \* Respect others' property
- \* Refrain from sexual misconduct
- \* Honor honesty and truth
- \* Refrain from drug and alcohol intoxication
- \* Remember that silence is precious
- \* Do not judge others
- \* Be tolerant and cooperative
- \* Be peaceful and calm
- \* Esteem the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha

Guidelines:

The Zen Studies Society is a community based on trust and respect. Sangha members are expected to interact with one another in a manner that reflects this trust and respect and are expected to behave in an ethical manner flowing from the Precepts. At Dai Bosatsu, no hunting or fishing is allowed. In addition, no driving of any motor vehicle or water craft is allowed while under the influence of alcohol or any other drug. The following behaviors are not permissible for any teacher, guest lecturer, monastic, Sangha member, program attendee or visitor at either Dai Bosatsu Zendo or New York Zendo:

- \* Failure to conform to zendo or monastery rules.
- \* Any willful removal or damaging of property, or theft of funds.
- \* Withholding or falsely reporting any income generated by the Zen Studies Society.
- \* Threatening, abusive or obscene behavior.
- \* Disrespectful or preferential treatment towards anyone on the basis of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, physical disability, income or national origin.
- \* Willfully causing injury, whether physical or psychological, to anyone.
- \* Any type of illegal drug use, possession or sale.
- \* Consumption of alcohol unless served at an officially sponsored event.
- \* Possession of any firearms or other weapons.
- \* Misrepresenting personal information requested for any program sponsored by the Zen Studies Society.
- \* Engaging in any type of unlawful activity.
- \* Sexual advances or liaisons between teachers or guest lecturers or monastics and Sangha members, program attendees or visitors.

\* Sexual harassment, defined as any single act or multiple persistent acts of physical or verbal conduct that is/are sexual in nature and (1) sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context; or (2) unwelcome or offensive behavior in the view of the receiver of such attentions.

Governance:

1. If any Sangha member, participant or guest has concerns about how he or she is being treated by another or has concerns about someone's ethical conduct within the community, he or she may choose to have a direct conversation with that person to address the concerns, provide feedback and reach an agreement about needed changes.
  
2. However, if the concerned Sangha member, participant or guest does not feel safe to speak directly with the source of concern, feels the complaint is sufficiently egregious, or if he or she has spoken with that person and does not believe the concerns have been addressed, he or she is encouraged to actively pursue the following process: The Zen Studies Society's board will designate an ethics committee consisting of three persons to hear, oversee and resolve issues of interpersonal behavior or ethics. The names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of all the committee members will be posted in the main office of each property associated with the Zen Studies Society. Anyone having concerns will be directed to contact someone on this committee.
  
3. A complainant may choose one of the following ways to submit a formal complaint. A written complaint can be submitted by the complainant to the committee or developed with the assistance of the committee. Or a formal complaint can be made directly with the accused during a dialogue arranged and attended by at least two members of the committee, one of whom will take notes. In the case of a written complaint, after a review by the full committee, it will be shared with the accused so that he or she can make a written response to the committee. After the written response is reviewed, the committee will share it with the complainant and ask for any additional comment.
  
4. The committee is authorized to review and investigate the complaint. The committee will retain all notes and correspondence associated with a given complaint for at least ten years.
  
5. If the complaint is judged by the committee not to meet the level of plausible illegal activity or egregious conduct, the committee will, at the request of the complainant, arrange a facilitated session with the concerned party for the purpose of achieving understanding.
  
6. If, after consideration, a majority of the committee agrees that a reasonable person would likely judge the conduct under investigation as illegal activity or egregious, it will be brought to the attention of the full Zen Studies Society's board for prompt consideration and response. If a member or ex officio member of the board is accused in the complaint then that member's voting rights associated with Board membership will be suspended during the period the complaint is investigated and he or she will be excluded from attending any meeting related to the complaint.

7. Disciplinary action by the Board of Directors may include expulsion, discharge, suspension, probation and/or exclusion from future practice and events associated with the Zen Studies Society. Any egregious activity that is also thought to be illegal will be turned over to the police for investigation.

8. This document will be posted in each main office of the Zen Studies Society and made easily accessible here on the Zen Studies Society web site.

The current members of the ZSS Board are:

Carl Yuho Baldini  
Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat  
Joe Soun Dowling  
Seigan Glassing  
Genjo Marinello  
Chris Shoteki Phelan  
Randy Banko Philips  
Richard Zenshin Rudin  
Jim Togen Streit

<http://www.zenstudies.org/ethical.html>  
partofit22

by **Nonin** on Fri Jul 23, 2010 8:57 pm

All,

For me, the most important step that the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors has taken is this:

After discussion with senior members of the American Zen Teachers Association, the ZSS Board has decided to seek outside professional assistance to move this process forward with openness and compassion for all.

I was one of the AZTA senior members at our recent annual meeting who recommended that the ZSS Board take such a step. ZSS Board members (also AZTA members) Roko Sherry Chayat (Shinge Roshi) and Genjo Marinello, who attended this meeting, agreed with our counsel and forwarded our recommendation to the ZSS Board, whose members took it to heart and are seeking out professional facilitation and mediation to help them sort through the many layers of the issues facing the organization.

It is impossible in such a situation faced by the ZSS to solve such issues in-house, for some of them are long-standing and have not been handled properly in the past. Turning

to outside help shows that the organization is serious about addressing the issues forthrightly and turning toward reconciliation with those who have been either wronged or ignored when they tried to right wrongs done to others.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by AlasdairGF** on Fri Jul 23, 2010 9:00 pm

Brad Warner reflects on this in today's blog post at [http://hardcorezen.blogspot.com/2010/07 ... t-sex.html](http://hardcorezen.blogspot.com/2010/07...t-sex.html). He's also responding to an article by James Ford at [http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20 ... tions.html](http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20...tions.html).

(As an aside, can anyone name the teachers pictured in the Ford essay? I recognise most but not all.)

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

**by Nonin** on Fri Jul 23, 2010 9:56 pm

AlasdairGF,

The picture that you refer to was taken at the end of the recent AZTA meeting at Chapin Mill, the country retreat center operated by Rochester (NY, USA) Zen Center.

The teachers are (all left to right):

Back row:

Barry Magid

Stanley Lombardo

Judy Roitman



Nonin Chowaney  
 Jiko Tisdale  
 Dosho Port  
 Mark Houghton  
 Ejo McMullen (partially blocked)  
 Ruben Habito  
 Sogen Hori (guest scholar/speaker)  
 James Ford

Middle row:  
 Kyogen Carlson  
 Daien Bennage  
 Roko Shinge Sherry Chayat  
 Bodhin Kjolhede  
 Susan Ji-on Postal  
 Haju Murray  
 Kyoki Roberts

Front row:  
 Charles Birx  
 Chozen Bays  
 Ellen Birx  
 Taigen Henderson  
 Genjo Marinello  
 Hogen Bays

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
 Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
 USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by So-on Mann** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 1:27 am

Ford says: What I think we're looking at is a dying off of Zen in the West within the next twenty years.

Eesh.

I dunno I have a hard time, from my perspective at Dharma Rain, seeing this. I don't know what other lineages have going for them in regards to succession, but our temple has two novice priests of young age who have been dedicated to our temple for many years. We have another monk who will soon be ordained priest who is of a more mature age, but has a few decades of teaching before her for sure.

Our temple is constantly growing, and I would not only chalk that growth up to the quality of our teachers and facility, but also to the quality of its organization. DRZC has a powerful elected board of members, codes of conduct, open meetings to discuss financial matters and more examples of transparency and accountability. This all without scandal cropping up within its ranks to precipitate it.

There is a chance that sexual scandals and the mess they leave behind will hurt the ranks of Zen, but if there is enough critical mass of Zen institutions with organizational accountability I think Zen will more thrive than decline.

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by Nonin** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 4:18 am

James Ford is a good friend and a person of deep understanding, but I think that he's overstating the case. Yes, only four or five people at our AZTA meeting were under 60, but those were some of the most senior Zen Buddhist teachers in the U.S.

There are many young people, lay and ordained, training in the U.S. at this time, and I'm confident that with time many of them will come forth as the next generation of teachers. Training takes time, however, and there is no substitute for experience.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by So-on Mann** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 9:40 am

Nonin wrote:

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Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Funny it just occurred to me that Ford wasn't thinking about who was running all those Zen centers while the abbots were at AZTA?

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by AlasdairGF** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 4:54 pm

Thanks Nonin - nice to get some faces for some names!

So-on Mann wrote:

Funny it just occurred to me that Ford wasn't thinking about who was running all those Zen centers while the abbots were at AZTA?

Oooo nice spot!

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

**by genkaku** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 6:18 pm

Hi Nonin -- Any description/reaction you'd care to share of the most recent AZTA meeting? Concerns? Discussions? Directions? Poetry?

genkaku

**by fukasetsu** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 8:28 pm

So-on Mann wrote:

There is a chance that sexual scandals and the mess they leave behind will hurt the ranks of Zen, but if there is enough critical mass of Zen institutions with organizational accountability I think Zen will more thrive than decline.

I'll keep saying it's too easy these days to be labeled a zen teacher, and thus there are too many not fully liberated flesh teachers. I don't care if the world has 50 million zazen instruction teachers, but a teacher of zen? common, any idiot can hold a dharma talk and give personal advice to spiritual seekers, they're the embodiment of grasping. They're like a VCR, teachers put in a tape and they know who they are suddenly.

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

**by Carol** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 10:00 pm

fukasetsu wrote:

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Not always so ... the Zen lineages -- Soto & Rinzai -- put their teachers through rigorous training and practice for many years before dharma transmission takes place. It's not perfect ... teachers are of varying degrees of realization. But the ones I have met have been quite good.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **fukasetsu** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 10:09 pm

Carol wrote:

Not always so ... the Zen lineages -- Soto & Rinzai -- put their teachers through rigorous training and practice for many years before dharma transmission takes place. It's not perfect ... teachers are of varying degrees of realization. But the ones I have met have been quite good.

Ofcourse there are proper ones, I overdo or thicken [what's the word] mos statements to keep room for countercomments. The only icky part with formal religious stuff are transmissions and such, not perse the transmission, but the status and hierarchy involved with 'wordly' people. So therefore the transmissions itself also. I think this would function better when kept inside of the club. Students don't have to know whether a teacher had transmission or not.

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fukasetsu

by **Carol** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 10:48 pm

fukasetsu wrote:

Carol wrote:

Not always so ... the Zen lineages -- Soto & Rinzai -- put their teachers through rigorous training and practice for many years before dharma transmission takes place. It's not perfect ... teachers are of varying degrees of realization. But the ones I have met have been quite good.

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I understand. It can get icky and clubby, sometimes. But I think students definitely do need to know whether they are studying with a transmitted teacher or not. I do think there is some real value in knowing that your teacher has been recognized in the lineage by his/her teacher. That's not a guarantee ... what is? But at least you know you don't have some self-proclaimed guru who has set up shop based on whatever s/he's read without going through the fire of facing and being acknowledged by a teacher.

Aversion to hierarchy and so on is just another aversion, imo.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

**by fukasetsu** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 11:27 pm

Carol wrote:

I understand. It can get icky and clubby, sometimes. But I think students definitely do need to know whether they are studying with a transmitted teacher or not. I do think there is some real value in knowing that your teacher has been recognized in the lineage by his/her teacher. That's not a guarantee ... what is? But at least you know you don't have some self-proclaimed guru who has set up shop based on whatever s/he's read without going through the fire of facing and being acknowledged by a teacher.

Aversion to hierarchy and so on is just another aversion, imo.

Not perse icky for myself, give me 2 minutes with anyone in the flesh and I've taken measure.

But I've seen a friend trusting her transmitted teacher fully and was hurt badly, and ofcours this has its consequences up to this day when having faith in teachers.

Transmission isn't a guarantee but surely it is somewhat an signpole or a safehouse in a field as you say self-proclaimed guru, on the other hand is it not custom to a serious practisioner to have given up certainties and dwellings on such matters?

My first teacher, and still a friend/teacher, has nothing to do with formal traditions or even any labels as 'zen'.

He would be transmitted formally instantly if he ever go on such a trail, and if he did I wouldn't suddenly have more trust regarding his authenticity. But sure for others and especially 'beginners' it might be helpfull picking an apple from the basket. On the other hand transmitted teachers might be rotten inside as well, perhaps no public display of transmission, but a shown certificate if the student asks for it?

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

**by So-on Mann** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 11:49 pm

The Dharma can be passed down even through a few flawed vessels.  
Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by christopher:::** on Sun Jul 25, 2010 4:15 am

The Dharma gets passed down via individuals who realize it profoundly, practice skillfully and then share with others freely via example, words, actions. This often has little to do with formal transmission or roles, imo, much like the flower "transmission" it happens outside formal structures, hierarchies, inkas, labels, rituals, etc.

Folks like Adam, Bob (hrtbeat7), Carol, Linda and Ted who live and breathe the dharma in their own way are as much teachers (in my opinion) as those formally recognized.

We do need to investigate a wider understanding of what constitutes living and teaching the dharma and Zen in the West, imo. In this sense I've gravitated more towards the Thai Forest tradition and Western Theravadan Buddhism recently, cause they are very aware of this. Robes are just symbols there, what matters (and is respected) is how well one is practicing the dharma, no matter what the formal "rank" or public recognition...

I agree with what you said earlier, Lisa, that there are many excellent young recognized Dharma teachers in Zen, and many excellent senior teachers, such as Nonin and Ford. There are also many who are excellent teacher/practitioners who are not formally recognized as such. People living and breathing Zen in new creative ways (like yourself), with feet still firmly grounded and rooted in the dharma.

Put these understandings together and Western Zen is far more vibrant, creative and alive than some may think.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Carol** on Sun Jul 25, 2010 5:03 am

christopher::: wrote:

Folks like [...] Carol, [...] who live and breathe the dharma in their own way are as much teachers (in my opinion) as those formally recognized.

LOL! Flattery will get you nowhere with me, Chris.

I think if you spent a year or two studying with a zen master face-to-face, you would recognize what it is they do that is different. Without that experience, perhaps you cannot know.

There are many teachers, the mountains, the rivers and the whole great earth, but zen masters are trained to skillfully lead you to the edge of the precipice and encourage you to jump. Very few can do that without leading you astray. I should add that finding a teacher worthy of this kind of trust isn't easy. And, even when you do find such a teacher, finding the trust within yourself to go down that path isn't easy.

That's one reason why, when a teacher like Eido Rosho violates and abuses that trust, it is such a serious matter and can do so much harm. Some people give that trust too easily and can be harmed by its unscrupulous use. It's important to truly and deeply size a teacher up before investing much in him/her. I sometimes think that it's those who have invested the most in a teacher who are most harmed when they discover their teacher has abused someone else. It's such a shock to see that one's trust was misplaced.

But, even so, I think that trust is necessary, and that there are trustworthy teachers who are very much worth the effort it takes to find them.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Linda Anderson** on Sun Jul 25, 2010 5:26 am

christopher::: wrote:

The Dharma gets passed down via individuals who realize it profoundly, practice skillfully and then share with others freely via example, words, actions. This often has little to do with formal transmission or roles, imo, much like the flower "transmission" it happens outside formal structures, hierarchies, inkas, labels, rituals, etc.

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Put these understandings together and Western Zen is far more vibrant, creative and alive than some may think.

Christopher,

You have a clear and unbiased perspective, it seems to me. It's not flattery at all, it's a truth that many people live and breathe dharma... some are skilled as teachers, some are not, and some are flawed... all of them have the ability to share and transmit, using their life as their experience... In fact, we all do that when we are open to it and sometimes no words are necessary. The generosity of life allows each of us to bring forth our experience and talents... yes, I love it when a true master appears... the most notable for me has been Sasaki Roshi. I've only had the privilege of visiting his sesshins for dharma talks. At this age, it's not for me to devote myself to him. I've also seen a few other masters such as Namkai Norbu Rinpoche in the flesh ... you only need to be within a half mile to feel his dharma. These masters will not be with us much longer.

Personally, I'm not attached to the form of it. I just started too late in life to know what that even means. I appreciate anyone who is devoted to the path, whatever that means to them. Zen in America seems destined to change over time as an institution, but the zen heart mind which can never be changed continues untouched by all of our ideas.

But, never mind, I'm just repeating what you've already said.

Always love what you have to say.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

by Linda Anderson on Sun Jul 25, 2010 6:06 am

Carol wrote:  
christopher::: wrote:

Folks like [...] Carol, [...] who live and breathe the dharma in their own way are as much teachers (in my opinion) as those formally recognized.

LOL! Flattery will get you nowhere with me, Chris.

I think if you spent a year or two studying with a zen master face-to-face, you would recognize what it is they do that is different. Without that experience, perhaps you cannot know.

There are many teachers, the mountains, the rivers and the whole great earth, but zen masters are trained to skillfully lead you to the edge of the precipice and encourage you to jump. Very few can do that without leading you astray. I should add that finding a teacher worthy of this kind of trust isn't easy. And, even when you do find such a teacher, finding the trust within yourself to go down that path isn't easy.

That's one reason why, when a teacher like Eido Rosho violates and abuses that trust, it is such a serious matter and can do so much harm. Some people give that trust too easily and can be harmed by its unscrupulous use. It's important to truly and deeply size a teacher up before investing much in him/her. I sometimes think that it's those who have invested the most in a teacher who are most harmed when they discover their teacher has abused someone else. It's such a shock to see that one's trust was misplaced.

But, even so, I think that trust is necessary, and that there are trustworthy teachers who are very much worth the effort it takes to find them.

Dear Carol,

The issue is trust. I remember long ago, sitting in a zen living room with you during a precepts conversation when the issue arose. Then, as now, I question is there such a thing as trust except in ourselves and our connection to dharma... I addressed you, I remember, trust doesn't depend on people or outer circumstances. Did you know, I wasn't invited for dinner, as I remember neither were you. I don't think you knew. I turned to my trust and the love in my zen heart with the hurt that I was experiencing. I was speaking from the heart of betrayal... Little did I know how much I would need to remember that later. Yet, I can only find gratitude for all of it, and how it broke through my expectations.

Since then, betrayal has not been a stranger to me. Sometimes, hurt and anger... and then, the sky opens and I see that we are all in this together... and nothing else could have happened given the people involved. To me, this is the zen heart... It's a mystery to me how some of us grow from these experiences while others can't survive it. I trust the dharma enough to know that we all find what is best for us, whether it brings us failure or success... there is a suchness about it... often left up to us to turn to.

If I have grown up at all, I attribute it to the betrayals that I have suffered.... for me, in the context of spiritual relationships. My corporate adventures have actually been quite

predictable and tame by comparison. Too bad that corp. life has such a bad image... yes, it's cut throat sometimes, but they're actually not too shy about admitting it.

I know there is a suchness in the universe that is beyond our ideas about it... beyond success and failure..

Linda

Last edited by Linda Anderson on Sun Jul 25, 2010 9:28 am, edited 1 time in total.

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Linda Anderson** on Fri Jul 16, 2010 2:29 pm

Seigen wrote:

Here is Robert Aitken on formal repentance and reconciliation, interesting to read as Aitken has been such a player in all of this:

SANGE

The dharma wheel can also be turned with sange, or confession, a practice to be distinguished at the outset from Christian, particularly Roman Catholic, confession.<sup>41</sup> There is no original sin to be forgiven by God, but rather a shared realization of the essential purity of shunyata as the nature of all things. With this realization in peak experience, all the evil of the past is purified. This is mushosen (C h. wu-sheng-chang), repentance on realizing the unborn-that all is pure from the beginning.<sup>42</sup> Buddhist literature does not give transgressors a circumscribed place after they are redeemed, as the moon was assigned by Dante in his Paradiso, priests and nuns who have broken their vows and forgiven. Rather, the Buddha Way is full redemption in the realization of the vacancy of karma and the purity of essential nature, and then renewed realization with renewed confession.<sup>43</sup>

Here is the sange gatha that is part of every Rinzai and Soto Zen Buddhist sutra service, as recited in Diamond Sangha centers:

All the evil karma, ever created by me since of old, on account  
of my beginningless greed, hatred, and ignorance,  
born of my conduct, speech, and thought,  
I now confess openly and fully.<sup>44</sup>

Dogen Kigen says, "If you repent in this way, you will surely have the assistance of the invisible Buddhas and ancestors."<sup>45</sup> Hee-Jin Kim comments, "These acts of repentance and confession are performed in the nondual context of the I who confesses and the

Buddhas who receive the confession.... Ultimately one confesses, repents, and is forgiven in the non-dual purity of the self and Buddha."4 6 The sange ceremony-in the simple form of repeating the gatha at daily sutra services, and in more elaborate form of repeating the gatha at daily sutra services, and in even more elaborate forms in full-moon ceremonies - is a reminder that the peak experience of realization and redemption must be sustained. Moreover, the process does not stop there. Public confession and repentance are classically a part of conflict resolution in the Buddhist community. See, for example, Thich Nhat Hanh's Old Path White Clouds, for the ceremony called Saptadhikarana-samanthhae, Seven Practices of Reconciliation.47

From:

\*Formal Practice: Buddhist or Christian

\* Robert Aitken

\* Buddhist-Christian Studies, Vol. 22, (2002), pp. 63-76

\* Published by: University of Hawai'i Press

Thank you. This is very meaningful to me. I am glad to see that there is an equivalency in Buddhism and that karma can be put to rest... that this is part of community. Singing that very chant all these years... and yet.

Linda

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by partofit22** on Fri Jul 23, 2010 4:33 pm

We are grateful beyond words for the incomparable gift of Eido Roshi's Dharma treasure, and for his unstinting efforts to root Rinzai Zen Buddhism in American soil. Ever at home in the unconditional realm, he spurs us to go beyond the relative vista.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the world of causation; each of our actions has a result.

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld.

On July 4, 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi and his wife, Aiho-san Shimano, stepped down from the board of directors of the Zen Studies Society (ZSS). This was prompted when an

inappropriate relationship was revealed. The ZSS is committed to fully investigating, clarifying and bringing resolution to this matter.

It was with deepest gratitude and respect for their years of service to this organization and their efforts to assist us in honestly processing this matter, that their resignations from the ZSS Board were accepted.

After discussion with senior members of the American Zen Teachers Association, the ZSS Board has decided to seek outside professional assistance to move this process forward with openness and compassion for all.

If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact the ethics committee.

The Ethics Committee can be reached at [zssethicscom@gmail.com](mailto:zssethicscom@gmail.com).

The ZSS Board can be reached at [zssboard@gmail.com](mailto:zssboard@gmail.com).

The Zen Studies Society Ethical Guidelines  
updated June 2010

The Buddhist Precepts are a fundamental part of Zen Buddhist practice. They help create a safe and supportive environment for all. It is each person's responsibility to follow and honor the tradition. The precepts are:

- \* Honor life, don't kill
- \* Respect others' property
- \* Refrain from sexual misconduct
- \* Honor honesty and truth
- \* Refrain from drug and alcohol intoxication
- \* Remember that silence is precious
- \* Do not judge others
- \* Be tolerant and cooperative
- \* Be peaceful and calm
- \* Esteem the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha

Guidelines:

The Zen Studies Society is a community based on trust and respect. Sangha members are expected to interact with one another in a manner that reflects this trust and respect and are expected to behave in an ethical manner flowing from the Precepts. At Dai Bosatsu, no hunting or fishing is allowed. In addition, no driving of any motor vehicle or water craft is allowed while under the influence of alcohol or any other drug. The following behaviors are not permissible for any teacher, guest lecturer, monastic, Sangha member, program attendee or visitor at either Dai Bosatsu Zendo or New York Zendo:

- \* Failure to conform to zendo or monastery rules.
- \* Any willful removal or damaging of property, or theft of funds.
- \* Withholding or falsely reporting any income generated by the Zen Studies Society.
- \* Threatening, abusive or obscene behavior.
- \* Disrespectful or preferential treatment towards anyone on the basis of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, physical disability, income or national origin.
- \* Willfully causing injury, whether physical or psychological, to anyone.
- \* Any type of illegal drug use, possession or sale.
- \* Consumption of alcohol unless served at an officially sponsored event.
- \* Possession of any firearms or other weapons.
- \* Misrepresenting personal information requested for any program sponsored by the Zen Studies Society.
- \* Engaging in any type of unlawful activity.
- \* Sexual advances or liaisons between teachers or guest lecturers or monastics and Sangha members, program attendees or visitors.
- \* Sexual harassment, defined as any single act or multiple persistent acts of physical or verbal conduct that is/are sexual in nature and (1) sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context; or (2) unwelcome or offensive behavior in the view of the receiver of such attentions.

#### Governance:

1. If any Sangha member, participant or guest has concerns about how he or she is being treated by another or has concerns about someone's ethical conduct within the community, he or she may choose to have a direct conversation with that person to address the concerns, provide feedback and reach an agreement about needed changes.
2. However, if the concerned Sangha member, participant or guest does not feel safe to speak directly with the source of concern, feels the complaint is sufficiently egregious, or if he or she has spoken with that person and does not believe the concerns have been addressed, he or she is encouraged to actively pursue the following process: The Zen Studies Society's board will designate an ethics committee consisting of three persons to hear, oversee and resolve issues of interpersonal behavior or ethics. The names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of all the committee members will be posted in the main office of each property associated with the Zen Studies Society. Anyone having concerns will be directed to contact someone on this committee.
3. A complainant may choose one of the following ways to submit a formal complaint. A written complaint can be submitted by the complainant to the committee or developed with the assistance of the committee. Or a formal complaint can be made directly with the accused during a dialogue arranged and attended by at least two members of the committee, one of whom will take notes. In the case of a written complaint, after a review by the full committee, it will be shared with the accused so that he or she can make a written response to the committee. After the written response is reviewed, the committee will share it with the complainant and ask for any additional comment.

4. The committee is authorized to review and investigate the complaint. The committee will retain all notes and correspondence associated with a given complaint for at least ten years.
5. If the complaint is judged by the committee not to meet the level of plausible illegal activity or egregious conduct, the committee will, at the request of the complainant, arrange a facilitated session with the concerned party for the purpose of achieving understanding.
6. If, after consideration, a majority of the committee agrees that a reasonable person would likely judge the conduct under investigation as illegal activity or egregious, it will be brought to the attention of the full Zen Studies Society's board for prompt consideration and response. If a member or ex officio member of the board is accused in the complaint then that member's voting rights associated with Board membership will be suspended during the period the complaint is investigated and he or she will be excluded from attending any meeting related to the complaint.
7. Disciplinary action by the Board of Directors may include expulsion, discharge, suspension, probation and/or exclusion from future practice and events associated with the Zen Studies Society. Any egregious activity that is also thought to be illegal will be turned over to the police for investigation.
8. This document will be posted in each main office of the Zen Studies Society and made easily accessible here on the Zen Studies Society web site.

The current members of the ZSS Board are:

Carl Yuho Baldini  
Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat  
Joe Soun Dowling  
Seigan Glassing  
Genjo Marinello  
Chris Shoteki Phelan  
Randy Banko Philips  
Richard Zenshin Rudin  
Jim Togen Streit

<http://www.zenstudies.org/ethical.html>  
partofit22

by **Nonin** on Fri Jul 23, 2010 8:57 pm

All,

For me, the most important step that the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors has taken is this:

After discussion with senior members of the American Zen Teachers Association, the ZSS Board has decided to seek outside professional assistance to move this process forward with openness and compassion for all.

I was one of the AZTA senior members at our recent annual meeting who recommended that the ZSS Board take such a step. ZSS Board members (also AZTA members) Roko Sherry Chayat (Shinge Roshi) and Genjo Marinello, who attended this meeting, agreed with our counsel and forwarded our recommendation to the ZSS Board, whose members took it to heart and are seeking out professional facilitation and mediation to help them sort through the many layers of the issues facing the organization.

It is impossible in such a situation faced by the ZSS to solve such issues in-house, for some of them are long-standing and have not been handled properly in the past. Turning to outside help shows that the organization is serious about addressing the issues forthrightly and turning toward reconciliation with those who have been either wronged or ignored when they tried to right wrongs done to others.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by AlasdairGF** on Fri Jul 23, 2010 9:00 pm

Brad Warner reflects on this in today's blog post at [http://hardcorezen.blogspot.com/2010/07 ... t-sex.html](http://hardcorezen.blogspot.com/2010/07...t-sex.html). He's also responding to an article by James Ford at [http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20 ... tions.html](http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20...tions.html).

(As an aside, can anyone name the teachers pictured in the Ford essay? I recognise most but not all.)

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF



by **Nonin** on Fri Jul 23, 2010 9:56 pm

AlasdairGF,

The picture that you refer to was taken at the end of the recent AZTA meeting at Chapin Mill, the country retreat center operated by Rochester (NY, USA) Zen Center.

The teachers are (all left to right):

Back row:

Barry Magid

Stanley Lombardo

Judy Roitman

Nonin Chowaney

Jiko Tisdale

Dosho Port

Mark Houghton

Ejo McMullen (partially blocked)

Ruben Habito

Sogen Hori (guest scholar/speaker)

James Ford

Middle row:

Kyogen Carlson

Daien Bennage

Roko Shinge Sherry Chayat

Bodhin Kjolhede

Susan Ji-on Postal

Haju Murray

Kyoki Roberts

Front row:

Charles Birx

Chozen Bays

Ellen Birx

Taigen Henderson

Genjo Marinello

Hogen Bays

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by So-on Mann** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 1:27 am

Ford says: What I think we're looking at is a dying off of Zen in the West within the next twenty years.

Eesh.

I dunno I have a hard time, from my perspective at Dharma Rain, seeing this. I don't know what other lineages have going for them in regards to succession, but our temple has two novice priests of young age who have been dedicated to our temple for many years. We have another monk who will soon be ordained priest who is of a more mature age, but has a few decades of teaching before her for sure.

Our temple is constantly growing, and I would not only chalk that growth up to the quality of our teachers and facility, but also to the quality of its organization. DRZC has a powerful elected board of members, codes of conduct, open meetings to discuss financial matters and more examples of transparency and accountability. This all without scandal cropping up within its ranks to precipitate it.

There is a chance that sexual scandals and the mess they leave behind will hurt the ranks of Zen, but if there is enough critical mass of Zen institutions with organizational accountability I think Zen will more thrive than decline.

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by Nonin** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 4:18 am

James Ford is a good friend and a person of deep understanding, but I think that he's overstating the case. Yes, only four or five people at our AZTA meeting were under 60, but those were some of the most senior Zen Buddhist teachers in the U.S.

There are many young people, lay and ordained, training in the U.S. at this time, and I'm confident that with time many of them will come forth as the next generation of teachers. Training takes time, however, and there is no substitute for experience.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by So-on Mann** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 9:40 am

Nonin wrote:

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Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Funny it just occurred to me that Ford wasn't thinking about who was running all those Zen centers while the abbots were at AZTA?

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by AlasdairGF** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 4:54 pm

Thanks Nonin - nice to get some faces for some names!

So-on Mann wrote:

Funny it just occurred to me that Ford wasn't thinking about who was running all those Zen centers while the abbots were at AZTA?

Oooo nice spot!

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

**by genkaku** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 6:18 pm

Hi Nonin -- Any description/reaction you'd care to share of the most recent AZTA meeting? Concerns? Discussions? Directions? Poetry?  
genkaku

**by fukasetsu** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 8:28 pm

So-on Mann wrote:

There is a chance that sexual scandals and the mess they leave behind will hurt the ranks of Zen, but if there is enough critical mass of Zen institutions with organizational accountability I think Zen will more thrive than decline.

I'll keep saying it's too easy these days to be labeled a zen teacher, and thus there are too many not fully liberated flesh teachers. I don't care if the world has 50 million zazen instruction teachers, but a teacher of zen? common, any idiot can hold a dharma talk and give personal advice to spiritual seekers, they're the embodiment of grasping. They're like a VCR, teachers put in a tape and they know who they are suddenly.

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

**by Carol** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 10:00 pm

fukasetsu wrote:

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Not always so ... the Zen lineages -- Soto & Rinzai -- put their teachers through rigorous training and practice for many years before dharma transmission takes place. It's not perfect ... teachers are of varying degrees of realization. But the ones I have met have been quite good.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by fukasetsu** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 10:09 pm

Carol wrote:

Not always so ... the Zen lineages -- Soto & Rinzai -- put their teachers through rigorous training and practice for many years before dharma transmission takes place. It's not perfect ... teachers are of varying degrees of realization. But the ones I have met have been quite good.

Ofcourse there are proper ones, I overdo or thicken [what's the word] mos statements to keep room for countercomments. The only icky part with formal religious stuff are transmissions and such, not perse the transmission, but the status and hierarchy involved with 'wordly' people. So therefore the transmissions itself also. I think this would function better when kept inside of the club. Students don't have to know whether a teacher had transmission or not.

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fukasetsu

**by Carol** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 10:48 pm

fukasetsu wrote:

Carol wrote:

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I understand. It can get icky and clubby, sometimes. But I think students definitely do need to know whether they are studying with a transmitted teacher or not. I do think there is some real value in knowing that your teacher has been recognized in the lineage by his/her teacher. That's not a guarantee ... what is? But at least you know you don't have some self-proclaimed guru who has set up shop based on whatever s/he's read without going through the fire of facing and being acknowledged by a teacher.

Aversion to hierarchy and so on is just another aversion, imo.

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and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by fukasetsu** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 11:27 pm

Carol wrote:

I understand. It can get icky and clubby, sometimes. But I think students definitely do need to know whether they are studying with a transmitted teacher or not. I do think there is some real value in knowing that your teacher has been recognized in the lineage by his/her teacher. That's not a guarantee ... what is? But at least you know you don't have some self-proclaimed guru who has set up shop based on whatever s/he's read without going through the fire of facing and being acknowledged by a teacher.

Aversion to hierarchy and so on is just another aversion, imo.

Not perse icky for myself, give me 2 minutes with anyone in the flesh and I've taken measure.

But I've seen a friend trusting her transmitted teacher fully and was hurt badly, and ofcours this has its consequences up to this day when having faith in teachers. Transmittion isn't a guarantee but surely it is somewhat an signpole or a safehouse in a

field as you say self-proclaimed guru, on the other hand is it not custom to a serious practitioner to have given up certainties and dwellings on such matters?

My first teacher, and still a friend/teacher, has nothing to do with formal traditions or even any labels as 'zen'.

He would be transmitted formally instantly if he ever go on such a trail, and if he did I wouldn't suddenly have more trust regarding his authenticity. But sure for others and especially 'beginners' it might be helpful picking an apple from the basket. On the other hand transmitted teachers might be rotten inside as well, perhaps no public display of transmission, but a shown certificate if the student asks for it?

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

**by So-on Mann** on Sat Jul 24, 2010 11:49 pm

The Dharma can be passed down even through a few flawed vessels.  
Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by christopher:::** on Sun Jul 25, 2010 4:15 am

The Dharma gets passed down via individuals who realize it profoundly, practice skillfully and then share with others freely via example, words, actions. This often has little to do with formal transmission or roles, imo, much like the flower "transmission" it happens outside formal structures, hierarchies, inkas, labels, rituals, etc.

Folks like Adam, Bob (hrtbeat7), Carol, Linda and Ted who live and breathe the dharma in their own way are as much teachers (in my opinion) as those formally recognized.

We do need to investigate a wider understanding of what constitutes living and teaching the dharma and Zen in the West, imo. In this sense I've gravitated more towards the Thai Forest tradition and Western Theravadan Buddhism recently, cause they are very aware of this. Robes are just symbols there, what matters (and is respected) is how well one is practicing the dharma, no matter what the formal "rank" or public recognition...

I agree with what you said earlier, Lisa, that there are many excellent young recognized Dharma teachers in Zen, and many excellent senior teachers, such as Nonin and Ford. There are also many who are excellent teacher/practitioners who are not formally

recognized as such. People living and breathing Zen in new creative ways (like yourself), with feet still firmly grounded and rooted in the dharma.

Put these understandings together and Western Zen is far more vibrant, creative and alive than some may think.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Carol** on Sun Jul 25, 2010 5:03 am

christopher::: wrote:

Folks like [...] Carol, [...] who live and breathe the dharma in their own way are as much teachers (in my opinion) as those formally recognized.

LOL! Flattery will get you nowhere with me, Chris.

I think if you spent a year or two studying with a zen master face-to-face, you would recognize what it is they do that is different. Without that experience, perhaps you cannot know.

There are many teachers, the mountains, the rivers and the whole great earth, but zen masters are trained to skillfully lead you to the edge of the precipice and encourage you to jump. Very few can do that without leading you astray. I should add that finding a teacher worthy of this kind of trust isn't easy. And, even when you do find such a teacher, finding the trust within yourself to go down that path isn't easy.

That's one reason why, when a teacher like Eido Rosho violates and abuses that trust, it is such a serious matter and can do so much harm. Some people give that trust too easily and can be harmed by its unscrupulous use. It's important to truly and deeply size a teacher up before investing much in him/her. I sometimes think that it's those who have invested the most in a teacher who are most harmed when they discover their teacher has abused someone else. It's such a shock to see that one's trust was misplaced.

But, even so, I think that trust is necessary, and that there are trustworthy teachers who are very much worth the effort it takes to find them.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol



by **Linda Anderson** on Sun Jul 25, 2010 5:26 am

christopher::: wrote:

The Dharma gets passed down via individuals who realize it profoundly, practice skillfully and then share with others freely via example, words, actions. This often has little to do with formal transmission or roles, imo, much like the flower "transmission" it happens outside formal structures, hierarchies, inkas, labels, rituals, etc.

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Put these understandings together and Western Zen is far more vibrant, creative and alive then some may think.

Christopher,

You have a clear and unbiased perspective, it seems to me. It's not flattery at all, it's a truth that many people live and breathe dharma... some are skilled as teachers, some are not, and some are flawed... all of them have the ability to share and transmit, using their life as their experience... In fact, we all do that when we are open to it and sometimes no words are necessary. The generosity of life allows each of us to bring forth our experience and talents... yes, I love it when a true master appears... the most notable for me has been Sasaki Roshi. I've only had the privilege of visiting his sesshins for dharma talks. At this age, it's not for me to devote myself to him. I've also seen a few other masters such as Namkai Norbu Rinpoche in the flesh ... you only need to be within a half mile to feel his dharma. These masters will not be with us much longer.

Personally, I'm not attached to the form of it. I just started too late in life to know what that even means. I appreciate anyone who is devoted to the path, whatever that means to them. Zen in America seems destined to change over time as an institution, but the zen heart mind which can never be changed continues untouched by all of our ideas.

But, never mind, I'm just repeating what you've already said.

Always love what you have to say.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Linda Anderson** on Sun Jul 25, 2010 6:06 am

Carol wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

Folks like [...] Carol, [...] who live and breathe the dharma in their own way are as much teachers (in my opinion) as those formally recognized.

LOL! Flattery will get you nowhere with me, Chris.

I think if you spent a year or two studying with a zen master face-to-face, you would recognize what it is they do that is different. Without that experience, perhaps you cannot know.

There are many teachers, the mountains, the rivers and the whole great earth, but zen masters are trained to skillfully lead you to the edge of the precipice and encourage you to jump. Very few can do that without leading you astray. I should add that finding a teacher worthy of this kind of trust isn't easy. And, even when you do find such a teacher, finding the trust within yourself to go down that path isn't easy.

That's one reason why, when a teacher like Eido Rosho violates and abuses that trust, it is such a serious matter and can do so much harm. Some people give that trust too easily and can be harmed by its unscrupulous use. It's important to truly and deeply size a teacher up before investing much in him/her. I sometimes think that it's those who have invested the most in a teacher who are most harmed when they discover their teacher has abused someone else. It's such a shock to see that one's trust was misplaced.

But, even so, I think that trust is necessary, and that there are trustworthy teachers who are very much worth the effort it takes to find them.

Dear Carol,

The issue is trust. I remember long ago, sitting in a zen living room with you during a precepts conversation when the issue arose. Then, as now, I question is there such a thing as trust except in ourselves and our connection to dharma... I addressed you, I remember, trust doesn't depend on people or outer circumstances. Did you know, I wasn't invited for dinner, as I remember neither were you. I don't think you knew. I turned to my trust and the love in my zen heart with the hurt that I was experiencing. I was speaking from the heart of betrayal... Little did I know how much I would need to remember that later. Yet, I can only find gratitude for all of it, and how it broke through my expectations.

Since then, betrayal has not been a stranger to me. Sometimes, hurt and anger... and then, the sky opens and I see that we are all in this together... and nothing else could have happened given the people involved. To me, this is the zen heart... It's a mystery to me how some of us grow from these experiences while others can't survive it. I trust the dharma enough to know that we all find what is best for us, whether it brings us failure or success... there is a suchness about it... often left up to us to turn to.

If I have grown up at all, I attribute it to the betrayals that I have suffered.... for me, in the context of spiritual relationships. My corporate adventures have actually been quite preditable and tame by comparison. Too bad that corp. life has such a bad image... yes, it's cut throat sometimes, but they're actually not too shy about admitting it.

I know there is a suchness in the universe that is beyond our ideas about it... beyond success and failure..

Linda

Last edited by Linda Anderson on Sun Jul 25, 2010 9:28 am, edited 1 time in total.

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Dan74** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 2:14 am

christopher::: wrote:

Are psychopaths ever genuine, caring or committed? Can genuine, caring and committed people ever think or behave like psychopaths?

Since we know they too have Buddha Nature, how do psychopaths wake up? Is that beyond the capacity of Buddhism to answer, or central to our practice to consider?

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angulimala>

Funnily enough I was just reading about psychopathy on the web in between posting.

My guess is that what manifests as psychopathy is a dominant dynamics which is totally preoccupied with "getting what I want." We've all experienced that, when all other concerns pale or fade away and just this thing is all that matters. So of course "genuine, caring and committed people" can think and behave like psychopaths for brief periods (quite often probably!), except that when the urge for that "thing" cools, they can see the drawbacks and the consequences, etc more clearly than a psychopath.

Are psychopaths ever genuine, caring and committed? Not if their overriding motivation in life is to serve themselves and this is what defines a psychopath, I believe. They can appear to be, because it serves their interests but this is just a game.

Of course so-called normal people behave like this a lot of the time - feigning concern, taking other people's needs into account, only to come out on top in the long run. Perhaps the difference is a matter of degree?

How does a psychopath begin to wake up? Same way all of us do, I suspect, from Angulimala to your squeaky-clean goody-two-shoes - by stopping to run to and from things, stopping dead in one's tracks and realizing that one's been running in circles, opening up and inquiring. This is apparently especially hard for the so-called psychopaths, being so immersed in the game of gratifying the self.

I guess eventually suffering may get through to this kind of a person. If they see a ray on pure sunshine (like unconditional love) in the midst of hell, then an opening may present itself. I don't know but I hope so.

Dan74

**by genkaku** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 2:34 am

If they see a ray on pure sunshine (like unconditional love) in the midst of hell, then an opening may present itself.

Gotta be willing to see the hell before there is any chance of escape. Most of the time, the addiction is just too wonderful to surrender on the basis of rational thought or human kindness ... or well-woven psychology. The psychopaths are not the crazy ones ... it is we who suggest a change who are out of our blinkin' minds. If you don't believe me, ask a psychopath.

genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 2:41 am

Living in Japanese culture long term- the more i read of Eido Tai Shimano and other Japanese teachers who have had drinking problems, sex scandals, etc- the more they sound like "average Joes" and "the guy next door" then anything out of the ordinary. If you read what happened to average Japanese during WW 2, how easily good average people changed when placed on the front lines of war, nothing about Shimano will sound so surprising. Similar stories exist for average men in all nations when sent into war zones (or brothels).

The one thing that sticks out (for me) as being truly out of the ordinary with Shimano and others is the unrealistic positions they have been given in society, the mythic roles they are expected to play- as enlightened teachers and Zen masters.

When Buddha woke up under the Bodhi tree he said "realized is the unconditioned, achieved is the end of craving."

Zen Buddhism seems to be primarily centered on this first verse, Theravada more on the second. Buddha emphasized both and i do often wonder if we put overly unrealistic expectations on our teachers when they are not yet masters of these two crucial components of the dharma.

The biggest tragedy and surprise for me with Shimano roshi is that this man was put into a position that never fit with his capabilities and then allowed to remain there for decades.

Good talk by Joseph Goldstein here, on the topic of ending cravings as a key component of the Buddha's dharma-- The Buddha; Song Of Enlightenment: Achieved Is The End Of Craving. People who still struggle unsuccessfully with cravings and addictions are not dharma masters, from this perspective, and we are asking for trouble when this isn't commonly understood and agreed upon by students, as well as teachers, imo.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by genkaku** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 2:59 am

The biggest tragedy and surprise for me with Shimano roshi is that this man was put into a position that never fit with his capabilities and then allowed to remain there for decades.

Naturally it is true that unrealistic expectations are all our fault ... surely not the instructor's. But it might be worth noticing how little some so-called teachers did/do to turn unskillful fantasies into skillful means and instead simply bask in and add fuel to the fires of fantasy.

Making nice won't save anything.  
genkaku

by clyde on Wed Aug 04, 2010 3:21 am

Chris;

While we may be sympathetic to the plight of ordinary human beings acting in extreme circumstances (e.g. – war, torture, etc.) and work to eliminate those circumstances, this was not the case here. Being a spiritual teacher, teaching and conducting interviews may be special, but it is not extreme.

christopher::: wrote:

The biggest tragedy and surprise for me with Shimano roshi is that this man was put into a position that never fit with his capabilities and then allowed to remain there for decades.

It is a tragedy, a tragedy for his teacher, his students, and the wider Zen & Buddhist sangha. Those directly involved must bear their responsibility. Those of us indirectly involved must bear our responsibility. But none of this relieves him of his responsibility.

From the Five Contemplations:

I am the owner of my actions,

heir to my actions,

born of my actions,

related through my actions

and have my actions as my arbitrator;

Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir.

And the Atonement Gatha:

All my ancient twisted karma

From beginningless greed, hate, and ignorance

Born through body, speech, and mind,

I now fully avow.

clyde

“Enlightenment means to see what harm you are involved in and to renounce it.” David Brazier, *The New Buddhism*

DO NO HARM

clyde

by **Linda Anderson** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 4:18 am

Regarding any pathology, I think that we need to use caution when we try to equate it to extreme behavior among the general population, that's most of us. A pathology is extreme, fixed and does not alter itself easily when the crisis is past... probably not at all. So, it's impossible for us to imagine. The clinical realities of things like this are beyond what we know unless we are in the profession or have lived with it. This is way beyond having a disregard for simple decency and an overly developed attachment to what one wants. Also, there are specific guidelines for making such a diagnosis, so it's presumptuous to know this about anyone.

I also think that it's even more challenging to comprehend bad behavior when there is no label for it, which can serve as a type of buffer to the full experience of the pain and chaos involved. That it can function to distance us by way of abstraction. What if there are no labels, only experience.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

by **christopher:::** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 5:28 am

Nothing is fixed, by its nature. Every pattern changes, though some patterns don't change easily. Yes, its these labels that i question. The label of Zen master, the label of psychopath. The problems caused by greed, desire, attachment and aversion are what we all have to work with. Putting people into conceptual boxes of master or psychopath makes it easier for us to distance ourselves from them, see them as other. There's a bit of zen master and psychopath in all of us. Denying either is a kind of blindness, can get us into trouble.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Dan74** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 5:54 am

christopher::: wrote:

Nothing is fixed, by its nature. Every pattern changes, though some patterns don't change easily. Yes, its these labels that i question. The label of Zen master, the label of

psychopath. The problems caused by greed, desire, attachment and aversion are what we all have to work with. Putting people into conceptual boxes of master or psychopath makes it easier for us to distance ourselves from them, see them as other. There's a bit of zen master and psychopath in all of us. Denying either is a kind of blindness, can get us into trouble.

Of course.

At the same time, when in New York and wishing to do some serious Zen practice with a teacher, I know which centre I won't be going to.

Distinctions are important and should be made clearly. That doesn't mean we should cling to them as something ultimately real and fixed. Just very useful for specific purposes.

I've been lucky to come across quite a few teachers and mentors (school, uni, buddhism, etc) who while very human and imperfect were genuinely concerned with my well-being rather than their gratification. I don't see this as some amazing ideal but a matter of basic decency and kindness.

By the same token no one can be said to be for ever beyond the pale. But as genkaku said sometimes the addiction is so powerful the person sees nothing else. It's not a matter of condemnation but of recognition, I think. That's all.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by genkaku** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 10:40 am

Using Buddhism and its teachings as a defensive perimeter that can keep unpleasantness at bay is OK for a while. Which of us hasn't sought out some haven in the wit and wisdom of Buddhism? Yes indeed, the Four Noble Truths! Yes indeed, The Eightfold Path! Yes indeed the teachings that touch so many corners of the universe and seem to make them 'manageable.'

But what is OK for a while is not OK in the end. Buddhism as a defensive perimeter may keep institutions and individuals safe and protected for a while, but until there is an inescapable willingness to give it all away -- every last analysis and wisdom that makes so much defensive sense -- I think Buddhism will remain a cardboard cut-out of what Buddhism honestly offers. It's not a matter of good or bad ... it's just a matter of what works and what's true.

Just noodling.



genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 1:46 pm

Hi Adam.

Are you pointing a finger at Buddha and his teachings or Buddhism and it's established schools, hierarchies and organizations? Cause there's a very big difference. Buddha was very strict about rules of conduct for monks, as that was seen as a required component of awakening and realization.

He would have bounced Shimano out on to the street right after his first offense. Ikkyu and some others as well.

no?

Last edited by christopher::: on Wed Aug 04, 2010 1:50 pm, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by Christopher** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 1:48 pm

genkaku wrote:

"Zen and the Art of Seduction" by Robin Westen

Now that I've read that, I regret having at times made light of this situation. Eido is no longer welcome at my dojo.

Christopher

**by genkaku** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 2:23 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Hi Adam.

Are you pointing a finger at Buddha and his teachings or Buddhism and it's established schools, hierarchies and organizations? Cause there's a very big difference. Buddha was very strict about rules of conduct for monks, as that was seen as a required component of awakening and realization.

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no?

Christopher::: Please, from whatever perspective, don't lump Ikkyu and Shimano in the same pile. The suggestion is ludicrous and harms the one who entertains it.

Alternatively ... knock yourself out: Hold on to whatever you conceive Buddhism to be and see what happens.

genkaku

**by partofit22** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 2:35 pm

genkaku wrote:

partofit22 wrote:

did anyone ever punch him in the nose? kick him where it hurts?

Perhaps the inability/unwillingness to be hurt helps to account for a deliberately deaf ear or callousness when it comes to the suffering of others.

maybe hurt was what disabled him in the first place- (?)

partofit22

**by Seigen** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 3:19 pm

We can't know the origin, only that it is. There are theories, of course, emotional abandonment in childhood for ex., but that is not a true accounting. For some reason that we will likely never know (there I go seeking origins again) there is a social autism or sociopathology that can be variously named upon the evidence, which is an inability to care for others beyond one's own self-interest. If unchecked it becomes skilled manipulation in the cruelty of taking from others whatever one can, absolutely everything if possible, precisely because they can, to the point of a sick enjoyment in the timing and symbolic weight of the transgression. Regarding Shimano, there are still many, women included, who regard Shimano as a profound teacher important to their practice. Maybe no one from outside of that understanding can speak to this. But for sure for sure there is also the very real truth that the skillful means of another in well-disguised and systematically organized cruelty and harm can also be a real teacher.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by genkaku** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 4:14 pm

maybe hurt was what disabled him in the first place- (?)

Analyzing the motives and experiences of another will always fall short of the truth. It may soothe the analyst, but more often than not it is just a form of mental masturbation.

But this is not to say we cannot see how others act -- what they actually do.

But for sure for sure there is also the very real truth that the skillful means of another in well-disguised and systematically organized cruelty and harm can also be a real teacher.

Very true ... Hitler was a great teacher. You do the prostrations if you like.  
genkaku

**by partofit22** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 4:40 pm

Seigen wrote:

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it doesn't seem that any human is free of self interest, no matter how minimal, that doesn't cause harm to another-

and though less harm is best, it seems that in my own experience of attempting to gain a healthy sense of strength,

feel that i've developed icky traits in place of or in defense of succumbing to supposed previous ignorant behaviors

that seemed to cause less harm to other people-

i've been sitting with this for the past month or so, and it's rubbing me -- the wrong way or right way, i don't claim to know-

partofit22

**by christopher:::** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 6:48 pm

genkaku wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

Hi Adam.

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He would have bounced Shimano out on to the street right after his first offense. Ikkyu and some others as well.

no?

Christopher::: Please, from whatever perspective, don't lump Ikkyu and Shimano in the same pile. The suggestion is ludicrous and harms the one who entertains it.

Alternatively ... knock yourself out: Hold on to whatever you conceive Buddhism to be and see what happens.

I won't push the issue, but a quick glance at Rinzai master Ikkyu's bio and poems about the beauty of women and importance (acceptability) of sexual intercourse for Zen priests could be very much related to these problems we're discussing. We'd have to ask Shimano himself, of course, to see if he looked upon Ikkyu as a role model and hero. Until then, we can't know.

Sorry if that feels like a heretical suggestion to you, but sometimes things that make us uncomfortable to think about contain truths it can be worthwhile to bring into the light and consider. This entire situation with Shimano is one such example.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by genkaku** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 8:28 pm

Sorry if that feels like a heretical suggestion to you,

Christopher::: It doesn't feel heretical to me. It feels facile ... sort of like "if we just make very, very nice and neatly analyze according to some 'authentic' teaching, then everything will turn out OK." On the other hand, that approach really does feel heretical to me, so maybe you're right.  
genkaku

by **Carol** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 9:13 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Sorry if that feels like a heretical suggestion to you, but sometimes things that make us uncomfortable to think about contain truths it can be worthwhile to bring into the light and consider. This entire situation with Shimano is one such example.

Ikkyu had sexual intercourse with courtesans (in a culture that views such things quite differently from ours). I've never seen any reports that he had sexual intercourse with women who came to him for spiritual guidance.

Circumstances alter cases quite a lot. Discernment is part of wisdom and compassion, just as much as equanimity.

Discomforting thoughts may show us where our "hang ups" are -- we may be uncomfortable with priests having sex in general, for example. It would be good to investigate that. Does that discomfort apply in all cases, or only some? Do I have a blanket judgment about it or not? What is the source of that judgment? Scriptures? Aversions about sex? Vows? Precepts? Something else?

Or discomforting thoughts may show us where appropriate action is needed, such as priests having sex with women who come to them for spiritual guidance and manipulating them with one's "spiritual insight" to agree to/participate in the sexual intercourse. In such a case, teachers, board members and even sangha members are responsible for the welfare of the students/seekers who come to your organization to receive teaching. If you believe this is a true teaching in the circumstances ... by all means, support it. If you don't, then some other action is called for to stop it.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **christopher:::** on Wed Aug 04, 2010 9:20 pm

Good points, Carol.

genkaku wrote:

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Christopher::: It doesn't feel heretical to me. It feels facile ... sort of like "if we just make very, very nice and neatly analyze according to some 'authentic' teaching, then everything will turn out OK." On the other hand, that approach really does feel heretical to me, so maybe you're right.

No, everything won't "turn out OK" thanks to some neat analysis. I know that.

Completely off topic, i'm at a computer in Osaka airport right now, boarding soon for a conference in Hanoi, thinking about Thich Nhat Hanh. His sanghas in Vietnam have been closed by authorities, followers told to disband. Not much of a hub bub has been made internationally. It's going to be very weird going there, where such a terrible war was fought, where Americans had dropped countless napalm bombs.

I once went to an international conference in Hiroshima, held in the Peace Park! Couldn't attend most of the sessions, it was just too creepy, although everything looked beautiful my mind couldn't stop thinking about the atomic bombing there decades earlier, all the people who had died.

This is the world, a lot of tragedy has happened out there, great injustice and suffering. Sometimes decades pass, but minds remember, hold on. The pain is carried forward into time.

How does healing happen when justice hasn't been metted out? How can forgiveness be given when apologies have not been spoken?

Big questions. Heavy burdens...

Take care Adam, Carol, everyone.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Christopher** on Thu Aug 05, 2010 8:13 am

christopher::: wrote:

We'd have to ask Shimano himself, of course, to see if he looked upon Ikkyu as a role model and hero. Until then, we can't know.

I'm sorry, but you must be freaking kidding.

Christopher

**by Dan74** on Thu Aug 05, 2010 10:49 am

Yeah, I can't really see the leap of imagination here.

Ikkyu had sex, Shimano had sex, hell even I had sex (at least three times as the evidence attests). Yet I don't look upon Shimano as a model and hero.

(scratching my head here...)

Maybe Chris::: meant a loose interpretation of the Vinaya or some quirk of Japanese ethics (or lack thereof) is at fault here, but it's a bit of a leap.

Ikkyu has slept with courtesans, Ryokan had a relationship (physical or otherwise - I am not sure) with a woman much younger than himself but that was a loving relationship according to the accounts we have, not a sequence of deception, , manipulation, seduction, exploitation and neglect which appears to be the pattern of Mr Shimano.

Sex in itself is neither good nor bad, I think, rather it is the matter of intention as the Buddha himself is reported to have emphasized. As for Vinaya and celibacy of monks/priests this has been discussed elsewhere. There are pros and cons of course. I for one am glad there are opportunities for those inclined to a celibate monastic path and for those inclined to a householder's or other kinds of renunciate lifestyles to commit to Dharma.

Dan74

**by genkaku** on Thu Aug 05, 2010 11:01 am

Until then, we can't know.

We can never know what influences worked in what way for any given individual. We can guess and gossip and write Ph.D. theses, but that doesn't mean we actually know.

Still, although we cannot know ...

We can assess actions and speak our minds without relying on someone else's virtue or standing.

genkaku

by **Carol** on Thu Aug 05, 2010 4:55 pm

Dan74 wrote:

Sex in itself is neither good nor bad, I think, rather it is the matter of intention as the Buddha himself is reported to have emphasized. As for Vinaya and celibacy of monks/priests this has been discussed elsewhere. There are pros and cons of course. I for one am glad there are opportunities for those inclined to a celibate monastic path and for those inclined to a householder's or other kinds of renunciate lifestyles to commit to Dharma.

Me, too.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by **christopher:::** on Tue Aug 10, 2010 4:10 pm

Hi all. Back from Hanoi this morning. What an incredible experience! Still dealing with the culture shock.

As for Shimano and Ikkyu, i wasn't suggesting that they were similar (beyond both being Rinzai Abbots of Sanghas), just pointing out that Ikkyu could have been a role model and influence (inspiration) for Shimano. But i really don't know and am surprised that the suggestion has seemed so ludicrous (or offensive) to many.

We are throwing around the word psychopath in this discussion, and no one has objected to that. People behave the way they do for many reasons, with many cultural influences and models that inspire their behavior. If you want to find a nice conceptual box to place Shimano and other "deviant" teachers in, we may then be ignoring the many factors that played a part in the unfolding of their difficulties. How then can we reach a deeper understanding?

Walt Whitman inspired many 60's hippies, they read his poetry and appreciated his open attitudes about sexuality and the body. It doesn't mean that we would then say a bisexual hitchhiking hippy is the same as Whitman, just that the influence was there, had significance.



Go to Theravadan Buddhism and you won't find any writings like this poetry (below). The Buddhism of Zen and Ikkyu is not the same as what Buddha taught. We all have appreciation for that.

I'm just asking, can an open-minded attitude about sex also lead to trouble, in certain cases? If we want to discuss sexual misconduct I don't think that's such a heretical question to ask. I also don't think that Buddha would use a word like psychopath to describe Zen teachers who behave badly. He'd just point to the basics of his teachings on the dangers of attachments and desires, how they give rise to unwholesome actions, dukkha and suffering.

Peace.

#### The Dharma Master of Love

My life has been devoted to love play;  
 I've no regrets about being tangled in red thread from head to foot,  
 Nor am I ashamed to have spent my days as a Crazy Cloud—  
 But I sure don't like this long, long bitter autumn of no good sex!  
 Follow the rule of celibacy blindly and you are no more than an ass;  
 Break it and you are only human.  
 The spirit of Zen is manifest in ways countless as the sands of the Ganges.  
 Every newborn is a fruit of the conjugal bond.  
 For how many eons have secret blossoms been budding and fading?

#### To My Daughter

Even among beauties she is a precious pearl;  
 A little princess in this sorry world.  
 She is the inevitable result of true love,  
 And a Zen master is no match for her!  
 Rinzai's disciples never got the Zen message,  
 But I, the Blind Donkey, know the truth:  
 Love play can make you immortal.  
 The autumn breeze of a single night of love is  
 better than a hundred thousand years of sterile sitting meditation.  
 Monks these days study hard in order to turn  
 A fine phrase and win fame as talented poets.  
 At Crazy Cloud's hut there is no such talent, but he serves up the taste of truth  
 As he boils rice in a wobbly old cauldron.

#### Three Poems on Love and Longing

Day and night I cannot keep you out of my thoughts;  
 In the darkness, on an empty bed, the longing deepens.  
 I dream of us joining hands, exchanging words of love,

But then the dawn bell shatters my reverie and rends my heart.  
 Women, lovely flowers that bloom and quickly fade;  
 Flowery faces, in full flush, lovely as dreams.  
 When flowers burst open they grow heavy with passion  
 But once they fall, no one speaks of them again.  
 Even if I were a god or a Buddha you'd be on my mind.  
 I sit beneath the lamp, a skinny monk chanting love songs.  
 The fierce autumn wind nearly bowls me over  
 And my heart is choked with thick clouds.  
 The wise heathens have no knowledge;  
 They just keep their mind continually set on the Way.  
 There are no big-shot Buddhas in nature  
 And ten thousand sutras are distilled in a single song.  
 I'd like to  
 Offer something  
 To help you  
 But in the Zen School  
 We don't have a single thing!  
 A sex-loving monk, you object!  
 Hot-blooded and passionate, totally aroused.  
 Remember, though, that lust can consume all passion,  
 Transmuting base metal into pure gold.  
 Coming alone,  
 Departing alone,  
 Both are delusion:  
 Let me teach you how  
 Not to come, not to go!  
 Of all things  
 There is nothing  
 More congratulatory  
 Than a weather-beaten  
 Old skull!  
 Typhoons and floods make everyone suffer,  
 And tonight there will be no singing and dancing.  
 The Dharma flourishes and decays, ages come and go:  
 So right yet so sad—the bright moon sets behind the Western Pavilion.  
 Bliss and sorrow, love and hate, light and shadow, hot and cold, joy and anger, self and  
 other.  
 The enjoyment of poetic beauty may well lead to hell.  
 But look what we find strewn all along our Path:  
 Plum blossoms and peach flowers!

From "Love Letters Sent by the Wind," the poetry of Ikkyu translated and introduced by  
 John Stevens. *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly*, Winter 2004.

~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by genkaku** on Tue Aug 10, 2010 4:47 pm

I also don't think that Buddha would use a word like psychopath to describe Zen teachers who behave badly.

Christopher::: If you choose to sidestep such a word, let's not blame it on the Buddha.

Also the above reminds me of the old 'joke' about three men walking down the street when they come on a pile of dog shit.

The first one looks: "Sure does look like dog shit."

The second one sniffs: "Sure does smell like dog shit."

The third one extends a finger and takes a taste: "Sure does taste like dog shit ... damned glad we didn't step in it."

genkaku

**by Jok\_Hae** on Tue Aug 10, 2010 5:10 pm

Christopher::: wrote:

Go to Theravadan Buddhism and you won't find any writings like this poetry (below). The Buddhism of Zen and Ikkyu is not the same as what Buddha taught. We all have appreciation for that.

The "Buddhism of Zen" is not the same as what the Buddha taught? Wow, that is really quite a statement.

Sorry, but I have no appreciation for that. The spin you seem to be pedaling in this thread is that 1.) The Zen Buddhist system is the cause for situations such as this, and 2.) that Theravadan Buddhism is somehow morally superior. You are entitled to your opinion of course, but the quote seems to be quite over the top, imho

Keith

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

by **Seigen** on Tue Aug 10, 2010 5:13 pm

Openness towards sexuality and harmful behavior are two different things. Even the S&M community knows the difference.

One of the things that Ikkyu was certainly doing was harnessing sexual energy, I think it became a sort of kensho satori for him, and he describes it as a part of his practice, to build and carry his sexual energy as enlightenment. I can't say what this actually meant in Ikkyu's time, I don't think anyone can. Even his modern biography is little more than a lamp history, where the moral at the end is that we are sexual beings until the day we die. And so?

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by **genkaku** on Tue Aug 10, 2010 9:53 pm

Caution: What follows is laced with ignorance and bias and may be wrong beyond belief:

In tumultuous times Theravada is a bulwark -- a resting place that is much annotated and authentic. It glues Buddhism together and glues its students to a straight and narrow that can be very reassuring. Even when times are less fraught with confusion, still there is what "the Buddha said" or "the Buddha did" or the various rules of comportment and mind that need to be exercised in pursuit of a clear and peaceful life. It is very strong and in that strength allows its participants to look to it for a resting place, a place of safety, a place of certainty.

But I seriously doubt that the most devoted Theravadin would deny the fact that at some point the rules must be left behind -- not denied or refuted or disdained, just left behind as one who has forded the river on a raft leaves his or her raft behind.

Zen has a tendency to push to raft-left-behind approach, the everything-is-Buddha approach, the there-is-nothing-other-than-enlightenment approach. On its surface Zen can be rowdy and free-wheeling and unconstrained and seem to break all the good rules. But talk is talk: Zen too is informed by The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path ... which means discipline ... which means doing what you don't want to do. The one thing Zen is not known for is allowing its adherents to rest or nest in one virtue or another, one authentic word or another, one sure-fire meaning or another. Everything changes, period. That goes for tumult (when we are all most uncomfortable) and it goes for smooth sailing (which poses and even greater threat).

If this blither is anywhere close to true, then Zen roughly begins and presses forward where Theravada leaves off ... the teaching beyond the scriptures once so lovingly embraced. If this blither is anywhere close to true, you can understand why Zen was not

recognized in many Buddhist realms ... it was and remains too free-wheeling, too care-free, too dangerous, and most important, too open to misuse or misunderstanding.

I don't mean to put one school against another. I mean that there is discipline and there is freedom and that resting too conveniently on either of these suggestions is, well, stupid, assuming a clear understanding is what anyone seeks. Intellectual gum-banging on either front may make supporters feel supported in tumultuous times ... but that's just cowardice or ignorance.

OK ... just to repeat, the above is simply my beer-drinking opinion and may be as far from the mark as could be. I wanted to get it off my chest because I get tired of listening to oh-so-reasonable explications which fail to explain anything but ego.

Ego like mine.  
genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Tue Aug 10, 2010 10:45 pm

I'm not saying Theravada practice is superior to Zen Buddhism, just that the attitude toward sensual desires and attachments is different, and that Buddha himself warned many many times that only trouble and suffering comes from indulging the senses. He was very clear about that, in the Pali texts...

On most things there is agreement, but Zen and Theravada part ways on this topic, in my opinion. Ikkyu believed he was fully enlightened, an arahant. Theravadans would say, "not yet." Freedom from craving is the crucial factor, where conceptions differ. Until we leave behind our sensual desires (no longer indulge in them), we are not yet enlightened or free.

This is not so much a statement of moral judgment as an observation of cause and effect. Feeding desires leads to suffering. Did Buddha teach this, or not? I think that's the crucial question.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arhat>

Ikkyu's enlightenment verse:

For twenty years I was in turmoil  
Seething and angry, but now my time has come!  
The crow laughs, an arhat emerges from the filth,  
And in the sunlight a jade beauty sings!

~Ikkyu

From the Dhammapada...

16. Pleasure

Do not let pleasure distract you  
 From meditation, from the way.  
 Free yourself from pleasure and pain.  
 For in craving pleasure or in nursing pain  
 There is only sorrow.  
 Like nothing lest you lose it,  
 Lest it bring you grief and fear.  
 Go beyond likes and dislikes.

From passion and desire,  
 Sensuousness and lust,  
 Arise grief and fear.  
 Free yourself from attachment.

He is pure, and sees.  
 He speaks the truth, and lives it.  
 He does his own work.  
 So he is admired and loved.

With a determined mind and undesiring heart  
 He longs for freedom.  
 He is called uddhamsoto -  
 "He who goes upstream."

Buddha  
 The Dhammapada

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by So-on Mann** on Tue Aug 10, 2010 11:51 pm

Was Ikkyu "indulging"? Was Vimilakirti?

Which I believe is beside the point, because Ikkyu and his view are quite the minority in Zen.  
 Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

by **Christopher** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 8:53 am

This is all very nice, and might even be relevant if we were talking about an otherwise normal Zen master who happened to like sex a lot.

Chris: the reason I found your suggestion so awful is because, first, this isn't about sex at all (or at least not for the most part), and secondly because asking Eido what he thinks is clearly hopelessly naïve. The man has obviously been lying to everyone for FORTY YEARS.

By the way, since we're all airing our dirty laundry about Eido, I'd like to publicly point out what I personally found the most contemptuous about the man. I was thankfully never his student, so was spared any direct emotional harm, but I'll never forget the rage I felt when I opened up one of his books and read how "Eido Roshi was Soen Roshi's principal Dharma successor." This statement stinks to high heaven on so many levels, not the least of which because it is clearly an opinion that was held by noone except Eido himself.

Christopher

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by **christopher:::** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 11:14 am

I hear you, Chris. But Shimano was not the only one who was lying to everyone for forty years...

Just re-reading Robin Westen's story and YES... i agree, it's understandable that people reach for words like psychopath to explain this behavior. We could also use words like charlatan, con-man, sex addict and fraud.

Certain Japanese Zen cultural attitudes such as i've mentioned also played a part (imo) BUT none of these alone help to explain how this situation could have continued on and on for so many years. Why the cover-ups? Why was he allowed to stay in his position? Why were so many other Zen masters and teachers apathetic? Did people really believe that by keeping this secret about Shimano they were protecting Zen?

The points I was raising in regards to Ikkyu are irrelevant to most of these questions, except when used as an excuse (see bolded area below). It's a very tragic story, how so many people were harmed while the Roshi's behavior was ignored, left to fester or hushed up.

excerpt:

Fed up with Eido's activities and the apparent apathy of the other Zen masters, Nora started her own zendo in a loft in Chelsea. About 25 members defected to the alternative center, some to other Zen Groups in the city, and others dropped out of the practice completely.

To the outside world, Eido Roshi remained an influential figure, his reputation unmarred. In a few months, the New York Zendo, emptied of half of its members, resumed normal operations, and enrollment began to increase once again. In 1977 The New York Times Magazine published its cover piece on Eido and Dai Bosatsu. In a short time, the Zendo was once again filled to capacity.

Nora explained why Eido's activities were not publicized. "When this thing was first brought out in the open among us, I was as hotheaded a revolutionary as anyone, I wanted to picket the place, expose him in *The Village Voice*, or maybe something classier than that. But I didn't do any of it. Don't get me wrong, the fact is I think the sex thing is just the tip of the iceberg. I suspect he's crazy, truly crazy. I've seen him manipulate people in every possible way—sex is just one. But on the other hand, he's not like some swami or something where they're having scandals every five minutes. Zen Buddhism is very, very respectable. This is so unheard of. This guy is such an oddball in the Zen establishment. If we let outsiders know about Eido, it would be the end. Why ruin Zen in America?"

While cleaning the dormitory rooms of the Catskill monastery, a monk discovered the diaries of a woman I'll call Laurel Sloane. She had left the monastery in a hurry. The diaries explicitly described her encounters with Eido. Xxxxx Xxxxx and others asked her to bring the diaries to the attention of the board of trustees of the Zen Studies Society. She agreed, a storm ensued, but shortly afterward the commotion was calmed. The force behind the cover-up was Sylvan Busch, then vice-president of the Zen Studies Society, and now president. He has been with Eido for over 15 years.

In 1980, it was reported by a woman who regularly attends sesshins at DBZ that Eido had become romantically involved with a female monk named Xxxxxxx. A former student, who asked to remain anonymous, said, "I don't know what he could have done to Xxxxxxx in just two years. When she first came to DBZ, she was really attractive and vibrant. She had a terrific smile and lots of enthusiasm. I remember thinking her red hair was fabulous. Of course, she shaved her head, but after her affair with Eido it grew back thin and gray. Her teeth looked rotted and her face drawn and lifeless as though she had aged 20 years."

Norman Hoeberg, Zenji or teacher of the Washington, D.C. Zendo ( a satellite of the New York Zendo). explained how the situation appears from the Zen master's point of view. Six feet four, and by his own admission somewhat lacking in physical grace, Norman almost filled my small office when he came to talk about Eido.

"He is my teacher and my Zen master," he began in a rush. "I am his student and his disciple. And all of these stories... well, because of what he is and of what I am, I must



give him leeway in the dokusan room. But I will admit, I don't know where his head is at. He is a mystery to me. Really a mystery. From your point of view he's seduced and destroyed women. But he's also destroyed men, not through sexual manipulation but by power manipulation. I heard him arguing very loudly with a young man once. And then the young man went off and killed himself.

“In his presence a woman fears physical rape—maybe. A man is spiritually raped with subtle mind control. But, you know, when a woman comes to see me in my dokusan room, and it's dark and quiet, and you know for certain that no one will come to interrupt you—and all that makes for intimacy. And this woman, she might be feeling desperate about her private life, about her marriage, maybe, or about her boyfriend—or not having a boyfriend—or whatever. And she's come to me for answers. It's like being asked to play God. She's come to me for spiritual guidance, and you want to know how I feel? I feel a sense of vulnerability about her. It's like an atmosphere you can almost take hold of. And you look at this woman across the floor from you and what she's brought with her—and it's like a presence between you—and I tell you, you want to push it aside, and if you're not careful, you can find yourself taking advantage of her.

Maureen Friedgood, president of the Cambridge Buddhist Association and a one-time student of Eido's, shared none of Norman's empathy. “It seems Eido has a terrible problem. I tried hard to defend him all these years because in many ways he's such a gifted teacher. I hoped he would outgrow this. But he's still behaving like an adolescent boy. He just can't resist.

Maureen Friedgood remained loyal for over 20 years but now she refuses to go back and warns her students about Eido's conduct. “It's just dreadful,” she said. “I and many people feel Soen Roshi should have recalled Eido to Japan and sent somebody to take his place. It's very upsetting and very bad for Zen in America.”

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I had heard, during my interviews, that Soen Roshi was returning to the United States for the first time in seven years. I sent a certified letter to both the New York City Zendo and Dai Bosatsu. I described the incident that had taken place with Eido at the New York Zendo, and the numerous interviews with other women who had experienced similar situations.

One week later, I received a call from Soen Roshi, who was at Dai Bosatsu. We agreed to meet in a few days at the Catskill monastery. I had reason to change our appointment, and when I phoned back my call was intercepted by Mark Uretsky, the office manager. “The situation is this,” he said. “Soen Roshi is not available. In order to be reached, he has to be reached through Eido Roshi, who is in New York City, but will be returning in two days [the very day Soen and I had scheduled our meeting]. The way we're working it now is that I'll leave a note with Eido Roshi describing your interest in speaking with Soen Roshi.”

I asked if he would also leave a note for Soen to let him know I had called.

“Soen Roshi is not available,” he repeated. “He’s only available through Eido Roshi.”

I asked if Soen was aware of this new procedure.

“Whether he’s aware of it or not is not really essential.” Mark said. “The essential fact is—if you want to reach Soen Roshi, you have to go through Eido Roshi.”

Mark told me that I should consider the fact that Soen is an old man, 75, not in the best of health, in America for the first time in many years. “Just consider these facts and then reflect on whether you’re doing, or rather Eido Roshi’s doing the right thing.”

I phoned the next day and tried again. This time I spoke with Kana, a monk who was ordained during the same sesshin I attended. Kana told me that the reason Soen Roshi was unable to speak to people was that he was no longer capable of making arrangements. He was “forgetful” and would tend to make several appointments for the same time. Or forget that he had one. “If you’ve made an appointment, don’t expect him to be here necessarily.” Kana was clearly insinuating that Soen Roshi was senile. Yet no one else I interviewed suggested that Soen had any mental problems.

Soen Roshi was the only man with the power to oust Eido, the only man with the power to send him back to Japan. It was not surprising that Eido seemed to have virtually imprisoned his own teacher—his own Zen master.

I decided to try to keep the date I had made with Soen Roshi. Before I reached the gate of Dai Bosatsu, I thought it likely I would be barred; I was not. I parked my car in front of the Monastery entrance. To my surprise, the door was open. I took off my shoes, climbed the stairs, and looked around. The monastery seemed to be inhabited by silence. I walked slowly toward the tea room. On the threshold, I paused, looked in, and saw a frail, elderly man, dressed in a peach colored robe, with a sleepy-looking face, but with lucid and alert eyes. I entered and bowed respectfully. He returned my bow. and reached

Soen suggested we share tea before beginning our discussion. An elaborate tea setting had already been prepared, and I watched silently as he whipped the green tea, steeped it, and then poured it into ceramic cups. He spoke about the origin of the tea and the little baked delicacies, also brought with him from his native country. Finally, Soen looked up from his tea and said, “We must begin now. This is a very serious matter.”

I took out my notes and tapes and spread them across the low table. I spoke softly. I told him about my experience in the dokusan room during sesshin. I told him how Eido insisted I had kensho. I told him about the follow-up attack at the New York Zendo. I explained that when I confronted Eido on the telephone about these events, and about the other women who said they shared similar experiences, Eido’s response was, “Don’t speak about them. They were different. You are the only one who has experienced kensho.”

Soen fixed me with his eyes and we sat staring at each other. Silence returned to the monastery. Finally he spoke: "This is a grave matter. Very grave. I showed Eido the letter you sent here last week. I asked him for an explanation. He gave me one, but it was not satisfactory. He is a liar."

Again we stared at each other in silence. It was Soen Roshi who broke it.

"Somehow Eido has left. He must still not have an answer."

I looked hard at Soen, trying to fathom him. I failed. His gaze was impenetrable.

When he spoke again his lips scarcely moved. "This problem happened almost seven years ago when Dai Boastsu was to officially open. Now it is happening again. The responsibility is clearly mine." He paused again. "It is a grave matter."

I reminded him that in my letter I had asked for a "turning word." (In Zen, a "turning word" is the essential factor that will alter a situation.)

He seemed surprised. "today?" But he did promise to have one for me on the following day. He said he needed to consult with George Zournas, president of the Zen Studies Society, an old and respected friend.

That evening I had a long telephone conversation with George. "Well, in the whole history of Zen," he said, "there have been those outrageous monks who do things that are very difficult for people to understand. My position through out all this is that I'm in no position to judge. At Theatre Arts Books, we publish Stanislavsky. And when things like this were brought to him, he said, "You know, I have so much to do, working on my own character, that I don't feel I can judge anyone else.

"The fact is, it may appear that some people have been injured by him, but to balance this, many have nicely benefited. For myself, I just don't choose to play God and balance things out. There's these 50 pounds to advantage and these 60 pounds to disadvantage, so he's 10 pounds in the red! I think when we begin judging other people in this area, we are treading on dangerous ground. Because none of us know really what's in the mind of any of us involved in this.

Maybe in his lifetime, maybe in the next, there will be certain consequences he will endure."

The following week George Zournas, president of the Zen Studies Society for 15 years, resigned.

The next morning the phone rang. I was certain it was Soen Roshi with the "turning word." But it was David Schnyer, resident director of Dai Bosatsu, Eido's right-hand monk and member of the board of trustees. David told me he was acting as Soen Roshi's

secretary. He said that any further communication at this time would be best dealt with through their lawyer. “Soen,” he said, “is requesting that you do not call again.”

David insisted again and again that these were Soen’s own words. But according to Frank Locicero, a tax auditor at the Internal Revenue Service and a board member of the Zen Studies Society, David was merely following Eido’s orders. Frank had heard of my investigation from George, and called to help me a week after my talk with David. “David Schnyer is lying,” he said. “It’s just more manipulation by Eido. David probably doesn’t even know the truth about what’s going on.”

Frank was the first to volunteer aggressively to help expose Eido—publicly. He promised to give me a copy of a letter written to the board by George Zournas, with Zournas’s permission.

The following is an excerpt: “Until her resignation in the wake of Eido Roshi’s 1975 sex scandals, one of the most active Trustees of the Society was Margot Wilkie. She is from the world of the trustees of the great charitable foundations of Asia Society and such. Our friendship continues and at her dinner parties I meet many of these powerful people—some of whom have contributed to our work in the past. When I am introduced as President of the Zen Studies Society and the connection with Dai Bosatsu and Eido Roshi is established, we are regaled with such remarks as, ‘How is the horny old pasha and his harem up there in the mountains?’ Or, ‘Boy, is that the kind of spiritual exercise I’d like to be doing.’ Of course such people have no intention of making contributions to support such activity. We have applied to some of the foundations these people control for additional grants—their reply is that their interest has shifted to other areas—they have nothing for us.

“This has become so serious that for the last ten years the Society has been running on money contributed to us by a convicted felon. We have been functioning on money that he obtained from selling illegal drugs!”

“For many years various members of the Board have protested the fact that Aiho, Eido’s wife, was also Treasurer of the society. They found this totally unacceptable, but Sylvan Busch and I were able to quiet their complaints. But this question is made even more serious by Sylvan’s statement that for many years the Shimanos [Eido’s legal surname] did not file income tax reports. Why? If this is true, this is one more example of the Buddha Dharma and the Society displayed by the Chairman of the Board and its Treasurer. Had such a story reached the newspapers it would really have finished us off.”

Robin Westen

Zen and the Art of Seduction

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Shonin** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 12:13 pm

It's a saddening story. This is what happens when you create a situation with such a great power difference between student and teacher. Traditional Zen is very hierarchical.

"I'm in no position to judge." I have heard that one before.

Students willingly suppress their discretion, their independence of thought, their power because they believe it makes them more 'Zen' to do so. Such things are criticised into submission as 'ego'. Such arrogance. And it should be clear by now that Zen teachers are not perfect. It's a situation ripe for abuse.  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

by **Shonin** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 12:41 pm

The situation is not dissimilar to that of abuse cases within psychotherapy. We need to drop our idealised notions about 'Zen masters'. There needs to be a student-teacher charter. There needs to be transparency and independent complaints processes.  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

by **Shonin** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 1:39 pm

It's cases like this that make me wary of the kind of submission required by teachers of their students in some Zen institutions. I'm talking about the pedestal that teachers are put on, with students required to bow or prostrate themselves before the teacher - perhaps publicly - before asking a question; high-status students sitting with the teacher, and being served first at meal times and the rhetoric of submission whereby disagreement is sometimes devalued and dismissed as 'ego', and monks and nuns being given menial, sometimes meaningless tasks to do in the name of 'not having preferences'. I wonder how much this kind of thing really has to do with dharma, whether it actually helps anyone to wake up and how much it has to do with maintaining authority. And I wonder even more

how much it enables abuse (physical and mental) when the wrong person is in charge. For example, I recall a story from one of his senior disciples about a certain Japanese Zen teacher who commanded a student to do prostrations. The student refused and the Zen teacher struck him on the head with the keisaku, drawing blood. The student left and never returned.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by **christopher:::** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 3:24 pm

Shonin wrote:

It's cases like this that make me wary of the kind of submission required by teachers of their students in some Zen institutions. I'm talking about the pedestal that teachers are put on, with students required to bow or prostrate themselves before the teacher - perhaps publicly - before asking a question; high-status students sitting with the teacher, and being served first at meal times and the rhetoric of submission whereby disagreement is sometimes devalued and dismissed as 'ego', and monks and nuns being given menial, sometimes meaningless tasks to do in the name of 'not having preferences'. I wonder how much this kind of thing really has to do with dharma, whether it actually helps anyone to wake up and how much it has to do with maintaining authority. And I wonder even more how much it enables abuse (physical and mental) when the wrong person is in charge...

As mentioned earlier, Stuart Lachs has raised similar points, which (whether one agrees or disagrees with) are well worth thinking about and considering....

Coming Down from the Zen Clouds: A Critique of the Current State of American Zen

and...

The Zen Master in America: Dressing the Donkey with Bells and Scarves

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **PeterB** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 4:29 pm

I dont think that the Theravadin view of sexuality differs in any great regard.

The Buddha lived a particular way because that was expected of spiritual teachers in Ancient Bharat in 2500 BC.

In many ways actually he was quite the radical.

Among the monastics the Precepts are frequently observed in the breach thereof.

Among the laity the precepts all of them are rules for training not commandments. It doesn't take Freud to figure out if sexual expression is based on mutual respect or not.

And that's the basic criterion.

What I am saying laboriously is that this situation is paralleled in the Theravada...in every regard.

PeterB

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by **Shonin** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 4:38 pm

christopher::: wrote:

As mentioned earlier, Stuart Lachs has raised similar points, which (whether one agrees or disagrees with) are well worth thinking about and considering....

Thanks for the reminder. I've read some of the latter before.

At it's worst the situation in some Zen organisation resembles a cult (psycho-socially) at least at times.

I think we can learn from this. We don't need to leave the traditional ways unchanged and unchallenged. We don't need to imitate unquestioningly.

From what I understand of it, I respect the work that my teacher and others in the Zen Studies Society are doing in terms of reconciliation and reform.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

by **Seigen** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 6:08 pm

From Grace Schireson, Zen Women: Beyond Tea Ladies, Iron Maidens and Macho Masters (p. 87):

Some women have expressed that being a practitioner at a coed Western Zen Center is the first time they have been in a group where they feel safe to make eye contact with men that they do not know without fear of sexual advances.

Very much worth bringing attention to.

With palms together, Seigen  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Jok\_Hae** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 6:44 pm

Shonin wrote:

At it's worst the situation in some Zen organisation resembles a cult (psycho-socially) at least at times

Name one religion that doesn't. Let's face it, organized religion isn't for everyone. All religions have within their groups people who behave inappropriately. All religions have their share of bowing, lowering the head, respect for teacher/priest/pastor etc. I would think this is hardly a Zen specific issue. Far from it. If we are to say the system is at fault, then organized religion, in any sense, should be abolished. There are people who think that way and that's ok.

These kinds of situations cause reflection and hopefully some action in avoiding future practitioners from being abused. Of course it would be better not to have it happen in the first place. But, imho, this is a problem in all of organized religions, not just Zen.

BTW, my response is a general one, not directed to you personally Shonin.  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Shonin** on Wed Aug 11, 2010 6:59 pm

Jok\_Hae wrote:

I would think this is hardly a Zen specific issue.

I didn't say it was. The Catholic Church for example has significantly bigger problems. But that is not a reason to be complacent or refuse to learn.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher



North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

**by misanoel** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 2:04 am

If, has has been suggested, this has gone on for 40 years, I have to ask why the Zen leadership not only allowed it, but apparently assisted in the cover-up, provided a safe-haven for these goings-on, and even financially supported the perpetrator. Several forum members have announced that THEIR temples run a tighter ship. Is the fact that the "Zen Police" are watching supposed to convince us that we should hereafter trust that these priests and teachers put the welfare of their students above their own? I'm sure you would hear the same from Warren Jeffers and his followers.

Perhaps the only thing worse than literally screwing your students is leading them to believe that sitting on a cushion for X number of hours per day ad nauseum is the most profound and morally forthright way for one to live one's (probably) sole human incarnation. Much better to go to the zendo every night than help your wife with the dishes and give your two-year-old a bath, let alone volunteer mowing lawns for old folks or work at the food bank. No, far better to sit. Just sit, and the more you do, the more you're convinced that you and everyone else should just sit.

Gosh, what if we could get all 7 billion of us on the planet to "just sit", as many hours a day as possible. Wouldn't the Meditation Journal be a cluster-\*\*\*\*!! Far better to sit than plant your seeds, weed your garden, harvest your crops, cook your produce, teach your children. Don't even worry about milking goats, collecting eggs, or butchering (yes, the scandalous butchering!) because we're all vegan, and we just buy our fermented soybeans at the local grocery!

Moreover, we have endured the "transmission" discussion on another thread, wherein transmission seems loosely defined as familiarity with the history and principles of Zen and the receipt of a robe and bowl. What that has to do with enlightenment, moral rectitude, or even being a decent human being is beyond me.

Yet time and time again, whenever something is posted here that questions the very status quo that Zen reputedly questions, the inquiry is met with retorts such as "You know nothing of Zen" or "anyone can post anything on the internet" or a \*sigh\* or an icon depicting rolling eyes or a some equally defensive/passive-aggressive (or just plain aggressive) device intended to drive away the demon of inquiry.

misanoel

by **Dan74** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 2:54 am

I was never encouraged to practice like this, misanoel.

Do you see an instance when a Zen teacher encouraged a student to neglect his/her responsibilities, forgo any involvement in community work and just sit?

Sure there are times when sitting can lead to a break-through and the person will be much better equipped to help others. Indeed the Buddha saw it fit to leave his family and forgo his responsibilities as a prince and a householder in order to seek. And I am happy that he did.

Maybe there is a point to be made that practice is not for ourselves and often to realize that we need to get of the cushions and practice being the best father/husband/teacher/volunteer I can be. Then again, cushion time may a good way to pull it all together and ask who's actually doing all that? And for what purpose?

Especially if none of it is actually the way it seems...

Dan74

by **hungryghost** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 3:48 am

misanoel wrote:

If, has has been suggested, this has gone on for 40 years, I have to ask why the Zen leadership not only allowed it, but apparently assisted in the cover-up, provided a safe-haven for these goings-on, and even financially supported the perpetrator. Several forum members have announced that THEIR temples run a tighter ship. Is the fact that the "Zen Police" are watching supposed to convince us that we should hereafter trust that these priests and teachers put the welfare of their students above their own? I'm sure you would hear the same from Warren Jeffers and his followers.

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Yet time and time again, whenever something is posted here that questions the very status quo that Zen reputedly questions, the inquiry is met with retorts such as "You know nothing of Zen" or "anyone can post anything on the internet" or a \*sigh\* or an icon depicting rolling eyes or a some equally defensive/passive-aggressive (or just plain aggressive) device intended to drive away the demon of inquiry.

Your first paragraph seems to suggest that there is some form of overall "zen leadership" in the united states that helped perpetrate this man's BS. I'm not sure where you get that idea from. As far as all the "planting seeds, weeding the garden, helping the neighbors stuff, the people I know who are longtime dedicated zen practitioners do all of those things too...so I guess I'm not sure what your trying to communicate. But enough about you, and enough about everyone else..let me share my experience with zen. 5 years ago I was a homeless heroin addict who stole from my closest friends and family, did unspeakable immoral actions make mr shimano's hijinks look like kiddie stuff. I was most definately insane and had little hope for survival. I cannot express my gratitude enough for the causes and conditions that led me to getting a little break from all of that...a breather. During that breather, I happened to discover zen buddhism. I've done zazen daily since then and I practice with a teacher who is a priest. He is probably the most ethically grounded person I've ever met. I can be a functioning member of society today and I can even help out a fellow suffering being. And sometimes the universe shines a little light on me and I can see just how precious and majestic everything is. There is not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that without daily sitting..lots of it...and a good teacher not only would life suck pretty bad, I would be worse than useless and probably dead. Eido and others who have f-ed up should not ever be taken as an example of what zen buddhism is. I'll stop rambling now...

hungryghost

by **Dan74** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 3:51 am

Thank you for your post, hungryghost.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Seigen** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 3:55 am

hungryghost, thank you, thank you, thank you! and grinning past my own ears with joy!  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Linda Anderson** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 4:30 am

Thanks Hungry Ghost

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by So-on Mann** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 8:53 am

HG  
Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by Luzdelaluna** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 12:52 pm

Thanks for sharing that, HG.

The ultimate Truth is beyond words. Doctrines are words. They're not the Way. The Way is wordless. Words are illusions. Freeing oneself from words is liberation.  
Bodhidharma

Luzdelaluna

by **Carol** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 1:56 pm

HG -- Thank you. And you are right, what Eido Shimano did is not representative of Zen or Zen teachers and should not be mistaken for that.

Many blessings and bows!

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Hosho** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 6:31 pm

Carol wrote:

what Eido Shimano did is not representative of Zen or Zen teachers and should not be mistaken for that.

Dear Carol -- I think we can all understand the sentiments behind what you say here. The reality however is that Eido Shimano's actions do depict a facet of Zen and Zen teachers as they exist today. It is important to accept this reality.

It is understood that we might wish to separate ourselves from that which depicts us unfavorably. But to find true Peace and Ease we must accept our faults, even if it is uncomfortable.

May Peace prevail.  
zenease

Hosho  
Banned

by **Carol** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 6:43 pm

Hosho wrote:

Carol wrote:

what Eido Shimano did is not representative of Zen or Zen teachers and should not be mistaken for that.

Dear Carol -- I think we can all understand the sentiments behind what you say here. The reality however is that Eido Shimano's actions do depict a facet of Zen and Zen teachers as they exist today. It is important to accept this reality.

It is understood that we might wish to separate ourselves from that which depicts us unfavorably. But to find true Peace and Ease we must accept our faults, even if it is uncomfortable.

May Peace prevail.

You are right that Eido Shimano's actions are an uncomfortable fact -- one that needs to be dealt with honestly and openly. But, based on my experience with zen practice and a number of zen teachers (some of whom have f-ed up) I agree with hungryghost that "Eido and others who have f-ed up should not ever be taken as an example of what zen buddhism is."

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Jok\_Hae** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 7:42 pm

Hosho wrote:

The reality however is that Eido Shimano's actions do depict a facet of Zen and Zen teachers as they exist today

I might reword that a bit that to say Shimano's actions depict a facet of human beings behavior, as it exists today. If one is inclined, I suppose it can be just a Zen thing. But, that is very narrow-minded, in my view. People use positions of power to take advantage of others in all walks of life.

One little fly in the ointment of all this is that how can a supposedly enlightened teacher can do something like this? It does call into question, quite fairly imho, the notion of enlightenment we are taught in Zen Buddhism. I'll still keep practicing, but this has been a nagging doubt for me.

Keith  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

by **Hosho** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 8:10 pm

Carol wrote:

I agree with hungryghost that "Eido and others who have f-ed up should not ever be taken as an example of what zen buddhism is."

As uncomfortable a fact as it may be for some, Eido and others who have made mistakes are examples of what Zen Buddhism is today, and their actions effect what "Zen Buddhism" means today. You can deny this and even advise others to never associate bad actions with Zen Buddhism, but it will be an exercise in futility and delusion. Associations are not formed in an entirely rational or conscious way.

I do not mean to diminish the meaning of anything that hungryghost has shared, quite the contrary. We best honor something by speaking the truth of it.

May Peace prevail.  
zensease

Hosho  
Banned

by **Carol** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 8:25 pm

We see it differently, based on our differing experiences. That is natural, there are many perspectives. We each speak our truth as we see it, and can do that without dishonoring the truth others see.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Nonin** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 9:14 pm

Hosho wrote:  
Carol wrote:

what Eido Shimano did is not representative of Zen or Zen teachers and should not be mistaken for that.

Dear Carol -- I think we can all understand the sentiments behind what you say here. The reality however is that Eido Shimano's actions do depict a facet of Zen and Zen teachers as they exist today. It is important to accept this reality.

Hosho,

What you say is your view only and is not indicative of any reality other than your own. I support what Carol has said 100%. Eido Shimano's behavior is not representative of the behavior of the overwhelming majority of Zen Buddhist teachers, nor is it in any way a "facet" of Zen Buddhism in general or the ethical practices of its practitioners. You are condemning the many for the actions of a very few.

Hands j palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by dennis60** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 9:58 pm

Hosho is correct in saying that Zen Buddhism has been given a reputation of dubious character because of the mistakes made by Eido, and many other teachers and roshis in leadership roles ( San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC) and the Kwan Um School of Zen ). The acts have been committed and it has been all over the news in America. It would be surprising that anyone who is interested in Zen practice is unaware of this huge problem. As she says, "As uncomfortable a fact as it may be for some, Eido and others who have made mistakes are examples of what Zen Buddhism is today, and their actions effect what "Zen Buddhism" means today. You can deny this and even advise others to never associate bad actions with Zen Buddhism, but it will be an exercise in futility and delusion. Associations are not formed in an entirely rational or conscious way." This is the truth, and it can not be denied. It is what people remember about leaders, just like Tiger Woods.

dennis



dennis60

by **Hosho** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 10:30 pm

Dear Nonin -- What very little I've stated has been grossly misinterpreted. I will attempt to clarify what I've said in responding to you so that you and Carol may better understand.

What you say is your view only and is not indicative of any reality other than your own.

My view of "Zen Buddhism" in general is partly shaped by Eido Shimano and others who have engaged morally questionable activities. It is also shaped by many other people who behave quite consistently with Zen Buddhist precepts.

I support what Carol has said 100%. Eido Shimano's behavior is not representative of the behavior of the overwhelming majority of Zen Buddhist teachers ...

Of course it is not my friend. I did not say that it was. In your saying "majority" we are quite in agreement that it does represent some minority. I've only advised that it may be unwise to deny this minority.

... nor is it in any way a "facet" of Zen Buddhism in general or the ethical practices of its practitioners.

Even if we have the capacity in ourselves to completely disassociate Eido and his actions from Zen Buddhism as it is known today we cannot do this for everyone who knows of him and his actions. Eido Shimano has been an influential figure in Zen Buddhism and his actions effect, to some degree, the general perception of Zen Buddhism, effect what Zen Buddhism means. I don't like this any more than you do but it is something that we must accept.

You are condemning the many for the actions of a very few.

I hope it is clear at this point how inappropriate this assertion is.

Be well my friend.  
zenease

Hosho  
Banned

by **Nonin** on Fri Aug 13, 2010 11:48 pm

dennis60 wrote:

Hosho is correct in saying that Zen Buddhism has been given a reputation of dubious character because of the mistakes made by Eido, and many other teachers and roshis in leadership roles ( San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC) and the Kwan Um School of Zen ). The acts have been committed and it has been all over the news in America. It would be surprising that anyone who is interested in Zen practice is unaware of this huge problem. As she says, "As uncomfortable a fact as it may be for some, Eido and others who have made mistakes are examples of what Zen Buddhism is today, and their actions effect what "Zen Buddhism" means today. You can deny this and even advise others to never associate bad actions with Zen Buddhism, but it will be an exercise in futility and delusion. Associations are not formed in an entirely rational or conscious way." This is the truth, and it can not be denied. It is what people remember about leaders, just like Tiger Woods.

dennis

dennis,

You said in reference to sexual misconduct by Zen Buddhist teachers:

It would be surprising that anyone who is interested in Zen practice is unaware of this huge problem.

It is not a "huge problem" to people who practice Zen Buddhism, but I can see how it would be considered so by people on the outside who like to point fingers at the few and say, "See, the whole system is corrupt."

Those of us who are interested enough in Zen Buddhism to actually practice it and teach it regard individual ethical transgressions as personal failures, by both Zen teachers and Zen students, whatever the transgression may be. We are also committed to helping heal both harmer and harmed in all situations so that they both can be restored to active and productive roles in the Zen Buddhist community rather than be shunned as either pariahs or trouble-makers by the self-righteous and vindictive.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **Nonin** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 12:01 am

Hosho wrote:

Dear Nonin -- What very little I've stated has been grossly misinterpreted. I will attempt to clarify what I've said in responding to you so that you and Carol may better understand.

Hosho,

I have understood perfectly what you have said on this matter. I can't speak for Carol, but her remarks show me that she has understood perfectly also. You are condescendingly blaming our disagreement with what you said on our inability to understand you.

You said that:

The reality however is that Eido Shimano's actions do depict a facet of Zen and Zen teachers as they exist today. It is important to accept this reality.

I strongly disagree, as Carol did when she said that:

What Eido Shimano did is not representative of Zen or Zen teachers and should not be mistaken for that.

You also said that

Eido and others who have made mistakes are examples of what Zen Buddhism is today, and their actions effect what "Zen Buddhism" means today.

This may appear to be so by people on the outside who know nothing about what Zen Buddhism is today and who like to point fingers at the few and regard their actions as indications that the whole tradition is corrupt. Those of us who actually practice and teach Zen Buddhism know better.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

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Nonin

by **Hosho** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 12:11 am

Nonin wrote:  
dennis,

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It would be surprising that anyone who is interested in Zen practice is unaware of this huge problem.

It is not a "huge problem" to people who practice Zen Buddhism, but I can see how it would be considered so by people on the outside who like to point fingers at the few and say, "See, the whole system is corrupt."

Those of us who are interested enough in Zen Buddhism to actually practice it and teach it regard individual ethical transgressions as personal failures, by both Zen teachers and Zen students, whatever the transgression may be. We are also committed to helping heal both harmer and harmed in all situations so that they both can be restored to active and productive roles in the Zen Buddhist community rather than be shunned as either pariahs or trouble-makers by the self-righteous and vindictive.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Well said Nonin. I would only add that the "self-righteous and vindictive" are not excluded from our help, when welcome and appropriate.

Blessings.  
zenease

Hosho  
Banned

by **Nonin** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 12:13 am

Jok\_Hae wrote:

One little fly in the ointment of all this is that how can a supposedly enlightened teacher can do something like this? It does call into question, quite fairly imho, the notion of

enlightenment we are taught in Zen Buddhism. I'll still keep practicing, but this has been a nagging doubt for me.

Keith,

This statement by Kosho Uchiyama-roshi is pertinent here:

There are no enlightened beings, only enlightened activity.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

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Nonin

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 12:16 am

dennis60 wrote:

Hosho is correct in saying that Zen Buddhism has been given a reputation of dubious character because of the mistakes made by Eido, and many other teachers and roshis in leadership roles ( San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC) and the Kwan Um School of Zen ). The acts have been committed and it has been all over the news in America. It would be surprising that anyone who is interested in Zen practice is unaware of this huge problem. As she says, "As uncomfortable a fact as it may be for some, Eido and others who have made mistakes are examples of what Zen Buddhism is today, and their actions effect what "Zen Buddhism" means today. You can deny this and even advise others to never associate bad actions with Zen Buddhism, but it will be an exercise in futility and delusion. Associations are not formed in an entirely rational or conscious way." This is the truth, and it can not be denied. It is what people remember about leaders, just like Tiger Woods.

dennis

Hi Dennis60,

Has anyone here denied the truth? I have been told point blank the truth about what happened at Kwan Um by people who were around when this happened. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is hidden. A "huge problem"? Sorry Dennis, while it is definitely a

huge problem for the people affected, to say this situation is some kind of widespread occurrence is nonsense.

And for the record, one of the people affected by this in my Sangha is now the head person of our organization and I recently heard an inspiring talk given by her at our Founders Day celebration, which celebrates the life and teaching of ZM Seung Sahn. All sex is not the same. I am not suggesting this kind of behavior is acceptable, but Kwan Um Zen has adjusted and moved on.

Of course, you are entitled to your opinion. But vast generalizations are very rarely helpful.

K

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 12:18 am

Nonin wrote:

Jok\_Hae wrote:

One little fly in the ointment of all this is that how can a supposedly enlightened teacher can do something like this? It does call into question, quite fairly imho, the notion of enlightenment we are taught in Zen Buddhism. I'll still keep practicing, but this has been a nagging doubt for me.

Keith,

This statement by Kosho Uchiyama-roshi is pertinent here:

There are no enlightened beings, only enlightened activity.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Thanks Rev. Nonin. I let that one sink in for a bit.

Keith

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

by **Nonin** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 12:31 am

Hosho wrote:

Nonin wrote:

dennis,

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It would be surprising that anyone who is interested in Zen practice is unaware of this huge problem.

It is not a "huge problem" to people who practice Zen Buddhism, but I can see how it would be considered so by people on the outside who like to point fingers at the few and say, "See, the whole system is corrupt."

Those of us who are interested enough in Zen Buddhism to actually practice it and teach it regard individual ethical transgressions as personal failures, by both Zen teachers and Zen students, whatever the transgression may be. We are also committed to helping heal both harmer and harmed in all situations so that they both can be restored to active and productive roles in the Zen Buddhist community rather than be shunned as either pariahs or trouble-makers by the self-righteous and vindictive.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Well said Nonin. I would only add that the "self-righteous and vindictive" are not excluded from our help, when welcome and appropriate.

Blessings.

That's what I'm trying to do.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by christopher::: on Sat Aug 14, 2010 12:43 am

It's unfair to judge Zen Buddhism based on the actions of a few troubled individuals. But in a sense it does make sense (imo) to speak of "facets" of organized Buddhism that are worth scrutiny. In line with what Keith and Shonin have mentioned, these incidents raise questions about what is enlightenment and who is an enlightened teacher. They also point to problems that have existed (and are currently being addressed, as Nonin sensei has pointed out) with quality control, having mechanisms in place to weed out (and assist) teachers who still have significant fetters to unravel and should not be considered enlightened.

These problems are not Zen specific, but they do come with any formal organizational situation where assumptions are made that people at higher levels of "status" possess the corresponding skills that their titles suggest. What are the characteristics of an enlightened dharma teacher? This is an important question, imo, in all schools of Buddhism.

The tragedy/lesson of Shimano and others (in all schools and spiritual traditions) is that mastering the dharma is very very difficult, that humans are not easily liberated from their desires and attachments. And that until we are we will continue to suffer and create problems for ourselves, we still have work to do.

This is Buddhism 101, in a sense. Buddha warned of this early on. The answers we seek can be found in the dharma and its successful practice.

Rev. Nonin just hit the nail on the head, here, imo...

Nonin wrote:

This statement by Kosho Uchiyama-roshi is pertinent here:

There are no enlightened beings, only enlightened activity.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Dhammapada

18. Impurity

You are the lamp  
To lighten the way.  
Then hurry, hurry.  
When your light shines  
Without impurity of desire



You will come into the boundless country.

As a silversmith sifts dust from silver,  
Remove your own impurities  
Little by little.  
Or as iron is corroded by rust  
Your own mischief will consume you.

Neglected, the sacred verses rust.  
For beauty rusts without use  
And unrepaired the house falls into ruin,  
And the watch, without vigilance, fails.

In this world and the next  
There is impurity and impurity:  
When a woman lacks dignity,  
When a man lacks generosity.  
But the greatest impurity is ignorance.  
Free yourself from it.  
Be pure.

Life is easy  
For the man who is without shame,  
Impudent as a crow,  
A vicious gossip,  
Vain, meddling, dissolute.  
But life is hard  
For the man who quietly undertakes  
The way of perfection,  
With purity, detachment and vigour.  
He sees light.

If you kill, lie or steal,  
Commit adultery or drink,  
You dig up your own roots.  
And if you cannot master yourself,  
The harm you do turns against you  
Grievously.  
You may give in the spirit of light  
Or as you please,  
But if you care how another man gives  
Or how he withholds,  
You trouble your quietness endlessly.  
These envying roots!  
Destroy them  
And enjoy a lasting quietness.

There is no fire like passion.  
 There are no chains like hate.  
 Illusion is a net,  
 Desire is a rushing river.

How easy it is to see your brother's faults,  
 How hard it is to face your own.  
 You winnow his in the wind like chaff,  
 But yours you hide,  
 Like a cheat covering up an unlucky throw.  
 Dwelling on your brother's faults  
 Multiplies your own.  
 You are far from the end of your journey.

The way is not in the sky.  
 The way is in the heart.  
 See how you love  
 Whatever keeps you from your journey.

But the tathagathas,  
 "They who have gone beyond,"  
 Have conquered the world.  
 They are free.  
 The way is not in the sky.  
 The way is in the heart.

All things arise and pass away.  
 But the awakened awake forever.

~The Buddha  
 Dhammapada

Last edited by christopher::: on Sat Aug 14, 2010 1:21 am, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Hosho** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 12:55 am

Nonin wrote:

Hosho wrote:

Well said Nonin. I would only add that the "self-righteous and vindictive" are not excluded from our help, when welcome and appropriate.

Blessings.

That's what I'm trying to do.

And I thank you for your efforts. I would suggest a less alienating approach but that is just my opinion.

In peace.  
zenease

Hosho  
Banned

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 1:01 am

Christopher::: wrote:

This is Buddhism 101, in a sense. Buddha warned of this early on. The answers we seek can be found in the dharma and its successful practice.

I am reminded of something Ted B. said once. I don't remember it exactly, but something like: "The Buddha was not some guy that lived 2500 years ago". If there are "no enlightened beings only enlightened activity" then Ted's statement is another log on the fire of that idea. Hopefully, Ted will clarify this if I am way off.

I agree that we should consider your points regarding Buddhist organizations and traditions, but on a very specific, case by case basis. Unfortunately, it is much easier (and quite frankly, lazier) to just pop out uninformed generalizations.  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by dennis60** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 1:36 am

What is the sound of one hand clapping?

dennis60

**by Hosho** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 3:01 am

I agree that we should consider your points regarding Buddhist organizations and traditions, but on a very specific, case by case basis. Unfortunately, it is much easier (and quite frankly, lazier) to just pop out uninformed generalizations.

Dear Jok\_Hae -- Generalizations are unavoidable, particularly if there is little interest in the subject. It is not laziness to neglect investigating something that is of little or no interest. Also in many cases there may be a vested interest in not understanding, like racial prejudice where there may be an advantage (though immoral) in dehumanizing a race of people to secure a greater share of resources. It can take effort to be willfully ignorant and promote that ignorance.

In my experience Zen Buddhism is generally thought to be a peaceful religion and not perceived to be rampant with corruption. Statistically Zen Buddhism is not a popular religion though, practiced by only a very small percent of the global population. The vast majority of the world does not care to know more about it. The sexual affairs of a Zen master is not headline news in the U.S. That is not an expression of laziness, it's just not as relevant as other issues for most people.

May Peace prevail.  
zenezase

Hosho  
Banned

**by christopher:::** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 3:38 am

It seems worth noting that the problems within Zen Buddhism are in no way nearly as bad as what has been seen over the last few decades within the Catholic church. A similarity though is that the status of the "priest" role can provide a "cover" of sorts, for individuals who's motives do not mesh with that of the position they play. Let's hope that some of the myths that perpetrated these situations continue to be discussed and questioned.

"There are no enlightened beings only enlightened activity" provides us with an excellent starting point, for weeding out the fake and harmful from what's helpful and authentic, in my opinion. In that sense the same responsibilities, possibilities and challenges apply to everyone, equally...

There's a potential con artist within each of us, that needs to be watched carefully. The most dangerous situation is to be in denial about this, imo.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by partofit22** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 12:54 pm

saying that what mr shimano did is not a part of zen buddhism is like saying that zen buddhism is not part of being a zen buddhist- like saying there is no yolk in an egg, only the whites- anything that can happen in life can also happen while practicing zen buddhism- practicing zen buddhism doesn't inoculate a person from being human- if anything it neutralizes the shock and awe when people do what people do-  
partofit22

**by dennis60** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 1:01 pm

So-on Mann said in another thread,  
"I again quote John McRae, the scholar of ancient Zen who says the LESS true something is in a Zen story, the MORE important it is."

This is exactly what happened when I said "The acts have been committed and it has been all over the news in America. It would be surprising that anyone who is interested in Zen practice is unaware of this huge problem." It was not supposed to be a true statement. It was meant for effect. By the responses it certainly had effects. Why? Because it is very important to the people on this forum to be good people and not to be associated with a Zen center that has a nasty teacher/priest. By the reactions you can tell how self-importance plays out in one's life. To some extent the importance placed on the statement shows how much one cares about the subject, or how much one is attached to the situation. It is obvious because of the amount of posts on this subject that sexual misconduct by Zen leaders and priest's is very important to the members here. Why? In the big picture of events on this planet there are horrific events being perpetrated daily. Do we spend 24 pages of comments on them? They are not debatable. We know right away they are horrific events. When something happens in the Zen center or in an intimate setting with a Zen teacher that is abusive, it should be questioned immediately. In this case as with other cases involving sexual misconduct, there seems to be quite a bit of ambivalence. Again why? What is this fence riding, and protecting of the actions of a teacher/priest? They are no better or worse than anyone else. " The sexual misconduct of these Zen teachers was just a mechanism for them to teach the student to get beyond their constant need for self-control". See that statement is not true, or might be true for some who would puts up with this kind of behavior. It is an exaggerated statement meant to stir a reaction in those who hear it, so they are finally not ambivalent. So many Zen/Buddhist practitioners think they are supposed to act with loving kindness all the time. If they are abused they turn the other cheek (Christian contamination). If one were acting from their original nature they would say NO, stop it. That is what I am trying to get to. Let every student and teacher know that the buck stops here. They can not get away with abusive behavior. No ambivalence. I also know that the vast majority of teachers/priests are very

honorable people. It is the same with all professions. But if we fail to act on the bad apples, it could spoil the whole cart, kind of like the Catholic Church.

dennis60

by **Jok\_Hae** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 1:54 pm

Hosho wrote:

I agree that we should consider your points regarding Buddhist organizations and traditions, but on a very specific, case by case basis. Unfortunately, it is much easier (and quite frankly, lazier) to just pop out uninformed generalizations.

Dear Jok\_Hae -- Generalizations are unavoidable, particularly if there is little interest in the subject. It is not laziness to neglect investigating something that is of little or no interest. Also in many cases there may be a vested interest in not understanding, like racial prejudice where there may be an advantage (though immoral) in dehumanizing a race of people to secure a greater share of resources. It can take effort to be willfully ignorant and promote that ignorance.

In my experience Zen Buddhism is generally thought to be a peaceful religion and not perceived to be rampant with corruption. Statistically Zen Buddhism is not a popular religion though, practiced by only a very small percent of the global population. The vast majority of the world does not care to know more about it. The sexual affairs of a Zen master is not headline news in the U.S. That is not an expression of laziness, it's just not as relevant as other issues for most people.

May Peace prevail.

Hi Hosho,

Thanks for your response. As partofit22 wrote, these situations are part of Zen.

They are also part of Tibetan Buddhism.

They are also part of Theravadan Buddhism.

They are also part of school systems.

They are also part of the work place.

They are also part of political life.

They are also part of military life.

Anywhere hwere there are people who assume some kind of leadership postion, there will be abuses of that priviledge. That's not a cover-up or as Dennis has suggested, some kind of ego protection. It's just the way it is. It is then up to the organization to correct the problem, make amends to those affected and then continue to do what is supposed to do. Clearly, with Shimano situation that has yet to occur. Again, people can feel free to say it is a "huge" problem in Zen Buddhism today, but my experience, and apparently some others here, show otherwise.

Dennis wrote:

This is exactly what happened when I said "The acts have been committed and it has been all over the news in America. It would be surprising that anyone who is interested in Zen practice is unaware of this huge problem." It was not supposed to be a true statement. It was meant for effect. By the responses it certainly had effects.

Dennis, when we have a conversation here, there is the notion that we are speaking truthfully and being respectful to each other. Making a statement that one knows is untruthful and then sitting back and watching the responses is disingenuous and deceitful.

Keith

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by genkaku** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 4:17 pm

The following suggestion about Zen Studies Society was posted on my blog earlier today  
Anonymous August 14, 2010 8:12 AM

"I suggest the board set up a new section on the ZZS website and post update at the least every week. If they cannot, they should step down."

Instead of calling on the board as a group we need to call on nine individuals one by one.

The current members of the ZSS Board are:

Carl Yuho Baldini

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat

Joe Soun Dowling

Seigan Glassing

Genjo Marinello

Chris Shoteki Phelan

Randy Banko Philips

Richard Zenshin Rudin

Jim Togen Streit

Carl. Sherry. Joe. Seigan. Genjo. Chris. Randy. Richard. Jim.

You are nine individual with hearts and minds who right now hold so much influence over the destiny of not only Zen Studies Society, but of American Zen Buddhism, and American Buddhism.

Each one of you has the power and ability to influence each other.  
 Each one of you has one vote.  
 Each one of you can make a proposal and to ask that a vote be taken.  
 Each of you is responsible primarily to the sangha and of course to the Dharma.  
 Each of you has fiduciary responsibilities with respect to federal and local government.

Anyone of you who wants to clean up 45 years years of accumulated mess at Zen Studies Society MUST NOT RESIGN simply because the majority will not budge or think all they need to do is to ride out the current storm.

Even it's only one person, hopefully you can be steadfast in protecting the Dharma and do not give up. But know enough to reach out for help whether it be legal, psychological or spiritual as it is needed.

**DO NOT QUIT!**

Train harder. Study. Prepare yourself.

Know for certain that literally hundreds if not thousands of people, of bodhisattvas, are behind you!  
 genkaku

**by dennis60** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 4:22 pm

Hi Jok\_kae,

As I quoted one of the posters on this forum...."So-on Mann said in another thread, "I again quote John McRae, the scholar of ancient Zen who says the LESS true something is in a Zen story, the MORE important it is."

Plus It is embellishment, not deceitful...and can reveal in others a lack of humor....and play, where everything is so serious, and we all are telling the exact truth. which we all know is relative. When you get as old as i am, you realize it all is a big game, that lasts about the time it takes to blink. The youngsters still believe they have the real truth. That is because they need the approval of other people. In two billion years we will find out how important this all is. Or not. Lighten up.

dennis60

**by Hoshō** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 5:54 pm

Jok\_Hae wrote:



Again, people can feel free to say it is a "huge" problem in Zen Buddhism today, but my experience, and apparently some others here, show otherwise.

Dear Jok\_Hae -- I clearly stated that in my experience Zen Buddhism is "not perceived to be rampant with corruption."

Many of the frequent misunderstandings here could be avoided if we pay attention and respond to what other members have actually written.

Also I do not condone Dennis's trickery. It was disruptive and did not reveal anything that was not already quite obvious. My friend Dennis, please understand that I don't mean to offend by saying this, it is just my opinion. In the interest of peace and productive dialogue I humbly suggest that you refrain from such tactics in the future.

May Peace prevail.  
zenease

Hosho  
Banned

**by So-on Mann** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 6:29 pm

If one were acting from their original nature they would say NO, stop it. That is what I am trying to get to. Let every student and teacher know that the buck stops here. They can not get away with abusive behavior. No ambivalence. I also know that the vast majority of teachers/priests are very honorable people. It is the same with all professions. But if we fail to act on the bad apples, it could spoil the whole cart, kind of like the Catholic Church.

OK, so then we are all in agreement.  
Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann  
Global Moderator

**by dennis60** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 8:04 pm

Hosho,  
You are probably right not to use tricky tactics on the internet, like Jok-Kae says also. It is a shame we can not converse in real time face to face, because so much communication is lost with trying to convey meanings and not-meanings over the internet. That is why i

think this thread has gone on for so long. It is like trying describe how the Mona Lisa looks to a blind person. The misconduct of a few people about something so personal to us all, really screws up the flow of the relationship. It is truly a sad situation, sorry for making light of it.

dennis

dennis60

**by Hosho** on Sat Aug 14, 2010 9:26 pm

Dear Dennis -- Even through this media your good heart is apparent.

Blessings.  
zenease

Hosho  
Banned

**by Christopher** on Wed Aug 18, 2010 12:12 pm

According to the Zen Studies' Society website, Eido's staying on as abbot and another of his "dharma successors" has been appointed as vice-abbot. Incredible in every sense of the word.

Although in the meantime they've allegedly handed the case to an outside organisation, something called the "Interfaith Institute", for some reason I'm no longer hopeful. This is really troubling me.

Christopher

**by genkaku** on Wed Aug 18, 2010 1:03 pm

Christopher wrote:  
According to the Zen Studies' Society website, Eido's staying on as abbot and another of his "dharma successors" has been appointed as vice-abbot. Incredible in every sense of the word.

Although in the meantime they've allegedly handed the case to an outside organisation, something called the "Interfaith Institute", for some reason I'm no longer hopeful. This is really troubling me.

Chris -- A student once told Kyudo Roshi he was thinking of making a longish visit to Dai Bosatsu, Eido Shimano's monastery. Kyudo probably knew more about Mr. Shimano's maneuverings than you or I will know in our lifetimes. Kyudo's advice to the student was brief: "If you want to go, just go."

I'm on your team when it comes to being troubled -- a facile, superficial power-swap; a passing of responsibility to a diversionary entity -- but Kyudo's advice, however hard, sounds true.

PS. From the FaithTrust Institute's web site:

FaithTrust Institute is a national, multifaith, multicultural training and education organization with global reach working to end sexual and domestic violence.

Founded in 1977 by the Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune, FaithTrust Institute offers a wide range of services and resources, including training, consulting and educational materials. We provide communities and advocates with the tools and knowledge they need to address the religious and cultural issues related to abuse. We work with many communities, including Asian and Pacific Islander, Buddhist, Jewish, Latino/a, Muslim, Black, Anglo, Indigenous, Protestant and Roman Catholic.

This is the organization from which the ZSS board of directors has allegedly sought counsel, according to the ZSS web site. There is no indication that Mr. Shimano either will or will not participate in such deliberations.

genkaku

**by Carol** on Wed Aug 18, 2010 1:55 pm

genkaku wrote:

PS. From the FaithTrust Institute's web site:

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This is the organization from which the ZSS board of directors has allegedly sought counsel, according to the ZSS web site. There is no indication that Mr. Shimano either will or will not participate in such deliberations.

From looking over their website, it looks like the FaithTrust Institute is a hard-nosed victims' rights organization. Gives me confidence they'll do a good job here and that the ZSS board is serious.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Christopher** on Wed Aug 18, 2010 5:06 pm

genkaku wrote:

There is no indication that Mr. Shimano either will or will not participate in such deliberations.

No matter how it turns out, I guess the charade might be worthwhile if at some point we get to read a transcript of Eido trying to explain his behaviour to a normal, non-Zen person.

Christopher

**by magiccarpetride** on Wed Aug 18, 2010 7:47 pm

genkaku wrote:

I received this article today in email and hesitate to post it for fear that it will just excite a dithering of virtues. But the observations and fears once expressed by Robert Aitken Roshi about Eido Tai Shimano (Roshi), and the latter's predatory sexual adventures with his students strike me as important pointers.

1. However wonderful Zen Buddhism and Zen practice may be -- and I for one would say it is pretty wonderful -- it is important to remember without rancor that there is no real accountability built into the realm. If the teacher is thought of, in one way or another, as an embodiment of the Dharma, then, despite all protestations this way or that, that teacher is as capable of sowing harm as s/he is of sowing kindness. We may all wish until we're blue in the face that in a realm of 'kindness' we will find true kindness. But I am talking

about human realities, not the hopefulness and encouragement of precepts. As I say ... consider without rancor. It's just an observation worth making, for my money.

2. The central -- and perhaps only -- lesson any of us might take from arrogant fools is this: "Just don't you do that!"

PS. Mods ... if you find this topic in some way out of line, please feel free to delete it.

The situation is extremely simple: it would be literally impossible for a fully awakened man to ever experience an erection. The Buddha himself explained that after the awakening, all sensual desires feel like enjoying burning coals, and are thus utterly unattractive.

All those men who claim to be the Buddhist masters while at the same time lusting after sensual pleasures are big fat phonies. Don't ever fall for those charlatans!

Your inflamed ego

Burns from the position of quasi-power  
magiccarpetride

**by genkaku** on Wed Aug 18, 2010 10:15 pm

it would be literally impossible for a fully awakened man to ever experience an erection.

And you verified this, of course?

genkaku

**by magiccarpetride** on Wed Aug 18, 2010 11:45 pm

genkaku wrote:

it would be literally impossible for a fully awakened man to ever experience an erection.

And you verified this, of course?

I am not gay.

Your inflamed ego

Burns from the position of quasi-power  
magiccarpetride

**by genkaku** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 12:10 am

magiccarpetride wrote:

genkaku wrote:

it would be literally impossible for a fully awakened man to ever experience an erection.

And you verified this, of course?

I am not gay.

But you are "fully awakened?"

genkaku

**by magiccarpetride** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 1:07 am

genkaku wrote:

magiccarpetride wrote:

genkaku wrote:

it would be literally impossible for a fully awakened man to ever experience an erection.

And you verified this, of course?

I am not gay.

But you are "fully awakened?"

Maybe in the next five billion lifetimes. But I'm not guaranteeing nothing.

Your inflamed ego

Burns from the position of quasi-power

magiccarpetride

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers

**by christopher:::** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 2:54 am

I've never heard that "it would be literally impossible for a fully awakened man to ever experience an erection" but the Buddha did speak extensively about "complete" liberation and awakening involving a release from attachments and sensual desires. To have an erection is very different from acting on that, allowing the erection to guide your behavior. Anyone who is still ensnared by sensual pleasures (acts on and pursues their desires) has not yet mastered the dharma fully.

One may agree or disagree, but Buddha did teach that, no? Most of us here are not fully enlightened, we still struggle with this. Many Zen masters and teachers still struggle with this, as they too are not fully enlightened. That's okay, one can still teach and learn the

dharma. The potential for trouble comes though when we're in denial, and make assumptions about teachers and roshis being fully liberated, when they are not.

### Impurity

You are the lamp  
 To lighten the way.  
 Then hurry, hurry.  
 When your light shines  
 Without impurity of desire  
 You will come into the boundless country.

As a silversmith sifts dust from silver,  
 Remove your own impurities  
 Little by little.  
 Or as iron is corroded by rust  
 Your own mischief will consume you.

Neglected, the sacred verses rust.  
 For beauty rusts without use  
 And unrepaired the house falls into ruin,  
 And the watch, without vigilance, fails.

In this world and the next  
 There is impurity and impurity:  
 When a woman lacks dignity,  
 When a man lacks generosity.  
 But the greatest impurity is ignorance.  
 Free yourself from it.  
 Be pure.

Life is easy  
 For the man who is without shame,  
 Impudent as a crow,  
 A vicious gossip,  
 Vain, meddling, dissolute.  
 But life is hard  
 For the man who quietly undertakes  
 The way of perfection,  
 With purity, detachment and vigour.  
 He sees light.

If you kill, lie or steal,  
 Commit adultery or drink,  
 You dig up your own roots.  
 And if you cannot master yourself,

The harm you do turns against you  
 Grievously.  
 You may give in the spirit of light  
 Or as you please,  
 But if you care how another man gives  
 Or how he withholds,  
 You trouble your quietness endlessly.  
 These envying roots!  
 Destroy them  
 And enjoy a lasting quietness.

There is no fire like passion.  
 There are no chains like hate.  
 Illusion is a net,  
 Desire is a rushing river.

How easy it is to see your brother's faults,  
 How hard it is to face your own.  
 You winnow his in the wind like chaff,  
 But yours you hide,  
 Like a cheat covering up an unlucky throw.  
 Dwelling on your brother's faults  
 Multiplies your own.  
 You are far from the end of your journey.

The way is not in the sky.  
 The way is in the heart.  
 See how you love  
 Whatever keeps you from your journey.

But the tathagathas,  
 "They who have gone beyond,"  
 Have conquered the world.  
 They are free.  
 The way is not in the sky.  
 The way is in the heart.

All things arise and pass away.  
 But the awakened awake forever.

~The Buddha  
 Dhammapada

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::



by **Linda Anderson** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 5:34 am

genkaku wrote:

it would be literally impossible for a fully awakened man to ever experience an erection.

And you verified this, of course?

LOL Pardon me, this needs no verification. It's entirely absurd in the realm of humanity and awakening ...

I am not inspired to be reasonable.

Linda

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers

by **Carol** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 6:08 am

And also,

The Great Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva,

when deeply practicing prajna-paramita,

clearly saw that the five skandhas are all empty,

and was saved from all suffering and distress.

Sariputra,

form is no different to emptiness,

emptiness no different to form.

That which is form is emptiness,

that which is emptiness, form.

Sensations, perceptions, impressions, and consciousness  
are also like this.

Sariputra,  
 all things and phenomena are marked by emptiness;  
 they are neither appearing nor disappearing,  
 neither impure nor pure,  
 neither increasing nor decreasing.

Therefore, in emptiness,  
 no forms, no sensations, perceptions, impressions, or consciousness;  
 no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind;

no sights, sounds, odors, tastes, objects of touch, objects of mind;  
 no realm of sight up to no realm of consciousness;

no ignorance and no end of ignorance,  
 up to no aging and death,  
 and no end of aging and death;

no suffering, accumulation, cessation, or path;  
 no wisdom and no attainment.

With nothing to attain,  
 bodhisattvas  
 rely on prajna-paramita,  
 and their minds are without hindrance.

They are without hindrance,  
 and thus without fear.

Far apart from all confused dreams,  
 they dwell in nirvana.

All buddhas of the past, present and future  
 rely on prajna-paramita,  
 and attain anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

Therefore, know that prajna-paramita  
 is the great transcendent mantra,  
 the great bright mantra,  
 the supreme mantra,  
 the unequalled balanced mantra,  
 that can eliminate all suffering,  
 and is real, not false.

So proclaim the prajna-paramita mantra,  
 proclaim the mantra that says:

gate, gate,  
 paragate,  
 parasamgate,  
 bodhi, svaha!  
 It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

**by Shonin** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 6:10 am

magiccarpetride wrote:  
 genkaku wrote:  
 magiccarpetride wrote:  
 genkaku wrote:  
 it would be literally impossible for a fully awakened man to ever experience an erection.

And you verified this, of course?

I am not gay.

But you are "fully awakened?"

Maybe in the next five billion lifetimes. But I'm not guaranteeing nothing.

Meanwhile in the reality of this lifetime, people - including Zen teachers - continue to have sexual desires.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by Christopher** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 8:08 am

Apparently Kyudo Roshi once bragged of his diminishing potency; that, at age fifty-five, he hardly ever got erections anymore. He claimed that it was great because it left him more energy for zazen. Of course, this was coming from a guy who, of his own

admission, never loved a woman and had to change channels if he saw people kissing on TV.

Christopher

**by Carol** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 2:45 pm

Christopher wrote:

Apparently Kyudo Roshi once bragged of his diminishing potency; that, at age fifty-five, he hardly ever got erections anymore. He claimed that it was great because it left him more energy for zazen. Of course, this was coming from a guy who, of his own admission, never loved a woman and had to change channels if he saw people kissing on TV.

That's cute, but hardly instructive, IMO.  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by magiccarpetride** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 5:34 pm

Shonin wrote:

Meanwhile in the reality of this lifetime, people - including Zen teachers - continue to have sexual desires.

Plus, the eyebrows are horizontal and the nose is vertical.  
Your inflamed ego  
Burns from the position of quasi-power  
magiccarpetride

**by magiccarpetride** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 7:09 pm

Shonin wrote:

Meanwhile in the reality of this lifetime, people - including Zen teachers - continue to have sexual desires.

One thing that is not clear to me is why put one's trust into a half-baked teacher? If it turns out that your teacher is not what he initially claimed to be, why stay with him? What can be gained by perpetuating the 'dysfunctional family' pattern?

Your inflamed ego  
Burns from the position of quasi-power  
magiccarpetride

**by genkaku** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 7:32 pm

why put one's trust into a half-baked teacher?

Good question, magic.

Now all any of us has to do is to discover a teacher who is NOT half-baked.

Hmmmm ... books won't do; curricula vitae won't do; gossip won't do; praises won't do; temples won't do; scriptures won't do ....

A tricky business, I guess, and a good reason to practice zazen.  
genkaku

**by magiccarpetride** on Thu Aug 19, 2010 9:27 pm

genkaku wrote:  
why put one's trust into a half-baked teacher?

Good question, magic.

Now all any of us has to do is to discover a teacher who is NOT half-baked.

Hmmmm ... books won't do; curricula vitae won't do; gossip won't do; praises won't do; temples won't do; scriptures won't do ....

A tricky business, I guess, and a good reason to practice zazen.

I hear ya. I guess the thing I'm curious about is more to do with why stay with the teacher who is proven to be fraudulent, rather than how to make sure we don't ever approach such frauds in the first place. That would be much trickier. But the moment you feel zen teacher's d\*\*\* up your b\*\*, that's the very moment when you should pack up and leave.

Why stay?  
Your inflamed ego

Burns from the position of quasi-power  
magiccarpetride

**by genkaku** on Fri Aug 20, 2010 11:16 pm

NYTimes article on Eido Shimano  
genkaku

**by Hosho** on Fri Aug 20, 2010 11:36 pm

Thanks Genkaku.

From the article:

“What you see in America is a lot of Asian Buddhist teachers coming into contact for the first time with spiritual communities that include women,” Mr. Strand said. “And they weren’t necessarily prepared for that.”

“To be blunt about it, a Japanese Zen monk could go over the wall and visit a prostitute and a blind eye could be turned to that.” In America, he added, “it wasn’t as easy to turn a blind eye to going over the wall in his own monastery.”

Sounds like a good insight.

zenease

Hosho  
Banned

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 1:07 am

Hosho wrote:  
Thanks Genkaku.

From the article:

“What you see in America is a lot of Asian Buddhist teachers coming into contact for the first time with spiritual communities that include women,” Mr. Strand said. “And they weren’t necessarily prepared for that.”

“To be blunt about it, a Japanese Zen monk could go over the wall and visit a prostitute and a blind eye could be turned to that.” In America, he added, “it wasn’t as easy to turn a blind eye to going over the wall in his own monastery.”

Sounds like a good insight.

Sure does..and I think the crux of the whole issue.

K

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Shonin** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 6:50 am

Christopher wrote:

Apparently Kyudo Roshi once bragged of his diminishing potency; that, at age fifty-five, he hardly ever got erections anymore. He claimed that it was great because it left him more energy for zazen. Of course, this was coming from a guy who, of his own admission, never loved a woman and had to change channels if he saw people kissing on TV.

Except in so far as it might leave more time for zazen, this whole Buddhist celibacy thing is a red herring. It might actually help some teachers to be more down-to-earth. Purely my current personal opinion.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by Shonin** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 6:51 am

Christopher wrote:

According to the Zen Studies' Society website, Eido's staying on as abbot and another of his "dharma successors" has been appointed as vice-abbot. Incredible in every sense of the word.

I can't see this on the website. Can you show me where that is? Thanks.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

**by Carol** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 8:29 am

Shonin wrote:

Christopher wrote:

According to the Zen Studies' Society website, Eido's staying on as abbot and another of his "dharma successors" has been appointed as vice-abbot. Incredible in every sense of the word.

I can't see this on the website. Can you show me where that is? Thanks.

Here

[...]

Shinge Roshi Roko Sherry Chayat, who will be installed as Vice Abbot, Dec. 31, 2010, will offer dokusan from January 2011 on. Roshi will actively continue in his role as Abbot of the society until he retires, April 8, 2012, but he will not be seeing new students for dokusan. Eido Roshi has said he will remain committed to ordained and long-time students for as long as his health allows.

[...]

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Shonin** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 8:39 am

I see. Well although I have no inside knowledge of the matter it seems to me that inappropriate though these behaviours were, they don't negate the services that Eido Shimano Roshi has done for his students and the world in helping bring Zen to the West. Action needs to be taken yet he deserves to be treated with respect and honour. I don't get the sense that action has stalled.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog



Shonin

**by genkaku** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 10:20 am

“To be blunt about it, a Japanese Zen monk could go over the wall and visit a prostitute and a blind eye could be turned to that.” In America, he added, “it wasn’t as easy to turn a blind eye to going over the wall in his own monastery.”

Sounds like a good insight.

A good insight, perhaps, but one that smoothly overlooks the numbers of monks and nuns who found skillful and compassionate means to learn from and act within the cultures they chose to inhabit for 20-30-40 years ... without disrupting the sangha.

genkaku

**by Carol** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 4:08 pm

genkaku wrote:

“To be blunt about it, a Japanese Zen monk could go over the wall and visit a prostitute and a blind eye could be turned to that.” In America, he added, “it wasn’t as easy to turn a blind eye to going over the wall in his own monastery.”

Sounds like a good insight.

A good insight, perhaps, but one that smoothly overlooks the numbers of monks and nuns who found skillful and compassionate means to learn from and act within the cultures they chose to inhabit for 20-30-40 years ... without disrupting the sangha.

In fact, Eido Roshi came to the US in the late '60s (I believe) when sexual mores were in wild flux ... "free love" was the counter-culture movement of the time and many people interested in "Eastern philosophies" at that time were definitely part of that movement and experimenting with it. This went on all through the '70s and into the '80s. I don't think it really sobered up much until the AIDs epidemic.

None of this excuses much bad behavior -- including mine during that time. But it could be very disorienting to a newcomer from another culture, even a monk or a nun or a Zen Master.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

by **Hosho** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 4:41 pm

genkaku wrote:

“To be blunt about it, a Japanese Zen monk could go over the wall and visit a prostitute and a blind eye could be turned to that.” In America, he added, “it wasn’t as easy to turn a blind eye to going over the wall in his own monastery.”

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A good insight, perhaps, but one that smoothly overlooks the numbers of monks and nuns who found skillful and compassionate means to learn from and act within the cultures they chose to inhabit for 20-30-40 years ... without disrupting the sangha.

I believe the comment is limited in scope to Japanese Zen masters who came specifically to the U.S. and taught students. There must only be a small handful of these individuals, and of these individuals the naughty seem to outweigh the nice, but I could be wrong of course. Who knows what the real truth is...

The comment clearly does not include all Buddhist traditions and all the various cultures of the world.

zenease

Hosho  
Banned

by **simpleton** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 9:24 pm

Shonin wrote:

I see. Well although I have no inside knowledge of the matter it seems to me that inappropriate though these behaviours were, they don't negate the services that Eido Shimano Roshi has done for his students and the world in helping bring Zen to the West. Action needs to be taken yet he deserves to be treated with respect and honour. I don't get the sense that action has stalled.

Shonin - you write some good posts, but on this one you really have got to be kidding? Eido seems to be hurting not helping his students and that is NOT helping bring Zen to the West. Look, I don't care if someone has passed 0 or 1 or 1700 koans - after koan training comes training in precepts. Hurting people, lying about it, causing pain and distress to the Sangha is NOT training in precepts.

So he's Japanese, So he was given transmission. Big deal. Does that mean everyone should ignore multiple, ongoing cases of improper behaviour?

Please don't deceive yourself.  
simpleton

**by flax3lbs** on Sat Aug 21, 2010 9:36 pm

Hosho wrote:

genkaku wrote:

“To be blunt about it, a Japanese Zen monk could go over the wall and visit a prostitute and a blind eye could be turned to that.” In America, he added, “it wasn’t as easy to turn a blind eye to going over the wall in his own monastery.”

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The comment clearly does not include all Buddhist traditions and all the various cultures of the world.

I don't think the comment has to be limited in scope to Japanese Zen teachers. There are other examples, Korean Zen and Tibetan traditions. I think we can all acknowledge the difficulties of a different cultural milieu for some of these teachers.

But let's not lose focus and limit this discussion to "so and so having sex with a student". Eido Shimano's issues are much broader than this. There appears to be continued and frequent relationships with female students over a 40 year period. Also, accusations of psychological manipulation and abuse. Then in the non-sexual sphere there are accusations of financial impropriety on his part. And one more thing which may not be real important to people with criticisms of Dharma transmission, is he really a legitimate heir of Soen Nakagawa? There's much more to this whole mess than some Zen teacher having some sexual dalliances with a few students.

flax3lbs

by **StuartM** on Sun Aug 22, 2010 8:35 am

Shonin wrote:

Christopher wrote:

Apparently Kyudo Roshi once bragged of his diminishing potency; that, at age fifty-five, he hardly ever got erections anymore. He claimed that it was great because it left him more energy for zazen. Of course, this was coming from a guy who, of his own admission, never loved a woman and had to change channels if he saw people kissing on TV.

Except in so far as it might leave more time for zazen, this whole Buddhist celibacy thing is a red herring. It might actually help some teachers to be more down-to-earth. Purely my current personal opinion.

Hi Shonin,

I've only briefly looked over the article, and I don't know much about Shimano Roshi, but celibacy is certainly not the issue here (if I've read you correctly). Japanese clergy haven't been required to practice celibacy for a fairly long time (since late 1800s), apart from those periods, usually earlier on in their lives, when they are in training monasteries (as I understand it). The vast majority will then go on to run temples, marry, have kids, and pass their temples on to their oldest son (usually).

The issue here is fidelity (I believe he was married throughout? Please correct me if I'm wrong); the appropriateness of teacher/student relationships of sexual nature and the possibility that he's been less than fully honest with his sangha.

Stu

StuartM

by **Shonin** on Sun Aug 22, 2010 9:10 am

StuartM wrote:

The issue here is fidelity (I believe he was married throughout? Please correct me if I'm wrong); the appropriateness of teacher/student relationships of sexual nature and the possibility that he's been less than fully honest with his sangha.

Good point. You're absolutely right.  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

**by moon face buddha** on Mon Aug 23, 2010 10:57 pm

simpleton wrote:

So he's Japanese, So he was given transmission. Big deal. Does that mean everyone should ignore multiple, ongoing cases of improper behaviour?

Please don't deceive yourself.

This is what I find interesting about these cases. The culture clash is used to excuse actions by so-called enlightened teachers. Does this not undermine the very notion of enlightenment if mastery of self falls away at the sight of women in short skirts, a bottle of scotch, and a zendo full of vulnerable seekers.

A certain 'zen master' in the alt.zen scene is carrying on this tradition of hiding behind his 'enlightened' status to excuse his precept breaking. It seems that some Western teachers are able to fall to the temptations of Western Culture just as easily as some Eastern teachers.

I like reading about Ikkyu and his drunker debauchery, I might enjoy and evening in his company, but i'm almost certain I wouldn't want him teaching my daughter about Zen Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by Linda Anderson** on Tue Aug 24, 2010 6:49 am

moon face buddha wrote:

This is what I find interesting about these cases. The culture clash is used to excuse actions by so-called enlightened teachers. Does this not undermine the very notion of enlightenment if mastery of self falls away at the sight of women in short skirts, a bottle of scotch, and a zendo full of vulnerable seekers.

A certain 'zen master' in the alt.zen scene is carrying on this tradition of hiding behind his 'enlightened' status to excuse his precept breaking. It seems that some Western teachers are able to fall to the temptations of Western Culture just as easily as some Eastern teachers.

Agree, listen to this

"There isn't anyone out there who is totally clear"... Richard Moss ... "...who says no to ..." (to Osho, Roshi, etc)

Watch him talking about this... it's long... about 35 minutes in, he makes the point that enlightenment does not mean mastery of the self. I just don't see this wisdom typically in zen where the focus seems on meditation. Embodiment of awakening is something else to be present with what is, our awareness, our feeling, whether light or dark. "Stay spacious"

It's time too look outside the box. After 27 pages of this, nothing is done, and the punishment mentality hurts.

Richard Moss is not new to me. He's a master.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Christopher** on Tue Aug 24, 2010 4:10 pm

Forgive me if I'm going back on old territory, but I like these words from genkaku's letter to Eido:

On and on and on it goes down that long, long line. Person after person, Bodhisattva after crazy Bodhisattva, each of them willing their suspicions to silence. How is it possible they were so willing, so stupid? Perhaps it was because many people begin their spiritual practice with the understanding that the ascendancy they have previously granted to their emotions and intellect is the source of much suffering. Because of that pain, they were willing to set aside their own emotions and intellect (to the extent possible), and to be as faithful and obedient as possible. Perhaps they counseled themselves that intellect and emotion are more delusion. And perhaps they trusted that your emotions and thoughts were not based in delusion. This trust, however misguided, was surely human and understandable. Unfortunately, it was and is open to manipulation and deceit. There are many I know, myself among them, who practiced with you and were grateful to you, until, a little at a time, they began to wonder. In their wondering, they came to you in their twos and threes and tens, not even caring very much that you took lovers on the side, but curious about a wider pattern of contempt and manipulation.

He wrote that 25 years ago. Yet still students continue to make the same tragic, yet so human mistake: setting aside their better judgment because of a fear that they may be under the influence of "ego", and that the zen master must know something they don't.

Agreeing to give the man a blowjob because it might be a test of detachment! Heart-breaking, yet deep down so understandable.

We have to get that guy out of there.

Christopher

**by Carol** on Tue Aug 24, 2010 4:59 pm

Christopher wrote:

We have to get that guy out of there.

That's what the board is doing. They have posted a notice that he is retiring in April 2012, that he will not be seeing new students after Jan 1, 2011, that a new co-abbot is being appointed, and that they have brought in some hard-nosed consultants on clergy sexual and ethical abuse to help them deal with the pain and suffering this has all caused.

I suggest that anyone who has suffered in any way from their dealings with Eido Roshi, however long ago, contact them now so that they can do whatever is possible to make amends.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by genkaku** on Sun Aug 29, 2010 7:15 pm

SNAP press release on ZSS ethics probe  
genkaku

**by just** on Sun Aug 29, 2010 8:39 pm

ZSS' s acknowledgment is sad and funny at the same time. Its painful humor reading it. I am a cynic, but got to give it to those scholars: you are nb.1!  
We are grateful beyond words for the incomparable gift of Eido Roshi's Dharma treasure, and for his unstinting efforts to root Rinzai Zen Buddhism in American soil. Ever at home in the unconditional realm, he spurs us to go beyond the relative vista.

its quite unbelievable, the whole thing with adamant regulations, hilarious and sad.  
 Maybe people like this are worse offenders than the peasant that roots into ones soil.  
 wow, i feel sad even making jokes about this bunch at zss.  
 just

by **Linda Anderson** on Sun Aug 29, 2010 11:26 pm

just wrote:

ZSS' s acknowledgment is sad and funny at the same time. Its painful humor reading it. I am a cynic, but got to give it to those scholars: you are nb.1!

We are grateful beyond words for the incomparable gift of Eido Roshi's Dharma treasure, and for his unstinting efforts to root Rinzai Zen Buddhism in American soil. Ever at home in the unconditional realm, he spurs us to go beyond the relative vista.

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 Maybe people like this are worse offenders than the peasant that roots into ones soil.  
 wow, i feel sad even making jokes about this bunch at zss.

Oh my, this is even sadder and funnier when I went back to read the initial material on Page 1 of this post... the original letter to ZSS was written in 1995, about the previous thirty years??? Wow, they must be serious! And, after all this time, they have one person to serve as the accuser.

I'm not whitewashing, I have no doubt that this, in fact, happened and many people were hurt. BUT, I can only guess that ZSS has succumbed to the pressure. Can you believe they are serious after so many years?

I hope and pray that those who were hurt in this have healed and grown through it. Sometimes our worst betrayals are out best lessons. AND, I would guess that those who have moved into a bigger space are not much interested in reliving it. It's a tough one to hold along side the pith instruction of "as it is".

I find the harsh one-sidedness of ZSS to be particularly alarming in itself and somewhat insincere after more than 15 - 30 years. Seems to me that ZSS needs first to look at why it took them so long. The whole thing is rotten to the core.

I must be on a different bus, to hold a teacher on a pedastal? Too scared (ie, scar-ed) to buy that one. And, I can testify that to speak up is to be accused and diminished as ego, all around. Luckily, my karma didn't lead me into the sexual illusions, just a little untruth and misconduct. lol as if that ranks better.

Linda  
 Not last night,



not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by just** on Mon Aug 30, 2010 12:00 am

I find the harsh one-sidedness of ZSS to be particularly alarming in itself and somewhat insincere after more than 15 - 30 years. Seems to me that ZSS needs first to look at why it took them so long. The whole thing is rotten to the core.

im sure that nothing will make them or him ever say 'sorry'. nor will they or him accept any blame. but it is good to know. not so good for the ppl involved.  
..... and he is the one rooting ... oh i cant say it.  
just

**by Linda Anderson** on Mon Aug 30, 2010 12:05 am

Sexuality in a broader sense, Eros, capital "E". Eros at every chakra, Eros at the second chakra is genital sexuality. Eros, as is gets higher, there are more and more beings encompassed in blissful embrace. That doesn't mean genital embrace... At the second tier, there is almost no act is unethical... YET, what determines what is ethical or not, is that the circle of inter-subjectivity, the circle of those affected by the action is taken into account"....Ken Wilbur

Sorry, the quote above is inadequate compared to the whole, but may provide a whiff of what he says.

Clearly, tragically not coming from Eros, those affected not taken into account.

Ken brings in some practice based balance and maturity which I find useful in the broadest sense.

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by genkaku** on Mon Aug 30, 2010 10:37 am

A revised point of view from Eshin Brenda Shoshanna

[http://robertaitken.blogspot.com/2010/0 ... 0010913022](http://robertaitken.blogspot.com/2010/0...0010913022)  
genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Mon Aug 30, 2010 1:01 pm

genkaku wrote:

A revised point of view from Eshin Brenda Shoshanna

[http://robertaitken.blogspot.com/2010/0 ... 0010913022](http://robertaitken.blogspot.com/2010/0...0010913022)

This is so wise, hope folks don't mind if her post is shared here in full.

From genkaku's link...

Eshin Brenda Shoshanna said...

It is with deep sorrow that I write this follow up letter regarding all the events, and recent revelations about Zen Studies Society. It was certainly shocking to read everything that has been posted online subsequent to my earlier posts, and to finally sit down and read the entire archives. Although I knew there were sexual relationships going on, my general impression was that they were consensual, and occasional. I also thought that this had ended years ago. I had no idea of all these details or the extent of what went on. The cover up was indeed incredible, right from the beginning.

I apologize if my words or actions or lack of actions in any way caused or perpetuated pain for anyone. My heartfelt wishes are extended to all involved in this painful web.

All these years of practice with Eido Roshi, I saw a very different man. I saw a man deeply dedicated to dharma, helping many, tireless, relentless in his pursuit of truth. But I only saw part of the picture. I was blind to much else that was going on. There are two people we are confronted with in Eido Roshi. We must face and deal with both of them.

Most of us are familiar with the wonderful teaching, "Let he who is without sin throw the first stone." We are called upon to forgive and let go of anger and revenge. And yet this does not mean that we simply allow the same situation to go on. Forgiveness is a vital act and includes rectification and repair.

Allowing things to go on "as usual" with some slight alteration in schedule and promises of future changes denies and minimizes what went on and the pain and suffering caused

by it. It only exacerbates the problem and makes the Zen Studies Society seem unable to face and deal with reality - skillfully and justly.

Unless there are real and dramatic changes, the pollution cannot be cleared up. This is an opportunity to actually put the teachings into practice - to actualize truth, purification, simplicity, humility, compassion for all involved and uncompromising honesty.

There must be full respect for each member of the sangha and their needs and experience. Without a real respect for kindness and truth, it's not real practice. And, an individual who does not respect these values, and cannot be counted on to live by them, in my opinion can not be given any power at all over the lives of others.

In order to regain some sense of honor and viability, it seems clear that the best course of action would be for Eido Roshi to take time away for a period of serious reflection without all the pressures, power and responsibilities he has had to undertake. This would give him a chance to face his situation and life fully, and make the changes he needs to make. It would help restore faith for everyone in the truth and efficacy of Zen practice. Otherwise it all begins to look like a sordid game we've all been caught in.

As a protection against self serving practice, it is also vital to routinely include emphasis on the precepts and ways of practicing the precepts in daily life.

I think it is also clear that a hierarchical, authoritarian structure of governance only exacerbates the possibilities for deception and harm. It perpetuates a sense of powerlessness and a distorted estimation of a teacher, as a greater than life figure, who has access to wisdom that the student does not. Clearly, this structure has also caused a deep feeling of powerlessness among the many women subjected to these unwanted advances, along with feelings of shame and guilt.

If our dedication to practice is real, it has to be accompanied by real changes, by a willingness to let go of old, harmful ways and take a new road forward. Everyday we say, "let true dharma continue." It is time to actualize this teaching. Nothing less will do.

Eshin Brenda Shoshanna  
August, 2010

August 29, 2010 8:32 AM

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Shonin** on Mon Aug 30, 2010 8:28 pm

There is an update on this matter on Genjo Marinello Osho's Plum Mountain News. Here is an excerpt:

As nearly everyone knows by now, Eido Roshi, founder of Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) in New York and my Dharma Lineage Father, has had a reputation of having sexual relations with female students.

Until very recently, I thought this bad habit had long been laid to rest. Senior DBZ Dharma brothers and sisters assured me that Eido Roshi had clearly come to understand the egregious nature of this behavior 15 years ago at the time of the last known complaint. In addition, I heard Roshi on many occasions humbly refer to his own shortcomings and offer apologies to all those he has offended. However, this June a DBZ student stood up at a public Sangha gathering and announced that she had had an affair with Roshi and was tired of keeping it a secret. She acknowledged that she pursued him and that he did not decline her overtures.

The Zen Studies Society (ZSS) Board, which I have been a member of for the last few years, then went into overdrive. We had just concluded an update to the ZSS ethical guidelines and grievance procedures, but in hindsight, we all wished that they had been updated sooner. We put a link to the updated guidelines and grievance procedure on the ZSS home page and added a preamble that acknowledged this ethical breach of Eido Roshi. Here are the additional steps ZSS has taken so far:

- 1) Met with and heard from the woman who made the public announcement.
- 2) Met with Roshi to hear his side (he admitted his error and took responsibility).
- 3) Began meetings to hear from and listen to ZSS active Sangha.
- 4) Confirmed that Eido Roshi and his wife Aiho-san would step down from the Board.
- 5) Confirmed with Roshi that he would not see new students.
- 6) Confirmed with Roshi the appointment of an heir apparent (Shinge Roshi).
- 7) Confirmed with Roshi a firm and fixed date to complete transition to new Abbot (April 8th 2012).
- 8) Hired professional outside consultants to assist with open ethics investigation (FaithTrust Institute, <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org>)
- 9) Began a formal review of organizational and financial structures.
- 10) Went public with the facts through a press release to Tricycle Magazine and the New York Times.

The ZSS Board is working to have as healthy and timely transition as possible under the circumstances, without creating a vacuum for those still actively training at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. I believe not to allow for this would be negligent and nearsighted. However, given Eido Roshi's disturbing and complicated history and depending on what the ethics investigation uncovers, the ZSS Board may have to reevaluate its response.

So far, my peers at the American Zen Teachers Association have been very supportive that the ZSS Board is taking appropriate steps to respond to this matter. Of course, if

women come forward who are having trouble coping with the ramifications from these inappropriate relationships, the ZSS Board and I personally will do our best to be helpful.

The Buddha says take what works of his teaching and leave the rest. I have done pretty well following this advice since my ordination, which was thirty years ago this October 5th. Though I have only worked closely with Eido Roshi since 1996, in that time I have seen him point many to unceasingly search their own depths and inspire many to open up to and follow Heart/Mind. I wish there were more human beings who could inspire as well as he can. There are no Buddhas; if I meet one on the road of life, I have found a fraud. It is a delusion to believe that we are either Buddhas or bumpkins. Everyone should know that you will never find one without the other. The good news of Buddhism is that we are not just naked apes but also Buddhas.

I have been asked how could a “Roshi” be so blind? We all have blind spots; unfortunately, Eido Roshi’s have proven to be repeatedly dangerous to the very Followers of the Way he has otherwise given his life to. Very tragic for him, the Sangha and most of all those he has wounded. Gratefully, he has admitted his errors and taken responsibility. I have seen him do so through his recent actions and in saying so both privately and publicly to the Sangha. I hope that one day he will find it in his heart of hearts to do so to the wider public.

Finally, I am relieved to report that I was not appointed Vice Abbot or Co-Abbot of DBZ. I think my Dharma Sister, Shinge Roshi (<http://www.zencenterofsyracuse.org/teacher.html>), is an excellent choice; she has clear access to the subtle profound wisdom of the ages, she is much closer to DBZ than I am, three hours by car, and I believe DBZ could really use female leadership right now. Already she is working as fast as she can to change over her life to meet this new challenge. I will try and be as supportive as possible to assist Shinge Roshi in this difficult period of transition.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

**by Genjo** on Mon Aug 30, 2010 11:30 pm

I was very moved by Eshin Brenda Shoshana's comments, posted here on August 30th. I have copied them and sent them to the entire Zen Studies Society (ZSS) Board and the FaithTrust Institute (FTI), which is working with us to assist us in processing and discerning how to proceed. I know the ZSS Board wants to hear from as many current or former students of Eido Roshi who have equally taken the time to make a considered

analysis, no matter how critical. The ZSS Board will be meeting soon with Eido Roshi and FTI and we are compiling a dossier of the most well thought out and considered responses; so this would be a particularly good time to share what you have to say with us. The ZSS Board can be reached by emailing [zssboard@gmail.com](mailto:zssboard@gmail.com).

In our preamble to our Ethics Guidelines (<http://www.daibosatsu.org/ethical.html>) we state: "If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, or are aware of ethical matters that need to be addressed, please email your written communication to the ethics committee. With guidance from the FaithTrust Institute, the Ethics Committee will respond and process every communication we receive in a timely and appropriate manner. The Zen Studies Society Ethics Committee can be reached by emailing [zssethicscom@gmail.com](mailto:zssethicscom@gmail.com)."

The Ethics Committee has the following three members:

Yuho Carl Baldini, School Counselor, ZSS Board member,  
Keiun Clare Dacey, Social Worker  
and myself Genjo Marinello, psychotherapist and ZSS Board member

In addition, during our association with FaithTrust Institute all ethics correspondence is shared with Rev. Marie Fortune and Rabbi Dratch for their analysis and input.

If a new ethics violation is found it is brought to the full Board for appropriate action. If an old ethics violation is affirmed and requires some kind of remedy beyond the scope of the committee, this is also brought to the full board. Any request for anonymity will of course be respected. If a wounded party wants to deal directly with FTI they may write Rev. Marie Fortune at [mfortune@faithtrustinstitute.org](mailto:mfortune@faithtrustinstitute.org); FTI will then summarize the content of the correspondence for consideration by the ZSS Ethics Committee. We do request that all correspondence be submitted in writing in such a way that ZSS or FTI can verify that we are dealing with a real person.

More often than not the "remedy" is just to be acknowledged and heard with assurance that appropriate action has been instigated; in other instances, the wounded party may suggest something more, or our consultants may suggest something more. If an apology or some sort of reconciliation is sought we will try to facilitate this.

There is no statute of limitations on feeling wounded. If you have been wounded by an ethical breach as outlined in our Ethics Guidelines (<http://www.daibosatsu.org/ethical.html>) please write us. Of course the Ethics Committee and the full Board is particularly interested in hearing any first hand accounts that have not already been "published" in some way, especially anything in the last fifteen years since the last known lapse by Eido Roshi.

If you are someone or know of someone who has been wounded by an ethical breach by anyone at ZSS we encourage you or them to write us. Not only do we need to know, we

want to know. A summary of what we find and any remedies taken will be made public, when we think we have received what we can from the current and former ZSS Sangha.

With a sad heart and bow,

Genjo Marinello

Genjo

**by So-on Mann** on Tue Aug 31, 2010 2:51 am

Thank you, Genjo, for taking the time to create an account and give your input on this discussion. It sounds like you are taking some "truth and reconciliation" measures seriously.

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by christopher:::** on Tue Aug 31, 2010 3:40 am

Yes, thank you Genjo. Also thank you Adam (genkaku) and all the staff at ZFI for encouraging and supporting these public discussions of a very troubling issue. As painful as it is to confront situations like this publicly, and in detail, there really seems to be no other way "around" such matters. Hiding these problems in the dark or just chalking them up to the "crazy wisdom" of enlightened masters doesn't help anyone.

I hope and pray that Eido sensei and his wife will be able to confront this situation with courage, humility and compassion- for themselves and others. This isn't the typical "Japanese way" - where a public loss of face rarely leads to redemption.

If they are supported in the manner suggested by Eshin Brenda Shoshana they will hopefully be able to benefit from this transparency and gain from it. Pain is often unavoidable, but on the other side of suffering there usually lies a deeper freedom, greater wisdom.

Our challenge is getting there, to that other side.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **partofit22** on Tue Aug 31, 2010 3:41 pm

There is no statute of limitations on feeling wounded.

beautiful ...  
partofit22

by **Gregory Wonderwheel** on Wed Sep 01, 2010 5:17 am

Genjo wrote:

I was very moved by Eshin Brenda Shoshana's comments, posted here on August 30th. I have copied them and sent them to the entire Zen Studies Society (ZSS) Board and the FaithTrust Institute (FTI), which is working with us to assist us in processing and discerning how to proceed. I know the ZSS Board wants to hear from as many current or former students of Eido Roshi who have equally taken the time to make a considered analysis, no matter how critical. The ZSS Board will be meeting soon with Eido Roshi and FTI and we are compiling a dossier of the most well thought out and considered responses; so this would be a particularly good time to share what you have to say with us. The ZSS Board can be reached by emailing [zssboard@gmail.com](mailto:zssboard@gmail.com).

[snipped . . .]

If you are someone or know of someone who has been wounded by an ethical breach by anyone at ZSS we encourage you or them to write us. Not only do we need to know, we want to know. A summary of what we find and any remedies taken will be made public, when we think we have received what we can from the current and former ZSS Sangha.

With a sad heart and bow,

Genjo Marinello

Thank you Genjo Osho for reaching out to people and being a bridge for all concerned, i.e., a stone bridge or a single log bridge accordingly. I fully trust that your involvement and participation will be both a benefit for the relief of suffering today and a sign for future generations every bit as significant as Linji planting trees on the hillside by the monastery gate.

\_/\  
Gregory

The Blessed One said, “The recognition of the one vehicle (一乘) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness.” ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel



Global Moderator

**by Christopher** on Wed Sep 01, 2010 10:12 am

This is so wise

As someone mentioned on genkaku's blog, it's funny how people who a month ago were still actually defending Eido as an excellent teacher now allegedly have all the answers about how to deal with him. And such people actually write books about Zen.

But anyways, Genjo, thank you for publicly asking for input. I will most likely put a letter together and send it to you.

Christopher

**by partofit22** on Wed Sep 01, 2010 12:35 pm

Christopher wrote:

This is so wise

As someone mentioned on genkaku's blog, it's funny how people who a month ago were still actually defending Eido as an excellent teacher now allegedly have all the answers about how to deal with him. And such people actually write books about Zen.

But anyways, Genjo, thank you for publicly asking for input. I will most likely put a letter together and send it to you.

are you saying they no longer think of him as a good teacher because they are contributing their thoughts on how to deal with mr shimano's past actions?

partofit22

**by christopher:::** on Wed Sep 01, 2010 12:42 pm

Christopher wrote:

This is so wise

As someone mentioned on genkaku's blog, it's funny how people who a month ago were still actually defending Eido as an excellent teacher now allegedly have all the answers about how to deal with him. And such people actually write books about Zen.

When the Buddha was followed by Angulimala he spoke just the right words, that not only got Angulimala to stop what he was doing, but that awakened him as well.

Whether or not the approach recommended by Eshin Brenda Shoshana has a similar effect here remains to be seen, but yes, living in Japan for over 20 years and being familiar with the culture here (and people of the Shimano's generation) i felt her suggestions and insights were very wise.

Many people have shared wisdom and insights on this matter of course, she isn't the only one, and like others who surround and care about the Shimanos, it's a shame that it had to take this long for them (his inner circle) to face these realities.

But if the course of action pursued now leads to sincere atonement and greater wisdom blossoming within Roshi himself it could be, as Gregory has suggested, an important event in the early history of American Zen Buddhism.

Just my opinion, of course, depending upon many "ifs" "buts" and "maybes"....

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Christopher** on Wed Sep 01, 2010 1:16 pm

partofit22 wrote:

are you saying they no longer think of him as a good teacher because they are contributing their thoughts on how to deal with mr shimano's past actions?

Hi friend,

I'm not sure I understand your question, but my point was that if someone was clearly completely wrong for so long, I wouldn't give their current opinion on the subject all that much weight.

Christopher

**by Seigen** on Wed Sep 01, 2010 1:25 pm

I don't know her face to face, but Shinge Roshi is a very strong person to bring ZSS through these next few years, and should have everyone's support. Here is her bio from

her website, of value to me is that she made possible the publication of Maurine Stuart's words in *Subtle Sound*. The website: <http://www.zencenterofsyracuse.org/teacher.html>

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi was born in Brooklyn in 1943. Her father, Leonard Corlan, was killed during World War II. Her mother later married sculptor Maxwell Chayat and the family moved to rural New Jersey. Sherry studied Buddhism on her own during the early 1960's, while pursuing a degree in creative writing at Vassar College and doing graduate work in painting at the New York Studio School. She began Zen practice in 1967 with Eido Tai Shimano Roshi at the Zen Studies Society, where she also studied with Hakuun Yasutani Roshi and Soen Nakagawa Roshi on their periodic trips to the United States.

She received lay ordination from Maurine Stuart at the Cambridge Buddhist Association in 1985 and full ordination from Eido Roshi at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in 1991. Eido Roshi acknowledged her as a Dharma teacher in the Rinzai tradition on December 8, 1992, and installed her as abbot of the Zen Center of Syracuse on October 18, 1996. Two years later, he gave her inka shomei, Dharma transmission, in the Hakuin/Torei lineage. She thus became the first American woman to receive official Rinzai Zen transmission. On October 12, 2008, after a 10-year process of advanced training culminating in a ceremony called *shitsugo*, literally, "room-name," she received the title of roshi and the name Shinge ("Heart/Mind Flowering") from Eido Roshi. It was the first time that this ceremony was held on American soil.

Shinge Roshi travels widely to give Zen talks, workshops, and retreats. She compiled, edited, and wrote the introduction for *Eloquent Silence: Nyogen Senzaki's Gateless Gate and Other Previously Unpublished Teachings and Letters*. With Eido Tai Shimano Roshi and Kazuaki Tanahashi, she compiled, translated, and edited *Endless Vow: The Zen Path of Soen Nakagawa*. She wrote the introduction to, compiled, and edited *Subtle Sound: The Zen Teachings of Maurine Stuart* (both 1996: Shambhala Publications). The author of *Life Lessons: The Art of Jerome Witkin* (1994: Syracuse University Press), she has written many articles and reviews for such journals as *Buddhadharma*, *Shambhala Sun*, *Tricycle*, *Sculpture Magazine*, *ARTnews*, *American Ceramics*, *Present Tense*, and *Lilith*. She is a member of the Round Table of Faith Leaders of InterFaith Works, and is a member of the American Zen Teachers Association.

Shinge Roshi is married to artist Andy Hassinger, who leads the Tibetan practice at the Zen Center. They are the parents of Jesse Hassinger, a filmmaker.  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by partofit22 on Fri Sep 03, 2010 12:32 pm

Christopher wrote:

partofit22 wrote:

are you saying they no longer think of him as a good teacher because they are contributing their thoughts on how to deal with mr shimano's past actions?

Hi friend,

I'm not sure I understand your question, but my point was that if someone was clearly completely wrong for so long, I wouldn't give their current opinion on the subject all that much weight.

hi christopher,

i wouldn't have understood my question either if i were you- i was confused regarding who and what you were addressing-  
partofit22

**by genkaku** on Fri Sep 03, 2010 1:47 pm

The following was posted on my blog this morning by the Rev. Jiro Andy Afable, former vice-abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, one of two temples run by Zen Studies Society.

The spiritual standing of Eido Shimano Roshi, the Abbot and spiritual leader of The Zen Studies Society is so impaired that he should withdraw from the abbacy of The Zen Studies Society.

Unless the abbot resigns as abbot and spiritual representative of The Zen Studies Society, The Zen Studies Society will be unable to function in a way that meets the needs of a Buddhist Sangha and fulfill the aspirations of its founders. The Zen Studies Society will wither away, shunned by dharma students who routinely use the web to inform themselves.

Eshin Brenda Shoshanna in the Aitken blog had an eloquent and very kindly suggestion to Eido Roshi:

"In order to regain some sense of honor and viability, it seems clear that the best course of action would be for Eido Roshi to take time away for a period of serious reflection without all the pressures, power and responsibilities he has had to undertake. This would give him a chance to face his situation and life fully, and make the changes he needs to make. It would help restore faith for everyone in the truth and efficacy of Zen practice. Otherwise it all begins to look like a sordid game we've all been caught in."

As long as Eido Roshi remains as Abbot of The Zen Studies Society, we have to articulate the many compelling reasons why he should step down. We should do this clearly, without viciousness or self-righteousness.

I have sent the Directors of The Zen Studies Society a petition requesting them to take board action that will make the abbot step down. I am now working on a website so all interested parties can read this public petition online and hopefully become signatories. The petition website will become accessible in about a week or so. I will provide this blog with a URL when it opens.  
genkaku

**by Gregory Wonderwheel** on Fri Sep 03, 2010 9:00 pm

genkaku wrote:

The following was posted on my blog this morning by the Rev. Jiro Andy Afable, former vice-abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, one of two temples run by Zen Studies Society.

The spiritual standing of Eido Shimano Roshi, the Abbot and spiritual leader of The Zen Studies Society is so impaired that he should withdraw from the abbacy of The Zen Studies Society.

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I have sent the Directors of The Zen Studies Society a petition requesting them to take board action that will make the abbot step down. I am now working on a website so all interested parties can read this public petition online and hopefully become signatories. The petition website will become accessible in about a week or so. I will provide this blog with a URL when it opens.

Unfortunately one can't escape our own self-righteousness simply by saying 'we' should be without it. The prediction of future doom or other negative consequences "unless" another follows one's own prescription reads to me as an example of self-righteousness. If the good Reverend would simply own her feelings and opinions saying "unless Roshi does what I want I will never forgive him" or some such thing, her words don't ring true in my ears. Advocating by a petition to organize with others who share her grief and grievance and also to promulgate that grief among people who may sign a petition even though they were not personally affected by their personal involvement with Eido Roshi, just doesn't seem straightforward to me.

\_/\\_  
Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (一乘) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

**by clyde** on Fri Sep 03, 2010 11:46 pm

"It is my opinion . . ."

Gregory;

I understood the Reverend to be expressing his opinion (as I am expressing mine), but it would have been better had he explicitly noted that the following were his opinion.

And since I have not read the petition the Reverend sent to the Directors of ZSS, I have no opinion on its straightforwardness or lack thereof, or to the appropriateness of having it public for signing. Perhaps it would be best to wait until we read the petition before judging its merit . . . or lack.

clyde

"Enlightenment means to see what harm you are involved in and to renounce it." David Brazier, The New Buddhism

DO NO HARM

clyde

**by Christopher** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 12:52 pm

Here's a copy of a letter I sent to the Board of the Zen Studies Society the other day, with my thoughts on the whole Eido thing.

Dear Board,

I'm writing to you following the recent revelations of more inappropriate activity by your abbot, Mr. Eido T. Shimano, and the subsequent request by Mr. Genjo Marinello on Zen Forum International for public submissions on what to do about him.

I am not a student of Mr. Shimano's but do know him personally from having attended his sesshins in Switzerland from 2006 to 2008. Besides a passing acquaintance with Mr. Carl Baldini, I have no other ties to the Zen Studies Society.

With this letter I'm not going to bother addressing all the inappropriate acts, since they speak for themselves. The fact that, as a charitable organization, you and/or Shimano haven't already drawn the obvious and absolutely non-negotiable consequences long ago is beyond my comprehension in any case.

What I will address, though, is the equally incomprehensible opinion apparently held by some Board members that, despite all of the abuse, Mr. Shimano might still be a worthy teacher "in other respects." In stating my case, I will even ignore the fact that such an opinion is both grossly insensitive to his victims and deeply misinformed about the point of Zen practice in the first place. Instead, I will simply relate my own experience with regard to such "other respects," i.e. from the viewpoint of a perfectly normal sesshin participant, one who was not in fact sexually accosted, lied to, cheated on, threatened, defrauded, or otherwise even remotely mistreated by Mr. Shimano. Indeed, his interactions with me were always cordial and straightforward, even pleasant. Yet I still affirm without hesitation that he is a shockingly hollow teacher, if not completely illegitimate.

Perhaps because I was fortunate enough to have practiced under two other excellent Rinzai teachers beforehand (NB for those who value such things: one of whom was Mr. Shimano's "equal" in terms of formal transmission from Soen Roshi), upon meeting Shimano in Switzerland I could tell right away that something was wrong. He had practically none of the qualities that I knew and loved in my other teachers. To begin with, his teishos were anything but spontaneous; from the well-rehearsed jokes told with an affected chortle, to the "deep meaning" expounded in that fakely grave voice, he seemed to be actually pandering to his audience, even to the point of flattery. The same applied to the way he walked around: it was neither free nor energetic, but rather the slow, controlled gait of someone trying his best to exude authority, or at least what he thought authority looked like. He didn't even sit with us most of the time, retiring instead to the dokusan room three times a day, presumably to – as his supporters suggest – better selflessly convey the "utmost importance of zazen."

Two specific incidents especially stood out for me. The first was when, as I was doing the required bows in the dokusan room one day, for whatever reason Shimano motioned that he wanted to hit me with the stick. That was fine. However, when I got back up afterwards and glanced at him, I was taken aback by the expression on his face. He was practically glowing, with great, round eyes and an enigmatic smile, as if he had just given me some extraordinary gift, and was waiting for the corresponding acknowledgement. It was just a brief moment, but nevertheless extremely unsettling. Not only had he misunderstood what had just (not) happened, but he was also clearly hoping for a definite

emotional response from me. I have never experienced anything remotely similar from any other Zen teacher, ever.

The other was the time I happened to be first in line for dokusan. The interview room in the Swiss zendo being immediately above the waiting area, I could watch Shimano climbing the short flight of stairs to get there. As he was going up, he passed right under a set of cobwebs hanging from a corner of the stairwell. They practically grazed his head, yet he didn't even notice. What's more, when I looked back down a few moments later, I then saw that there was a thin layer of dust on the wooden frame of the kansho bell. I can confirm that it was dust because I proceeded to actually wipe my finger through it, right under the eyes of Shimano's personal assistant in charge of the bell. Now I admit that cobwebs and layers of dust are no big deal to a normal person, and are certainly forgivable in the context of a beginner Zen practice, yet for them to go unnoticed by a student who, only hours before, was rabidly screaming at us to "PAY ATTENTION!" – let alone by the supposed master himself – was really unbelievable, especially during sesshin. The fact that the cobwebs, the dust, and my finger mark were all still there days later was just the icing on the cake.

I could continue, but the point is that compared to my previous experience with real, excellent Zen teachers, what I was witnessing was just laughable. After three short sesshins I had had enough and never returned.

So, given the aforementioned opinions about Mr. Shimano's alleged teaching qualities, let me make the following points absolutely clear:

1. Mr. Eido T. Shimano is not an otherwise good teacher who just happens to often and repeatedly go terribly astray. His mind is not clear, and his character is always to a greater or lesser extent needy and manipulative. There is no reason whatsoever to allow him to continue teaching any students, whether new or old.
2. There is no kind of "unparalleled Rinzai transmission to America" that needs to be salvaged by replacing him with one of his successors. It's obvious that such a confused man cannot have transmitted anything remarkable to anyone. I can also personally vouch for this statement, having actually seen and heard some of his successors in action.

Of course, the recent revelations in the Shimano Archives – coupled with his unforgivable willingness to remain in office in spite of them – make all of these "in abstracto" observations about his legitimacy moot. I repeat that under the present circumstances he could have better credentials than Hakuin's yet still have no choice but to resign on the spot. I will just add though, with regard to my second point above, that the very fact that one or more of his successors are even now preparing to take his place is more than enough evidence of their lack of worth, not to mention their callousness. I'm not even sure which scenario is less appealing: whether they noticed or didn't notice what kind of person they've been practicing under this whole time.

To end on a more positive note, though, since you are presumably all Shimano's students in some form or another: even though the situation is indeed unimaginably tragic, and clearly many people have made many mistakes in letting it continue for so long, the entire moral responsibility nevertheless lies squarely with him. If you were unfortunately misled in the past, or even if you knew the truth and for whatever reason failed to act, you are in a certain sense still blameless. As of right now, on the other hand, the fault is entirely yours.



Please – finally – do the right thing.

Christopher

**by genkaku** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 1:20 pm

genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 2:41 pm

Christopher wrote:

I can confirm that it was dust because I proceeded to actually wipe my finger through it, right under the eyes of Shimano's personal assistant in charge of the bell. Now I admit that cobwebs and layers of dust are no big deal to a normal person, and are certainly forgivable in the context of a beginner Zen practice, yet for them to go unnoticed by a student who, only hours before, was rabidly screaming at us to "PAY ATTENTION!" – let alone by the supposed master himself – was really unbelievable, especially during sesshin. The fact that the cobwebs, the dust, and my finger mark were all still there days later was just the icing on the cake...

Really excellent point, Christopher....

Every-Minute Zen

Zen students are with their masters at least two years before they presume to teach others. Nan-in was visited by Tenno, who, having passed his apprenticeship, had become a teacher. The day happened to be rainy, so Tenno wore wooden clogs and carried an umbrella. After greeting him Nan-in remarked: "I suppose you left your wooden clogs in the vestibule. I want to know if your umbrella is on the right or left side of the clogs."

Tenno, confused, had no instant answer. He realized that he was unable to carry his Zen every minute. He became Nan-in's pupil, and he studied six more years to accomplish his every-minute Zen.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Shonin** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 2:52 pm

Personally, I have doubts that the best measure of a person's awakening is whether they are paying attention all the time, let alone that they are paying attention to things with regards to practical considerations all the time. I don't even think it's possible to be mindful 100% of the time.

In the context of Buddhism, concentration is a means to ending craving, aversion, delusion and suffering, not an end in itself.

Is it wise to judge real people against unrealistic ideals?  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

**by christopher:::** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 3:03 pm

Shonin wrote:

Is it wise to judge real people against unrealistic ideals?

Fellow Zen students? no. Zen roshis? absolutely. Especially if a lack of mindfulness is observed repeatedly.

In the context of Buddhism, concentration is a means to ending craving, aversion, delusion and suffering, not an end in itself.

Exactly why Christopher's point is so important.

~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Shonin** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 3:13 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Fellow Zen students? no. Zen roshis? absolutely.

This just tells me about your expectations - that real Zen roshis are mindful 100% of the time. Where do such expectations come from? Are they realistic? I have yet to meet a teacher who was other than a human being with human faults. I don't see any absolute

division between Zen roshis and the rest of humanity. Anyone can be absent-minded sometimes. Perhaps he was tired. So I don't share the same expectation.

christopher::: wrote:

Especially if a lack of mindfulness is observed repeatedly.

But was it though? Christopher described two incidents which might be interpreted as absent-mindedness.

christopher::: wrote:

Exactly why Christopher's point is so important.

Only if assume that such attentiveness needs to be engaged 100% of the time in order to have an effect - as opposed to being engaged when required. We all need to engage to abstract thought sometimes.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by christopher:::** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 4:56 pm

Shonin wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

Fellow Zen students? no. Zen roshis? absolutely.

This just tells me about your expectations - that real Zen roshis are mindful 100% of the time. Where do such expectations come from? Are they realistic? I have yet to meet a teacher who was other than a human being with human faults. I don't see any absolute division between Zen roshis and the rest of humanity. Anyone can be absent-minded sometimes. Perhaps he was tired. So I don't share the same expectation.

Hi Shonin. No- i didn't mean to make it sound like i expected a Zen roshi to be mindful 100% of the time. I responded specifically to this question that you asked.

Is it wise to judge real people against unrealistic ideals?

I responded with "Fellow Zen students? no. Zen roshis? absolutely. Especially if a lack of mindfulness is observed repeatedly."

That last sentence is the key point.

christopher::: wrote:

Especially if a lack of mindfulness is observed repeatedly.

But was it though? Christopher described two incidents which might be interpreted as absent-mindedness.

christopher::: wrote:

Exactly why Christopher's point is so important.

Only if assume that such attentiveness needs to be engaged 100% of the time in order to have an effect - as opposed to being engaged when required. We all need to engage to abstract thought sometimes.

If Christopher's observations are unique, that he and he alone saw Shimano Roshi as being less mindful and attentive than other Zen teachers he has observed, then indeed this is just one person's observations, nothing more.

On the other hand, if many people made the same assessment, that "as compared with other Zen teachers" Shimano Roshi was much less mindful, in many situations, then Christopher's observations carry water, in my opinion.

Because I definitely do think there is a correlation between mindfulness practice and mastery of the dharma. Buddha taught that, did he not? And for many Zen teachers mindfulness is essential, just as important as meditation.

Mindfulness and Concentration are not the same thing, right? They are two essential components of the 8 fold path.

If anything, it seems like this situation provides a good example of how these ALL fit together interdependently, and a lack of skillfulness in any one area will lead to problems (or be associated with difficulties) elsewhere as well...

Again, something Buddha and many wise teachers have mentioned down thru the ages. Something that we can all observe in our lives and practice, if we are mindful.

I thought that was a key point Christopher was raising. This is not about Shimano Roshi alone. We all need to be as MINDFUL as we can be, in our practice.

And we need teachers capable of teaching that.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Founding Member

by **Shonin** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 5:15 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Is it wise to judge real people against unrealistic ideals?

I responded with "Fellow Zen students? no. Zen roshis? absolutely. Especially if a lack of mindfulness is observed repeatedly."

It's very easy to put people on a pedestal - especially Zen Masters. But if we judge anyone against unrealistic ideals we will be disappointed.

christopher::: wrote:

If Christopher's observations are unique, that he and he alone saw Shimano Roshi as being less mindful and attentive than other Zen teachers he has observed, then indeed this is just one person's observations, nothing more.

On the other hand, if many people made the same assessment, that "as compared with other Zen teachers" Shimano Roshi was much less mindful, in many situations, then Christopher's observations carry water, in my opinion.

Perhaps, but I don't think that's been at all established, so as it stands it doesn't carry any water and I don't think it is helpful for anyone. Eido Shimano Roshi is a bit of an easy target right now. Of course we all have to base our assessments of who is and is not a good teacher for us to train with, on something, something which is usually a subjective impression. But I really don't think Christopher's subjective impressions of brief sightings of him really amount to anything of much substance or value to the discussion. I think we need to guard against a 'witch-hunt' mentality.

christopher::: wrote:

Because I definitely do think there is a correlation between mindfulness practice and mastery of the dharma. Buddha taught that, did he not? And for many Zen teachers mindfulness is essential, just as important as meditation.

I'm not saying that mindfulness is unimportant, I'm saying that mindfulness 100% of the time is an unrealistic expectation of any human being and is not an appropriate measure of whether someone is a worthy Zen teacher.

christopher::: wrote:

If anything, it seems like this situation provides a good example of how these ALL fit together interdependently, and a lack of skillfulness in any one area will lead to problems (or be associated with difficulties) elsewhere as well...

Possibly, however as an explanation for Shimano Roshi's inappropriate behaviour it's incredibly speculative. Also, while I think that discussing this material openly here is healthy there is a fine line between open expression and character assassination. Whether he has behaved inappropriately or not, Shimano Roshi is a human being who deserves

some respect and care. I don't think this forum should be used to declare open season on him and freely attack him on the most subjective of grounds.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

by **Carol** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 5:53 pm

One dangerous aspect of Zen is the expectation that Zen Masters be "enlightened" or at least "wise" or at least "mindful" at all times and in all circumstances. That can quickly turn into a belief that a Zen Master IS enlightened at all times and in all circumstances (otherwise s/he wouldn't be a Zen Master) causing students to put aside their own observations and self-confidence in right conduct -- as apparently occurred with some of Eido Roshi's students.

It's clear to me from hearing and reading many Zen Masters and meeting several of them, that they are human with human foibles, blind spots, difficulties, etc. They get tired, they misread situations, they overlook the obvious sometimes, they are not mind-readers, and sometimes they get arrogant or full-of-themselves or just plain deluded.

I'm currently reading a delightful little book of conversations between Aitken Roshi and Brother David Steindl-Rast about everyday practice (*The Ground We Share: Everyday Practice, Buddhist and Christian*) where Aitken Roshi talks quite openly about how he struggles with his shortcomings, how his wife helps him when he gets inflated, how he makes mistakes with students, and so on. Every Zen Master I've heard or read has talked about this from time-to-time, to encourage his/her students to take the teacher off the pedestal and to stand on their own two feet.

What I think we can reasonably expect from Zen teachers is that they be making an effort to notice when they are mistaken and deluded, and be open to examining feedback about it. If they can do that, then they are good examples for the rest of us to do the same. That's the "character work" of Zen, and it's very important.

The "character work" of Zen sometimes gets swamped by the work on "dropping off body and mind". We think that is more important, or that that is the work -- when the two cannot be separated.

I know from my own practice, however, that experiences of great peace, insight, clarity, compassion and wisdom -- the "true Dharma eye" and seeing the nature of things -- can and do occur even to imperfect human beings who are at other times deluded. Thank heaven for that, or I don't know how I would have gone on with practice through the

many rough spots. Because I know this is true for me, I am certain it is true for teachers, too. Another thing we can reasonably expect of our teachers is that they have had these experiences, too, and that their experience and practice have given them a keen eye for encouraging and pointing students on the way. It is quite possible for a flawed human being to do this -- in fact, I don't think there is anyone other than a flawed human being who can do it. It is also natural, when a teacher guides and helps us and is instrumental in our experiences of opening the true dharma eye, that we feel gratitude and love for the teacher. It's impossible not to feel this gratitude and love, because we see the true nature, the buddhanature, in all and everything and everyone.

There is a Zen teaching story about this, I can't remember where I heard/read it, so I'm paraphrasing-- There was a saintly old abbot of a monastery. For many years the earth spirit of the place had wanted to meet him and pay his respects. He looked everywhere, but he could never find him. One day the abbot came into the kitchen and saw one of the monks spill rice on the floor. The abbot lost his temper and angrily shouted at the monk, "How could you be so careless!" Whereupon, the earth kami appeared and bowed to the abbot, saying, "After all these years, finally I see you. I've come to pay my respects."

It's important to bring this practice down to earth.

In doing so, we come into reality with compassionate hearts. We help each other with our character work as well as our "enlightenment" work.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Seigen** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 5:59 pm

The "character work" of Zen sometimes gets swamped by the work on "dropping off body and mind". We think that is more important, or that that is the work -- when the two cannot be separated.

Thanks, Carol  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by **Shonin** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 6:35 pm

Beautifully expressed Carol.

Also, I tend to think that this tendency to put teachers on a pedestal, if anything, contributes to an atmosphere where foibles and problems are not communicated since people feel it is unacceptable to suggest that the teacher is other than perfect - either that or they doubt themselves and rationalise an incident away.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by Christopher** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 8:15 pm

Shonin wrote:

But I really don't think Christopher's subjective impressions of brief sightings of him really amount to anything of much substance or value to the discussion.

Fair enough. I'll pass the mike back over to those who were actually sexually assaulted.

Christopher

**by Shonin** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 9:37 pm

Thanks for your understanding

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by christopher:::** on Mon Sep 06, 2010 11:28 pm

I don't see this in such black and white terms, where Christopher's observations and Shonin's points (and Carol's) are all mutually exclusive. Yes, of course, teachers are human and struggle just as we do. Teachers who openly describe their difficulties are the one's i gravitate to as well. That's Right Mindfulness, Effort, Speech and Understanding



all being demonstrated, to be Aware of where you have challenges and then describing your efforts to others, with compassion for yourself.

Teachers are not perfect Buddhas, and yet we all need to have some Understanding of how to be more Buddha-like and continuously work in that direction. To hear a teacher insightfully describe their struggles- as Aitken Roshi has done, as Nonin and Jundo have done in this forum, increases our trust that they understand what they are doing and are not just play-acting out a role. Hearing of a teacher's growth and struggles helps us with our journey.

At the end of the day all these matters point back to our own practice. When i first read Chris' post it made me aware of my own lack of mindfulness over the years. No one is 100% mindful all the time, but in my experience the days when I have been more mindful of each moment were very different- more calm, flowing, grounded- from days when my mind got lost in plans, thoughts, desires, judgments and/or dreams.

Is or is this not central to dharma practice, to recognize these correlations?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Linda Anderson** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 12:43 am

Christopher wrote:

Shonin wrote:

But I really don't think Christopher's subjective impressions of brief sightings of him really amount to anything of much substance or value to the discussion.

Fair enough. I'll pass the mike back over to those who were actually sexually assaulted.

Perhaps Christopher's comments don't have "substance or value to the discussion"... indeed, we can't make beliefs out of what we hear from others. Thanks Chrisopher for your generosity. And, I think that we also must trust our intuitions and impressions while holding the potential for our own delusion. And, if I saw what Christopher described, the pride involved, I would be hesitant to engage also. We do the best we can to see truth and value in what presents itself to us; we're not always right. Christopher was describing his experience. I've had similar experiences and try to stay on the light side of interpretation, yet they are signs and signals, a few of them; and I take notice. No easy answers. To not act, to call everything we think a delusion is equally dangerous.

Linda

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Carol** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 4:10 am

Linda Anderson wrote:

We do the best we can to see truth and value in what presents itself to us; we're not always right. Christopher was describing his experience. I've had similar experiences and try to stay on the light side of interpretation, yet they are signs and signals, a few of them; and I take notice. No easy answers. To not act, to call everything we think a delusion is equally dangerous.

Linda

On the other hand, I remember when the tenzo at a place I once practiced was removed from her position for reasons that were never clear to me. After that some people felt free to mention everything they had ever noticed about her that seemed a little "off" to them ... it was open season for awhile, and not a pretty sight. I've seen that a little too often to relish piling on someone while they are down with all the major and minor sins anyone can think of.

In Eido Roshi's case, there is quite enough of the major category misconduct to require action without bringing up every time he overlooked some dust or made a strange impression on a student.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Linda Anderson** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 6:38 am

Carol wrote:

Linda Anderson wrote:

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In Eido Roshi's case, there is quite enough of the major category misconduct to require action without bringing up every time he overlooked some dust or made a strange impression on a student.

Carol,

Mea Culpa, Thanks for the reminder and bringing back the compassion and openness. I stand corrected.

I truly thank you for finally validating what I always felt. The truth is all I ever wanted. After all, I could feel it. It was never clear to me either. I could never let go of what I didn't know. For all the healing and suchness that I've discovered, it hasn't let go of me yet. The interesting aspect to me is that open season is never about the other person ... it took me a long while to see that, especially since my natural patterning is so self-rejecting. So, it was a perfect hand in glove dynamic for a while. From a larger perspective, people need to cling to something, anything to explain their reality and hold their beliefs and dependancies in place in defense of authority and their own security. In the end, it seems we all become who we really are and things take care of themselves naturally. That has given me the deepest trust in nothing at all, except that things happen. I can find a place that can laugh at how logical it all is... sometimes! As we have seen, the karma is still cooking, fortunately my role in the mystery play ended quite some time ago. But the consequences remain, when the scab is ripped off, the pain is still present, and I find myself holding back service which is my first love. Little by little, I'm find that I am astonished by others who can see simple goodness. It's not about feeling appreciated... it's about the relationship and the circularity of dana.

This has a lot of correspondence with the complaints in these 28 pages are only now being dealt with. Can you imagine what these women were dealing with?

Since this is the night for true confessions, I will confess to another great irony, suchness and sadness. As the rejected Tenzo in deep grief, I found myself sitting with Nonin, our Nonin, at Tassajara at lunch, quite accidentally in 2007. Actually, I was placed next to him in the zendo, this is how I first noticed him. I knew immediately that this stranger was someone who could be trusted. I had no idea he was a teacher until lunch the next day. I sense these things. I wanted desperately to seek his help at lunch and could not bring myself to tell him the story for fear of revealing something that I shouldn't. That

summer I discovered Dogen by reading Instructions to the Tenzo everyday before we prepared the meal. I discovered how natural my mother's heart was and how my instincts for the one body in the kitchen were his. Do you see how all these women never came forward. I can only hope they have found a similar peace, as I said once before. Still, tears in my eyes.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by christopher:::** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 8:04 am

Seems to me like these are night and day examples though, people gossiping about a tenzo who has already been removed with no explanation given and the situation with a teacher accused repeatedly of abusing students who has remained in power for over 40 years, with psychiatrists, fellow teachers and countless students raising red flags over and over again.

Linda Anderson wrote:

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((((Linda)))) you are a treasure.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Christopher** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 8:11 am

Carol wrote:

In Eido Roshi's case, there is quite enough of the major category misconduct to require action without bringing up every time he overlooked some dust or made a strange impression on a student.

Dear Carol,

I quite agree, and I would much rather not have had to go through the trouble of publicly pointing out things which, in the end, are merely proof of Shimano's mediocrity (to put it mildly) as a Zen practitioner. The problem is that some people are apparently appealing to his alleged "good side" as a teacher as an excuse to keep him in there, so I'm just trying to expose the inanity of that position.

Christopher

**by Carol** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 8:23 am

Yes, I can imagine the sickness that kept everyone locked in place for such a long time. I can imagine the pain and self-doubt, and the many many years of bitterness, confusion, and loss of self-respect that many felt and still do.

And I can also imagine how Eido Roshi was also caught in it, and the tragedy of that, too. I deeply believe that these situations call for compassion all around, and truth and honesty, and reckoning with it all.

Having been both in the position of the one wronged and the one doing wrong, I can't see any other way through it all.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Carol** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 8:29 am

Christopher wrote:

Carol wrote:

In Eido Roshi's case, there is quite enough of the major category misconduct to require action without bringing up every time he overlooked some dust or made a strange impression on a student.

Dear Carol,

I quite agree, and I would much rather not have had to go through the trouble of publicly pointing out things which, in the end, are merely proof of Shimano's mediocrity (to put it mildly) as a Zen practitioner. The problem is that some people are apparently appealing to his alleged "good side" as a teacher as an excuse to keep him in there, so I'm just trying to expose the inanity of that position.

I think he must have a "good side" -- we all do. There are many people who have testified to it, and I believe them, too. I think they may be the ones most deeply hurt by his bad conduct. That is what makes it that much more tragic. But, from what I can see, no one is arguing that his "good side" is an excuse to keep him in a position of authority. They are merely saying that he has a good side and deserves gratitude for what good he has done. That you didn't see it doesn't mean it wasn't there.

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and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Carol** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 8:38 am

christopher::: wrote:

Seems to me like these are night and day examples though, people gossiping about a tenzo who has already been removed with no explanation given and the situation with a teacher accused repeatedly of abusing students who has remained in power for over 40 years, with psychiatrists, fellow teachers and countless students raising red flags over and over again.

No, it is not night and day examples of how people frequently behave when someone is down. The piling on begins, and before long whatever good that someone did is erased or no longer mentioned, because they have become a caricature of "bad conduct" or "bad character" rather than the complex person and situation that they are. If you've ever known someone who was guilty of a heinous crime -- murder, incest, rape -- known them well, perhaps loved them, you know that they are more than their worst conduct, and you sorrow that none of that is remembered about them. So perhaps that spark goes out of them, and with it the ability we have to see each and every one of us as a complex person of dark and light struggling with our demons along the way.

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Carol

**by christopher:::** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 9:19 am

Carol wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

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Well yes, of course, Carol. And i've raised that point many times in this discussion and in other discussions we've had when i was a moderator. Everyone has Buddha Nature, a natural wisdom which they may or may not express, but its there within each of us. When we forget that we are not seeing the whole person, the whole being, their true potential. That's in part why i called Eshin Brenda Shoshanna's views wise, she seemed to hold both in mind.

Bottom line though, when a person is in a position of responsibility and leadership its dangerous to hold illusions about their skills and ability to serve in that position, no? Because so many can be hurt that way. I saw that as the main point Christopher was making and i'm just surprised that after so many pages with so much being shared here that suddenly Chris's points are questioned and somehow seen as "going too far."

These are his observations and just like all other observations shared here may or may not have validity.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Christopher** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 9:41 am

Carol wrote:

But, from what I can see, no one is arguing that his "good side" is an excuse to keep him in a position of authority.

Genjo wrote:

The ZSS Board is working to have as healthy and timely transition as possible under the circumstances, without creating a vacuum for those still actively training at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. I believe not to allow for this would be negligent and nearsighted. However, given Eido Roshi's disturbing and complicated history and depending on what the ethics investigation uncovers, the ZSS Board may have to reevaluate its response.

Christopher

**by Carol** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 10:22 am

Christopher wrote:

Carol wrote:

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Genjo wrote:

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Yes, let the ethics investigation do its work. That should have been done long ago. It is a good thing come late, but this board is doing its job with seriousness and due process.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Carol** on Tue Sep 07, 2010 10:32 am

christopher::: wrote:



Bottom line though, when a person is in a position of responsibility and leadership its dangerous to hold illusions about their skills and ability to serve in that position, no? Because so many can be hurt that way. I saw that as the main point Christopher was making and i'm just surprised that after so many pages with so much being shared here that suddenly Chris's points are questioned and somehow seen as "going too far."

These are his observations and just like all other observations shared here may or may not have validity.

Eido Roshi is being removed from his responsibilities as a teacher and abbot. That's not an issue, as far as I'm concerned. It's a necessary consequence of his bad conduct.

I don't want to single Christopher out, though it may seem that way. What I want to do is maintain the humanity of everyone involved and caution against losing sight of that. For those who have done prison ministry, or death row legal appeals work, these things strike very close to home. It's easy to put someone in the throwaway category with no redeeming qualities admitted. Not so easy to deal with the complexity and contradictions ... the sublime and the debased ... in human beings.

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~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by christopher::: on Tue Sep 07, 2010 1:03 pm

Carol wrote:

Eido Roshi is being removed from his responsibilities as a teacher and abbot. That's not an issue, as far as I'm concerned. It's a necessary consequence of his bad conduct.

I don't want to single Christopher out, though it may seem that way. What I want to do is maintain the humanity of everyone involved and caution against losing sight of that. For those who have done prison ministry, or death row legal appeals work, these things strike very close to home. It's easy to put someone in the throwaway category with no redeeming qualities admitted. Not so easy to deal with the complexity and contradictions ... the sublime and the debased ... in human beings.

Very well stated.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Seigen** on Wed Sep 08, 2010 1:44 pm

<http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?p=2271>

September 7, 2010

Dear Friends,

I would like to acknowledge the pain and unnecessary suffering you went through in your hearts due to my faults. I have a profound feeling of remorse for my actions.

This August marked my 50th anniversary in the United States. During this half-century I have received so much from people the world over. Over time, I took your kindness for granted and arrogance grew in my heart. As a result, my sensitivity to feel the pain of others decreased. Now, as I reflect on the past, I realize how many people's feelings and trust in me were hurt by my words and deeds. Please accept my heartfelt apology.

My mother was the person who encouraged me the most to follow Buddha's path. Tomorrow is her memorial day, as she passed away on September 8, 1986. Hearing her voice, I have decided to observe my 50th anniversary in the United States by stepping down from my position as abbot of the Zen Studies Society on the last day of Rohatsu sesshin in 2010.

Even though I carry sadness in my heart, as a Buddhist monk, my vow to practice will not end. In order to preserve the Dharma legacy, ensure the training of future teachers, and to purify my own karma, I must march on.

Gassho,

Eido Shimano  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by **Shonin** on Wed Sep 08, 2010 2:48 pm

Thanks for posting that. It's a moving letter.  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

**by genkaku** on Wed Sep 08, 2010 3:27 pm

Perhaps when there is a safe venue for them, we will be able to compare the 'moving' qualities of those who were made use of and those who saw fit to use.

genkaku

**by Christopher** on Wed Sep 08, 2010 3:31 pm

It's certainly moving in the sense that we're watching the culmination of a weak man's desperate struggle to get what he wants without having to really own up to it. He's still only doing the absolute minimum required, probably even yesterday still fighting tooth and nail with the board to at least continue to call himself "Abbot Emeritus".

Christopher

**by Kojip** on Wed Sep 08, 2010 3:58 pm

Really just an interloper on this thread. But I am a longtime practitioner, do love the Dharma, and have something to say.

Jundo Cohen referred earlier to "our perfectly imperfect teachers". If anyone has the unmitigated chutzpa to claim THE official word on what constitutes True Dharma, and claim THE authority to say who else does, then "perfectly imperfect" will not do for most folks out here. Either drop the claim to authority, or drop the non-dual spin. Because ethical behaviour is out there, and it does not require full blown Buddhahood.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by Seigen** on Wed Sep 08, 2010 4:02 pm

looking for the "like" button...

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by Carol on Wed Sep 08, 2010 4:49 pm

This is what should be done  
 By one who is skilled in goodness,  
 And who knows the path of peace:  
 ... Wishing: In gladness and in safety,  
 May all beings be at ease.

Whatever living beings there may be;  
 Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,  
 The great or the mighty,  
 medium, short or small,

The seen and the unseen,  
 Those living near and far away,  
 Those born and to-be-born —  
 May all beings be at ease!

Let none deceive another,  
 Or despise any being in any state.  
 Let none through anger or ill-will  
 Wish harm upon another.

Even as a mother protects with her life  
 Her child, her only child,  
 So with a boundless heart  
 Should one cherish all living beings;

Radiating kindness over the entire world  
 Spreading upwards to the skies,  
 And downwards to the depths;  
 Outwards and unbounded,  
 Freed from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down  
 Free from drowsiness,  
 One should sustain this recollection.  
 This is said to be the sublime abiding....  
 It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

by christopher::: on Wed Sep 08, 2010 5:17 pm

Skepticism, arrogance, anger, guilt, aversion, desire for retribution,  
inappropriate sexual desires, attachment, fear, hatred,  
self deception, blame, shame...

How do we untie such knots?

Carol wrote:

Let none deceive another,  
Or despise any being in any state.  
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~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by simpleton on Wed Sep 08, 2010 5:31 pm

Christopher wrote:

Carol wrote:

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Dear Carol,

I quite agree, and I would much rather not have had to go through the trouble of publicly pointing out things which, in the end, are merely proof of Shimano's mediocrity (to put it mildly) as a Zen practitioner. The problem is that some people are apparently appealing to his alleged "good side" as a teacher as an excuse to keep him in there, so I'm just trying to expose the inanity of that position.

Christopher, Some good posts. Thanks for your time and honesty in saying it as it is.  
simpleton

**by simpleton** on Wed Sep 08, 2010 5:36 pm

[quote="christopher:::"]Skepticism, arrogance, anger, guilt, aversion, desire for retribution, inappropriate sexual desires, attachment, fear, hatred, self deception, blame, shame...

How do we untie such knots?

christopher:::,

Well maybe we could:  
be honest with ourselves,  
live an ethical life,  
engage in real practice,  
and train with a true teacher?

just my 2c.  
simpleton

**by Carol** on Wed Sep 08, 2010 5:57 pm

christopher::: wrote:  
Skepticism, arrogance, anger, guilt, aversion, desire for retribution, inappropriate sexual desires, attachment, fear, hatred, self deception, blame, shame...

How do we untie such knots?

Metta practice comes highly recommended. When all else fails, I've found it helpful. But it can take a lot of time and determination to get to the bottom of the greed, hatred and ignorance that freezes our hearts.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
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~Rumi

Carol

by **Dan74** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 6:15 am

Reading this thread and feeling the magnetic pull to wade into the controversy, I am wondering what the actual use of all these words is.

Depending on our inclination we obviously react differently or rather different aspects come to the fore. Of course there are different aspects to this story. The socio-political aspect is quite clear and should not be confused with our personal associations with this motif. Those who are involved have finally acted and are also hopefully doing a great deal of soul-searching. Those who were traumatized are hopefully healing...

Also those who have had the good fortune of being exposed to real teachers know that while they too may be imperfect, moral integrity is not a utopia and neither are wise and compassionate Zen masters. The mind does not have to remain mired in craving and delusion, these can be let gone of in this very lifetime, and this is not a pipe dream but reality for many many people.

For the rest of us who were not personally affected, I wonder how we own the part of us that has betrayed and continues to betray our highest aspirations? The part that stalls when we want to give it 100%, the part that goes back on the commitments. The part that slackens off on the cushion and off it. The part which is the prime reason we are still stuck.

Do we bring our inner Shimano back into the fold - face him, hear him out, understand him and redeem him? Is there a real willingness to do this?

I don't know if this inquiry is of value to anyone, but it is one line I've picked up that I see as possibly being of use.

Dan74

by **Carol** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 6:21 am

Thanks, Dan. That's very helpful to me. As I've watched all this unfold, and my reactions to it, I just keep seeing the polarities arise and change and identifications shift from here to there and back again. It's very interesting to see that happening in myself... where I identify and how that keeps moving.

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for you are drunk,  
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~Rumi

Carol

by **christopher:::** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 6:43 am

Dan74 wrote:

Reading this thread and feeling the magnetic pull to wade into the controversy, I am wondering what the actual use of all these words is.

Depending on our inclination we obviously react differently or rather different aspects come to the fore. Of course there are different aspects to this story. The socio-political aspect is quite clear and should not be confused with our personal associations with this motif. Those who are involved have finally acted and are also hopefully doing a great deal of soul-searching. Those who were traumatized are hopefully healing...

Also those who have had the good fortune of being exposed to real teachers know that while they too may be imperfect, moral integrity is not a utopia and neither are wise and compassionate Zen masters. The mind does not have to remain mired in craving and delusion, these can be let gone of in this very lifetime, and this is not a pipe dream but reality for many many people.

For the rest of us who were not personally affected, I wonder how we own the part of us that has betrayed and continues to betray our highest aspirations? The part that stalls when we want to give it 100%, the part that goes back on the commitments. The part that slackens off on the cushion and off it. The part which is the prime reason we are still stuck.

Do we bring our inner Shimano back into the fold - face him, hear him out, understand him and redeem him? Is there a real willingness to do this?



I don't know if this inquiry is of value to anyone, but it is one line I've picked up that I see as possibly being of use.

VERY insightful post, Dan, thank you.

.....

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Dan74** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 7:56 am

Thank you, Carol and Chris, and yet my post doesn't sit so easy with myself. A part of me says that it's just the sort of limp-dick post-modern navel-gazing that tends to lead precisely nowhere. In the end like simpleton says, we've just got to

be honest with ourselves,  
live an ethical life,  
engage in real practice,  
and train with a true teacher

Probably somewhere there is also "stop making excuses."

Dan74

**by genkaku** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 12:19 pm

Thanks Dan. To the extent I hear you correctly, I think I agree with the muddling confusions that go with such difficulties. But however slimy the feel, still I think there is something to be said when it comes to problems: The first thing to do is to own them -- to confront them in all their grisly particulars, to name the names and weep the tears. Pretending problems are solved before they are actually solved is inviting a kind of kiddie Buddhism, full of wise nostrums and uneasy hearts.

As anyone who has practiced knows, attachments aren't clarified over night or by quoting some holy book. Endless -- and sometimes grimy -- attention is required. What others say may be instructive, but it is what you say and what you feel that actually matters. Who could embrace the light if they couldn't embrace the horror ... and yet the longing to have everything be hunky-dory (enlightened, compassionate, clear-headed, loving, etc.) is strong.

Let's just keep up our best efforts in this and all other matters.

genkaku

**by partofit22** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 1:49 pm

you say "Pretending problems are solved before they are actually solved" then say "Endless -- and sometimes grimy -- attention is required." do problems get solved or not?

the term "kiddie Buddhism" is condescending, regardless of who you might be referring to-  
partofit22

**by genkaku** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 2:00 pm

partofit22 wrote:

you say "Pretending problems are solved before they are actually solved" then say "Endless -- and sometimes grimy -- attention is required." do problems get solved or not?

the term "kiddie Buddhism" is condescending, regardless of who you might be referring to-

If there is honest openness to a problem, what problem is there?

Kiddie Buddhism is something we all indulge from time to time ... wishing and quoting like fury in the vain hope that the confusion will ease. It lacks openness but sounds good.  
genkaku

**by Carol** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 2:22 pm

"Kiddie buddhism" is still believing that my happiness depends on someone else's doings or not-doings. It does not. Happiness is non-attachment and non-revulsion with regard to what is -- without adding anything to it or taking anything away. To the extent we can do that, then we can come into the marketplace with open hands.

That is not a wise nostrum. It is the core of practice. Pretending otherwise is delusion. It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by partofit22** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 2:35 pm

believing that happiness depends on someone else's doings or not doings isn't buddhist practice- so where is the buddhist connection at all, re: Kiddie buddhism?  
partofit22

**by Carol** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 2:49 pm

partofit22 wrote:

believing that happiness depends on someone else's doings or not doings isn't buddhist practice- so where is the buddhist connection at all, re: Kiddie buddhism?

We're all caught in it to some extent, so we return to our core practice over and over again. That is Buddhist practice. Sometimes we're kiddies, sometimes we're mature, then we relapse into delusion, then we practice some more.

Sometimes I believe I'd be happy if my husband got the bathtub installed in the bathroom. Then I notice that I'm perfectly happy anyway. Then I forget again.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by Linda Anderson** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 4:03 pm

Yes, Kiddie Buddhism exists. Never heard it called that before... it can lighten things up or appear offensive, depending on one's relationship to it. I've heard a Tibetan teacher call it Sunday School Buddhism. I once went to a large non-zen retreat center to volunteer in the kitchen, one of the volunteers observed that when she was there, she was on her best behavior.

To me, to describe kiddie buddhism as depending on others for happiness, attachment, etc. is just one aspect. The dynamism is the energy of a child who on the one-hand will do most anything to preserve it's innocence and safety and on the other hand will carry on

until it gets it's way. We all have child-like parts inside, it's part of the noticing. I worked with a teacher who used this perspective. I like this model because it takes things like greed, hatred, and delusion from concept to actual experience, our experience. In the circle that I sat in, it was most humbling for all the great men (that's all of us) to observe those very tender and vulnerable places that can cause such tantrums. Especially difficult for the big ones, like well-respected professionals with years of experience and a firm grasp on control. To see the joy that it brought to all of us to loosen the grip of the child. With the right eye, I can see two-year olds dressed in business suits... see the vulnerability and fear that is covered over and well-compensated. When doing such work, it's good to keep a sense of humor and smell the flowers.

I often wondered what is the point of this very long discussion. It's impossible to keep all the things that have been said in mind. Even, so there is a wholeness to it beyond what we think.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

by **Linda Anderson** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 4:13 pm

Carol wrote:

partofit22 wrote:

believing that happiness depends on someone else's doings or not doings isn't buddhist practice- so where is the buddhist connection at all, re: Kiddie buddhism?

We're all caught in it to some extent, so we return to our core practice over and over again. That is Buddhist practice. Sometimes we're kiddies, sometimes we're mature, then we relapse into delusion, then we practice some more.

Sometimes I believe I'd be happy if my husband got the bathtub installed in the bathroom. Then I notice that I'm perfectly happy anyway. Then I forget again.

You may be happy, but tell him to put the xyz bathtub in! Happiness doesn't depend on that limp quality that Dan observed either.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Carol** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 4:26 pm

Linda Anderson wrote:

Yes, Kiddie Buddhism exists. Never heard it called that before... it can lighten things up or appear offensive, depending on one's relationship to it. I've heard a Tibetan teacher call it Sunday School Buddhism. I once went to a large non-zen retreat center to volunteer in the kitchen, one of the volunteers observed that when she was there, she was on her best behavior.

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I often wondered what is the point of this very long discussion. It's impossible to keep all the things that have been said in mind. Even, so there is a wholeness to it beyond what we think.

Linda

I love it, Linda! Tantrum Buddhism. If you don't buy me that candy, I'll ... I'll ... I'll stamp my foot and make a lot of noise! Then you'll be sorry.

Gotta love that child! Too. Flowers, candy, send her to her room, give her a swat on the seat of the pants ... What are you gonna do?

Sit still for awhile, breathe, listen to the wind in the trees, see the light turning gold in autumn.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,

and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Linda Anderson** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 4:36 pm

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by christopher:::** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 4:56 pm

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher::  
Founding Member

**by Hosho** on Thu Sep 09, 2010 7:29 pm

Linda Anderson wrote:

Especially difficult for the big ones, like well-respected professionals with years of experience and a firm grasp on control. To see the joy that it brought to all of us to loosen the grip of the child. With the right eye, I can see two-year olds dressed in business suits... see the vulnerability and fear that is covered over and well-compensated.

They are dressed in robes also my dear. I trust you are not blind to that.

Sorry for the absence of humor.  
zenease

Hosho  
Banned

**by Linda Anderson** on Fri Sep 10, 2010 6:30 am

Hosho,

Not blind to that at all!  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by partofit22** on Fri Sep 10, 2010 1:56 pm

Carol wrote:

Linda Anderson wrote:

Yes, Kiddie Buddhism exists. Never heard it called that before... it can lighten things up or appear offensive, depending on one's relationship to it. I've heard a Tibetan teacher call it Sunday School Buddhism. I once went to a large non-zen retreat center to volunteer in the kitchen, one of the volunteers observed that when she was there, she was on her best behavior.

To me, to describe kiddie buddhism as depending on others for happiness, attachment, etc. is just one aspect. The dynamism is the energy of a child who on the one-hand will do most anything to preserve it's innocence and safety and on the other hand will carry on until it gets it's way. We all have child-like parts inside, it's part of the noticing. I worked with a teacher who used this perspective. I like this model because it takes things like greed, hatred, and delusion from concept to actual experience, our experience. In the circle that I sat in, it was most humbling for all the great men (that's all of us) to observe those very tender and vulnerable places that can cause such tantrums. Especially difficult for the big ones, like well-respected professionals with years of experience and a firm grasp on control. To see the joy that it brought to all of us to loosen the grip of the child. With the right eye, I can see two-year olds dressed in business suits... see the vulnerability and fear that is covered over and well-compensated. When doing such work, it's good to keep a sense of humor and smell the flowers.

I often wondered what is the point of this very long discussion. It's impossible to keep all the things that have been said in mind. Even, so there is a wholeness to it beyond what we think.

Linda

I love it, Linda! Tantrum Buddhism. If you don't buy me that candy, I'll ... I'll ... I'll stamp my foot and make a lot of noise! Then you'll be sorry.

Gotta love that child! Too. Flowers, candy, send her to her room, give her a swat on the seat of the pants ... What are you gonna do?

Sit still for awhile, breathe, listen to the wind in the trees, see the light turning gold in autumn.

yes, but the wind in the trees and golden light of the autumn sun won't make you any cleaner ...

partofit22

**by Carol** on Sat Sep 11, 2010 11:55 am

partofit22 wrote:

yes, but the wind in the trees and golden light of the autumn sun won't make you any cleaner ...

I love it! But we still have a shower, so I'm clean enough.

Thanks.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by partofit22** on Sat Sep 11, 2010 7:05 pm

oh, i love it too! yet also experience the same weird sort of joy when "making due" and being thankful for having a water source ...

partofit22

**by genkaku** on Sun Sep 12, 2010 5:13 pm

Received the following in email from the Rev. Andy Afable, Eido Tai Shimano's second Dharma heir:



Archives recently published on the Internet reveal the enormity and historical depth of Eido Shimano's violations of the Buddhist precepts going back at least 40 years. With every passing day, former Sangha members, male and female, come forward to recount their stories.

Eido Shimano has denied none of it.

Judged by the standards of civil society, Buddhist law, clergy ethics, or any other standard applicable to the conduct of human affairs, Eido Shimano's conduct has been a disgrace. It has been an affront not only to the monks and nuns of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, to the practitioners of New York Zendo Shobo-ji, to the Zen Studies Society Sangha, but to sincere Buddhist practitioners everywhere.

We petition you to express your strong disapproval of Eido Shimano's deeds.

The online petition is at:

<http://www.sanghaconvergence.org/Pindex.php>

Remember, your clarity and intention count.  
genkaku

**by Carol** on Sun Sep 12, 2010 5:50 pm

There is an interesting article by Katy Butler from the 1990 issue of Common Boundary - Encountering the Shadow in Buddhist America. It's mainly about the Tibetan Buddhist sex/alcohol scandals, but she also discusses zen teachers and insight meditation teachers.

It looks like the article was run through an optical character reader -- so many of the words are garbled -- but with some effort you can fill in the misspelled words.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Dan74** on Mon Sep 13, 2010 1:37 am

Yes, I've heard about these stories from Trungpa Rinpoche's community.

It's a bit simplistic but perhaps one can imagine two paths - one a path of purity and the other of power.

In a way Zen can bypass both, through the path of clarity, emptiness and non-abiding, but in reality most of us struggle with moral purity issues and get immensely attracted by the energy and power that arise in practice, or rather that the practice reconnects us with.

Many Tibetan practices cultivate immense energy through their visualisations and other tantra. If these are not balanced properly abuses like in the article above can and will occur. It appears that the tradition with its rapid expansion and its wealth does suffer from the predominance of power and lack of purity. There are certainly teachings in Vajrayana about emptiness and non-abiding, teachings that point out the core message of the Buddha. But human beings coming as we do with a karmic baggage get lopsided and become seduced by the energy and lopsided in practice.

Last night I was reading Hui Neng's commentary on the Diamond Sutra. This would be a great anti-dote to this kind of corruption.

Dan74

**by christopher:::** on Mon Sep 13, 2010 8:29 am

Hi Dan,

Yes, Purity vs Power is one way of looking at this. I think another closely related factor is situational and structural- the role that Sangha and Community plays, reinforcing the factors that support one or the other of these goals.

Buddha described this pretty simply 2,500 years ago, explaining why we need the precepts, the community and dharma practices to nurture wholesome mental states (the factors of awakening, the eight fold path) and diminish unwholesome mental states (fetters and hindrances, ignorance & desires) that give rise to potentially destructive behaviors.

Pretty simple in principle, yet what we saw (in a number of instances) Sangha/Community didn't work out in the way Buddha intended. The Asian model was planted in foreign soil, and right from the start there was an immediate merging of cultures, values and intentions.

So a number of Asian leaders unfamiliar with Western cultures (meeting Westerners unfamiliar with Asian cultures) acted more like alpha parents or harem shieks then enlightened masters. In time their Communities came to resemble dysfunctional families rather than optimally functioning Sanghas.

In that respect a number of Insight Meditation, Yoga and Zen communities fell into the same traps as the Tibetan groups, cause the power issues are not just practice related, they

flow from the structural set-up-- young Western seekers of both genders seeking enlightenment, European/American values of sexual exploration, democracy, equality and freedom meeting up with an ancient Asian sangha system based on teacher-centered hierarchies and teacher/student dyads...

That article Carol linked outlined this pretty well, imo...

Carol wrote:

There is an interesting article by Katy Butler from the 1990 issue of Common Boundary - Encountering the Shadow in Buddhist America. It's mainly about the Tibetan Buddhist sex/alcohol scandals, but she also discusses zen teachers and insight meditation teachers.

Perhaps there was just no way of avoiding this? I mean, this is how Buddhism has "arrived" in the west, carried not by Bodhidharma walking many weeks (months?) across the Himalayas into China (and sitting years outside the monastery) but by young Asian masters leaving home and then arriving in less than a day aboard jet airplanes...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by Christopher** on Tue Sep 14, 2010 8:55 am

Here's something else from Jiro Andy Afable, called "Has Eido Shimano Really Resigned?"

Someone has raised an important question: "What is the point of this Petition if Eido Shimano has already resigned as Abbot?"

In fact, Eido Shimano has not resigned as Abbot. He has neither tendered his resignation to the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors nor has the Board of Directors accepted his resignation. Nor have the Directors dismissed him. There has been no "public" statement of the Abbot's resignation, no press release; just a brief email to the current members of the Zen Studies Society mailing list and a curious notice on the ZSS website.

From the ZSS website, September 9, 2010

Shinge Roshi Roko Sherry Chayat, who will be installed as Vice Abbot, Dec. 31, 2010, will offer dokusan from January 2011 on. Roshi will actively continue in his role as Abbot of the society until he retires, December 8, 2010, but he will not be seeing new students for dokusan. Eido Roshi has said he will remain committed to ordained and long-time students for as long as his health allows.

Consider the implications of what this says. He is retiring as Abbot and will not be seeing new students for dokusan. However “Eido Roshi has said he will remain committed to ordained and long-time students for as long as his health allows.”

Obviously, he intends to see “ordained and long-time students as long as his health allows” under the sponsorship and umbrella of The Zen Studies Society.” He will, presumably, keep his apartment in Dai Bosatsu Zendo, his suite at Shoboji, and will continue to receive substantial financial compensation from Zen Studies Society. A man without any spiritual standing will continue to have a significant presence and tremendous influence on the Society. This is what signing the Petition can forestall. What Mr. Shimano has done is to offer a non-binding “promise” that he will resign in the future. He has made similar promises before, only to renege each and every time.

Until his Abbacy is terminated by an irrevocable, binding resolution of the Board of Directors, or his immediately effective resignation, duly accepted and recorded in the organization’s minutes, Mr. Shimano not only remains the Zen Studies Society Abbot, but continues, together with his wife, Yasuko Shimano (Director of New York Zendo Shobo-ji), to control the process of his own removal.

A close reading of the by-laws of The Society will reveal that Eido Shimano is still on the Board of Directors even if he made the gesture of “stepping down from the Board.”

We therefore encourage you to sign the online Petition notwithstanding Mr. Shimano’s “promise” to resign. It is not simply that the circumstances permit no other result than his immediate dismissal; it is that the current Zen Studies Society board members must be made aware that the Sangha is watching, calling upon and encouraging them to exercise their independent judgment and to summon the courage to do what is indisputably right, fearlessly and without hesitation.

The petition can be signed here: <http://www.sanghaconvergence.org/Pindex.php>

Christopher

**by Nonin** on Tue Sep 14, 2010 10:06 pm

Eido Shimano stepped down from the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors a couple of weeks ago. More recently, he has resigned as Abbot of the Society, effective 12/8/2010.

His letter of resignation may be viewed here: [http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?s=Shimano... tton=go%21](http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?s=Shimano...tton=go%21)

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by genkaku** on Tue Sep 14, 2010 10:22 pm

Nonin wrote:

Eido Shimano stepped down from the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors a couple of weeks ago. More recently, he has resigned as Abbot of the Society, effective 12/8/2010. His letter of resignation may be viewed here: [http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?s=Shimano... tton=go%21](http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?s=Shimano...tton=go%21)

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Given past performance, it would be nice to see his dated resignation on a piece of Zen Studies Society letterhead paper, with both his physical signature and his chop at the bottom. Email -- the format of the current resignation -- does not carry the same gravity. If Mr. Shimano's intent is sincere this time, surely there should be no difficulty in presenting such a hard-copy to the board of ZSS or the public.

As the old American saying goes,

Fool me once,  
Shame on you.  
Fool me twice,  
Shame on me.  
genkaku

**by genkaku** on Wed Sep 15, 2010 3:14 pm

Received this morning in email the following from the Rev. Andy Afable, Eido Shimano's second Dharma heir:

September 15, 2010

#### HAS EIDO SHIMANO REALLY RESIGNED?

An online petition that calls for Eido Shimano's immediate dismissal or withdrawal from The Zen Studies Society gives a clear answer to this question that has not been disputed by the Directors of The Zen Studies Society. I quote from <http://www.sanghaconvergence.org>

Someone has raised an important question: "What is the point of this Petition if Eido Shimano has already resigned as Abbot?"

In fact, Eido Shimano has not resigned as Abbot. He has neither tendered his resignation to the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors nor has the Board of Directors accepted his resignation. Nor have the Directors dismissed him. There has been no "public" statement of the Abbot's resignation, no press release; just a brief email to the current members of the Zen Studies Society mailing list and a curious notice on the ZSS website.

No, Eido Shimano has not resigned from his administrative and spiritual "duties" at The Zen Studies Society.

A resignation letter signed by the abbot, approved by the Board of Directors, and signed by the President of the Board and witnesses who are members of the Board would present real proof of a resignation.

This would be very simple and easy for them to do.  
genkaku

**by Carol** on Wed Sep 15, 2010 5:48 pm

I understand the doubt after all the prior history.

However, a written resignation is a written resignation regardless of the form or letterhead. In this day and age, an email writing is as binding as any other, and since the ZSS board decided to widely distribute Eido roshi's resignation email letter, and gave their permission to Tricycle Magazine to publish it, it is clear to me that the board believes he has resigned and has accepted his resignation. If, he should try to change his mind, then there would certainly be considerable outcry and embarrassment. I doubt the board would permit him to change his mind in those circumstances.

With that said, I wish he had resigned effective immediately rather than effective December 8th. Dragging this out can't be good for anyone. It needs to be done and over with as soon as possible so that ZSS sangha members can start picking up the pieces, and former sangha and others affected can begin to move on and heal. For that reason, I signed Andy Atable's petition.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by genkaku** on Wed Sep 15, 2010 8:01 pm

Thanks Carol.  
genkaku

**by simpleton** on Wed Sep 15, 2010 11:15 pm

Interesting article from this blog: [http://ubercorp.com/blog/index.php/2010 ... l-part-n1/simpleton](http://ubercorp.com/blog/index.php/2010...l-part-n1/simpleton)

**by Christopher** on Thu Sep 16, 2010 8:42 am

Carol wrote:  
If he should try to change his mind, then there would certainly be considerable outcry and embarrassment. I doubt the board would permit him to change his mind in those circumstances.

One would assume, yes?

For me, the point (among other things) is that I clearly put much more time and effort into my own letter to the board than Eido did for his - and of course I'm not even the criminal here. And so I say to his students again, REGARDLESS of the sex scandal: if he can't even tender his own resignation like a man, how can he be a good teacher otherwise? What do you think to learn from him at all?

By the way, forgive me if I'm flogging a dead horse here, but going through the archives I noticed something particularly creepy about the guy that perhaps not everyone is aware

of. Now, anyone who knows Eido knows that he's always going on and on about anniversaries and "karmic coincidences" (even in his resignation letter, for God's sake) and how unbelievable the whole DBZ story is, with Soen and Senzaki coming over, the gift from the Carlsons, etc. Even just last year Eido and a couple of students made some kind of 50th anniversary pilgrimage to LA, even visiting the hallowed place (I'm not kidding) where Mrs. Shubin Tanahashi once operated a coin laundry. I always just thought this was a weird tic, but now with the archives it's clear how deeply disturbed it really is. Because in fact, all those people whom he constantly glamorizes, from Soen Roshi to Dorris Carlson to Mrs. Tanahashi, all ended up sooner or later officially severing their ties to him. We all know how Soen blew him off, how Mrs. Carlson called him deceitful and forbade the ZSS to ever use her name again, but my favorite story is when Mrs. Tanahashi (a simple lay Zen student of Senzaki's) went over to Ryutaku-ji in the fifties to meet the monk who was supposed to be sent to America to assist him. She apparently took one look at Eido, returned to America and told Senzaki: "That one's not for you."

Now tell me: is it the sign of an otherwise healthy mind for him to have constantly talked about all these people, and how wonderful their story is, and yet neglected to mention that they all thought he was more or less a fraud?

Christopher

**by Shonin** on Thu Sep 16, 2010 10:59 am

Once again this taisho by Genjo Osho is to the point:  
<http://genjo.libsyn.com/well-known-ryutan>  
 Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
 My blog

Shonin

**by Nonin** on Mon Sep 20, 2010 11:43 pm

I recently received the following from a member of the Zen Studies Society Board after I made an inquiry:

Eido Shimano Roshi has written a letter of apology that announces his retirement at the close of this training season 12/8/10. Roshi's retirement has been officially accepted and acknowledged by the Board. Again, there is no turning back.



Aiho-san will step down as the director of Shobo-Ji, New York City Zendo, by the first of the year. A new director(s) is being selected and will be in place by January 1st, 2011.

Shinge Roko Roshi will be installed as the new Abbot of the Zen Studies Society on January 2nd, 2011.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Carol** on Tue Sep 21, 2010 1:23 am

Genjo Marinello posted this yesterday on the Open Buddha forum:

Dear Dharma Brothers and Sisters,

I don't know how to put it more plainly, but please be assured that Eido Shimano Roshi and his wife Aiho-san did resign from the Board of Directors of the Zen Studies Society on July 4th, 2010. Their resignations were formally accepted by the Board, and we meet regularly by conference call, and when we are able in person, without their presence or undue influence. In all previous cycles of complaints, Roshi and Aiho-san have remained on the Board and this did indeed create circumstances that hindered the proper processing of similar complaints.

After this date the board has gone on to:

Engage the FaithTrust Institute to help us process ethics complaints and consult with us on how to best achieve a positive future for our Society.

We have instigated a complete rewrite of the ZSS bylaws that will be membership based, with a much more democratic structure, which we hope to have in place by late January, 2011.

We are pursuing a "forensic" audit of the whole financial structure of the organization so that we can understand all our assets and liabilities from the ground up.

After completing the first phase of our ethics investigation, we concluded that a sincere letter of apology was needed, along with a much earlier retirement date for Roshi. The board made this known to Roshi at our Labor Day weekend meeting with him.

The Board meets face to face with the New York Sangha Labor Day weekend and everyone is heard.

Eido Roshi writes his letter of apology that announces his retirement as Abbot at the close of this training season 12/8/10. Roshi's retirement is officially accepted and acknowledged by the Board.

Aiho-san is scheduled to step down as the director of Shobo-Ji, New York City Zendo, by the first of the year. A new director(s) is being selected and will be in place by January 1st, 2011.

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi will be installed as the new Abbot of the Zen Studies Society on January 2nd, 2011.

At every turn we have tried to respond promptly and with an open heart to every correspondence we have directly received to the Board or Ethics Committee.

As to Eido Roshi's relationship with the Zen Studies Society after 12/8/10, this is currently a matter of much discussion by the Board. I cannot go into details on this because we are in the middle of our own discernment. Speaking for myself, I hope that Eido Roshi will be able to assist Shinge Roko Roshi to learn the forms and ceremonies appropriate for her role as Abbot for the first six months of 2011. I also hope that Eido Roshi will occasionally be invited as our retired founding abbot to give Teisho at either DBZ or New York City Zendo. However, we are all cognizant that Shinge Roshi will need to find her own footing and that an extended absence by Eido Roshi would probably be very helpful to make for a clean transition.

Finally, as I stated in my own newsletter, as "women come forward who are having trouble coping with the ramifications from these inappropriate relationships, the ZSS Board and I personally will do our best to be helpful..."

There are no Buddhas; if I meet one on the road of life, I have found a fraud. It is a delusion to believe that we are either Buddhas or bumpkins. Everyone should know that you will never find one without the other. The good news of Buddhism is that we are not just naked apes but also Buddhas.

I have been asked how could a "Roshi" be so blind? We all have blind spots; unfortunately, Eido Roshi's have proven to be repeatedly dangerous to the very Followers of the Way he has otherwise given his life to. Very tragic for him, the Sangha and most of all those he has wounded.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,

and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Christopher** on Tue Sep 21, 2010 1:20 pm

Nonin wrote:  
Roshi's retirement has been officially accepted

Genjo Marinello wrote:  
Eido Roshi will occasionally be invited as our retired founding abbot

Well that certainly didn't take long: he hasn't even resigned yet and already they're calling it a "retirement" instead.

This is becoming quite the learning experience for me...

Christopher

**by Hosho** on Tue Sep 21, 2010 6:51 pm

Christopher wrote:  
Nonin wrote:  
Roshi's retirement has been officially accepted

Genjo Marinello wrote:  
Eido Roshi will occasionally be invited as our retired founding abbot

Well that certainly didn't take long: he hasn't even resigned yet and already they're calling it a "retirement" instead.

This is becoming quite the learning experience for me...

If Zen Buddhism were not such an obscure religion in America and it was paid more attention we would undoubtedly see a greater distancing, or rather some distancing. But no one is watching so...

zenease

Hosho  
Banned

by **Christopher** on Wed Sep 22, 2010 9:50 am

Hosho wrote:  
no one is watching

I expect that at least one person is watching very carefully, presumably because he thinks that a "retired founding abbot" will be entitled to more contractual benefits than a "resigned former abbot". I understand from the archives that an unusually large amount of money (for a supposedly charitable organisation) is in the balance.

I was thinking the other day about how Eido has pledged nevertheless to "march on" and continue training his students, in order to purify his tainted karma or whatever. It seems to me that if he were really interested in purifying himself, he could find better ways of doing that than clinging to every last vestige of influence and money that he can scratch out. For example, in the excellent novel "Musashi" there's a character called Tanzaemon who also does many disreputable things and eventually is forced out of office, ending up as a poor, wandering shakuhachi monk. But it is precisely through this denigration and acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and the subsequent return to simplicity and humility, that Tanzaemon is able to finally see the light and is redeemed. In the end you of course always have much more to teach if you finally confront things honestly and hit bottom, instead of constantly trying to avoid the piper.

But of course Eido is a Zen Buddhist Master so he knows all of this perfectly well.  
Last edited by Christopher on Wed Sep 22, 2010 2:26 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Christopher

by **christopher:::** on Wed Sep 22, 2010 10:20 am

I pretty much agree with most of your points, Chris, but i dunno... Things work out, karma gets worked out... and no one knows how that will happen in advance... Yeah, maybe in our opinion it looks like he's hanging on when he should be kicked far away from ZSS... and yet it may be that having him around for certain events, disgraced, will provide a door (an opening) where former students will come to some community events in the future and confront him, knowing he's going to be there.

I really don't know, just i do think things often work out in ways that none of us can foresee and plan for.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Huifeng** on Wed Sep 22, 2010 10:37 am

christopher::: wrote:

I pretty much agree with most of your points, Chris, but i dunno... Things work out, karma gets worked out... and no one knows how that will happen in advance... Yeah, maybe in our opinion it looks like he's hanging on when he should be kicked far away from ZSS... and yet it may be that having him around for certain events, disgraced, will provide a door (an opening) where former students will come to some community events in the future and confront him, knowing he's going to be there.

I really don't know, just i do think things often work out in ways that none of us can foresee and plan for.

Though the law of karma and result is clear - actions done on the basis of craving, aversion and delusion lead to suffering for those who perform them.

Bhikṣu & Mahāyāna bodhisattva ordination by Ven Master Hsing Yun (星雲大師) (et al) of Foguang Shan Monastery (佛光山寺) Taiwan, Qixia (棲霞) branch of the Linji Chan lineage (臨濟禪宗). <http://www.fgs.org.tw> Blog: <http://wisdom.buddhistdoor.com/huifeng/>

Huifeng

**by Christopher** on Wed Sep 22, 2010 11:00 am

christopher::: wrote:

former students will come to some community events in the future and confront him

I'm no expert in sexual abuse cases, but it seems to me that this is precisely the LAST thing any victim will want to do.

And re: your "all things will pass" stance: um, yeah.

Christopher

**by genkaku** on Wed Sep 22, 2010 11:15 am

In the end you of course always have much more to teach if you finally confront things honestly and hit bottom, instead of constantly trying to avoid the piper.

That sounds like Buddhism to me, but no doubt there is some unctuous and deeeeeep meaning that I am overlooking. Blowing holy smoke is not the same as getting to the bottom of things.

Saving all sentient beings is not just religious bullshit.  
genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Wed Sep 22, 2010 2:15 pm

wise responses gentlemen.

genkaku wrote:

In the end you of course always have much more to teach if you finally confront things honestly and hit bottom, instead of constantly trying to avoid the piper.

That sounds like Buddhism to me, but no doubt there is some unctuous and deeeeeep meaning that I am overlooking. Blowing holy smoke is not the same as getting to the bottom of things.

Saving all sentient beings is not just religious bullshit.

indeed.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Christopher** on Thu Sep 23, 2010 10:34 am

Someone posted the following on genkaku's blog the other day, and I found it to be a nice complement to my own letter to the Board. You'd think these things would be self-evident, but I guess not everyone who volunteers to be a member of the board of trustees of a charitable organisation (or who is strategically placed there by his master) is aware of the level of responsibility involved.

If ES doesn't agree to sit down to renegotiate, ZSS has lots of strategic options, all of which would have reasonable likelihoods of success, among them: (1) firing Shimano outright and filing its own action against ES to rescind the severance agreement based on his having committed arguably indictable offenses; (2) filing an action to rescind the severance agreement based on facial unreasonableness, inherent unfairness and it being

contrary to public policy; (3) filing an action against Shimano for breach of his employment agreement and the ZSS Ethical Guidelines, etc., etc.

So much leverage against ES, actually. So much, in fact that it is extremely difficult to understand why the Board is negotiating with ES at all. There is no reason to look at this situation through a "dharma lens," as someone pointed out previously, and thereby seek to justify engineering a "soft landing" for ES based on the good he is perceived to have done.

This is a case of gross misconduct - perhaps criminal misconduct - that, if it had occurred at a financial institution, a hospital, a business corporation or any other "ordinary" institution, would have undoubtedly resulted in termination, forfeiture of compensation and benefits and possible prosecution.

What exempts the ZSS Board from necessarily taking these same actions here in exercising their fiduciary responsibilities to protect the organization? (Indeed, their fiduciary obligations are not to protect ES, certainly not at the expense of protecting the organization.)

It's very hard to understand unless conflicts of interest are improperly impacting their exercise of good judgment, contrary to the obligations imposed upon them by the State of New York. But indeed, this seems to be the problem faced by prior Boards when they ran into these very same kinds of difficulties: these are Boards comprised of Shimano's Zen students, or individuals intensely loyal to him, without any independent Board member representation. The inherent conflict of interest prohibits the students from acting against their beloved teacher (that's why they are placed on the Board in the first place) and the cycle repeats itself.

The issue is no longer really Shimano's conduct - no one is even discussing it since much of the allegations are uncontroverted, even admitted - but rather what action the Board takes (or doesn't take) now. But why the Board doesn't treat this like any other Board would, by just firing Shimano, really is the crux of the issue now. Maybe it really will take a lawsuit to make them understand that this is not exclusively a "dharma" matter.

Christopher

**by Christopher** on Fri Oct 08, 2010 8:34 pm

I just received this in an email from the Zen Studies Society. I wouldn't normally comment on such stuff, but given the fact that the current situation at the ZSS really makes my stomach turn, allow me to let loose a bit.

To commemorate his 50th anniversary living in the United States, Eido Roshi is going to conduct a Jukai Ceremony at Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji on the closing day of Harvest

Sesshin, Saturday, November 6. If you would like to make a formal commitment to the practice of Buddha-Dharma at either Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji or New York Zendo Shobo-ji, you are welcome to apply. The following condition must be met: you must have attended one or more seven-day sesshins at DBZ or at least three weekend sesshins at Shobo-ji.

If you are interested, please write a letter of application briefly describing your motivation to make this commitment at this time. Include your full name, date of birth (year is optional), and information regarding any previous Zen practice, if applicable. Mail to Dai Bosatsu Zendo, attn: Eido Roshi. You will receive a reply with more details. Applicants should plan to attend Harvest Sesshin (beginning Saturday, October 30) at DBZ in its entirety.

It's not even the fact that this is a business-as-usual announcement for new people to officially become students of a sexual predator that gets me. It's also not the bogus formality of it, as if having attended "one or more seven-day sesshins at DBZ" has anything to do with one's "commitment to the practice of Buddha-Dharma".

Instead, what has always bothered me is how much emphasis Eido puts on this whole Jukai business in the first place. He even asked me once during a sesshin - it must have been my second or third interview with him at all - whether I had a dharma name, as if that could possibly have any influence on the quality of my zazen. And a student of one of Eido's successors was actually shocked when I told him that I didn't have one - I was apparently the first Zen practitioner he had ever met who actually went by the name his parents gave him. The poor guy wasn't sure whether he wanted to go through with Jukai, and was clearly relieved to meet me and see that sporting a dharma name obviously wasn't a precondition to serious Zen practice. So clearly Eido emphasises Jukai to the extreme, and the obvious result is that students feel somehow bound to him and his "school" - it's like a kind of baptism - though of course in Zen there's absolutely nothing to get from anything, let alone a new Japanese name. Yet in the meantime it seems like every Westerner and his dog feels it necessary to go through this exotic religious ceremony.

Now I won't say (at least not on this board) that there is anything wrong per se with publicly committing yourself to Buddhism. All I know is that in the several years that I practiced with my own teacher, not only did he never even remotely refer to the existence of such a ceremony, I often wondered whether he even knew what my name was at all. That's how unimportant such things were to him. And looking back, I realize how good (or should I say bad) that kind of treatment was for my ego. And so that's why I find Eido's Jukai-intensive practice so depressing.

Christopher



**by genkaku** on Fri Oct 08, 2010 9:44 pm

Chris -- One of the things (blush, blush) I asked Kyudo to do when I first met him was to give me another Dharma name. Eido had handed out "Kigen," original (wo)man ... sort of like "Adam." When I was getting to know Kyudo, I was trying to put some distance between myself and Eido, lol.

Kyudo didn't bat an eye and played right along, handing out the name "Genkaku," original understanding or original realization ... pretty much just like "Adam" or "Kigen." He inked it dutifully on the back of my rakusu. Kyudo knew how to play the game, but I always had a sense that he knew how to laugh about it and laugh hard.

I never saw Eido laugh hard except when maneuvering.  
genkaku

**by Christopher** on Sat Oct 09, 2010 5:51 pm

Thanks for the story - I don't think I've ever seen you blush!

PS Mods: please feel free to remove the annoying extra line breaks in my message above. I've been having computer problems lately, sorry!

Gotcha! - AlasdairGF

Christopher

**by Christopher** on Fri Oct 15, 2010 5:20 pm

Here's an update on the current situation, as nicely summarised by someone on the Tricycle blog:

ZSS Board Statements and outcomes:

1. Contracting with Faith Trust for advice. Advice given on Sept 4 was for Shimano to step down immediately.

Outcome – Advice not taken and Faith Trust continues to not agree with ZSS decision.

“Resignation” (reality is retirement) delayed to Dec 8, and the NY Zendo Schedule shows Shimano will be giving a Teisho 3 days after “resignation” on Dec 11, and again in January. This is a likely monthly event.....from ZSS website:

“DEC 1–8 We–We Rohatsu Week – one sit added each evening  
 Dec 11 Sa Fall Training Period Ends,  
 Teisho by Eido Roshi

JAN 6 Th Spring Training, Opening Teisho by Eido Roshi”

2. Strong statement made by ZSS That Shimano would NOT be allowed to take new students.

Outcome: The Harvest Sesshin as announced on ZSS website states:

“Harvest Jukai Sesshin, Oct. 30–Nov. 7 To commemorate his 50th anniversary living in the United States, Eido Roshi is going to conduct a Jukai Ceremony at Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji on the closing day of Harvest Sesshin, Saturday, November 6.

If you would like to make a formal commitment to the practice of Buddha-Dharma at either Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji or New York Zendo Shobo-ji, you are welcome to apply. The following condition must be met: you must have attended one or more 7-day sesshins at DBZ or at least three weekend sesshins at Shobo-ji.”

3. Also included in the ZSS website:

“Shoken

Students who are sitting sesshin for the first time at Dai Bosatsu Zendo participate in the traditional ceremony of shoken, where they formally begin a teacher-student relationship with Eido Roshi. To celebrate and honor the significance of this first meeting, shoken students make a \$25 incense donation to the monastery. Over the course of the year, all the shoken donations are pooled together and used to purchase ceremonial incense.

The Shoken ceremony occurs on the first day of sesshin. From that point forward, first-time participants are considered to be Eido Roshi’s students, and as such they are admitted into dokusan – formal, one-to-one meetings with the abbot.”

Given the above, may I inquire whether anyone on this board still maintains that Eido sincerely intends to resign? I have to admit that the silence on this thread is getting pretty deafening. I mean, on the one hand it's at least nice that nobody is bothering defending him anymore, but really: where is the outrage? This is undoubtedly the biggest scandal that American Zen has ever seen, and it's happening this very instant, right before your eyes. Why, for example, has apparently nobody but Carol signed the petition? Is there some piece of information that I'm missing?

Christopher

by partofit22 on Fri Oct 15, 2010 8:12 pm

christopher, maybe it's an expectation of yours to see continued interest, open involvement? maybe more people quietly signed the petition? i don't know ...

you write "given the above" but the above in your post would need to be investigated before being taken for gospel, no?

but if it's true, i totally don't understand the hoopla given his resignation and have to say i took for granted that it meant total, not partial, but i have to admit i didn't scrutinize every crossed T and dotted i- i trusted! i figured it meant kaput- done-finished- and maybe it is, in their language- in their understanding of it- kind of like when two people chuckle from an inside joke and others follow suit maybe because laughter is infectious? i don't know ...

but as far as defending eido shimano, i'll still do that because i don't know everything about the guy- i mostly know about the part of him that makes him a poor excuse for a man but i'm fairly certain that he wrote or spoke or both to someone's benefit somewhere-  
Last edited by partofit22 on Fri Oct 15, 2010 11:59 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
partofit22

**by genkaku** on Fri Oct 15, 2010 10:40 pm

Why, for example, has apparently nobody but Carol signed the petition?

Chris -- I signed it -- or at least I think I did ... though computers have a way of making their malevolent power known in my life. And so did several others.

Where's the outrage? you ask. Don't you think that outrage, like sorrow and much of what passes for love, has its limits? I'm not talking kissy-face Buddhism here -- I mean it really ... in the news, in your life ... how long can anyone keep it up before the dishes need to be washed or the dog walked? Is this somehow unusual in the human panorama? I once did some emailing with a fellow who had been in Bosnia as a soldier and seen the mass graves. The experience tore his face off ... an honest tragedy ... but how many people do you know who could even identify Bosnia on a map?

Keep an eye on things.  
genkaku

**by just** on Fri Oct 15, 2010 11:05 pm

Adam, you come from the understanding of the eido situation by your presence. please do not offer advice based on e-mail and "unknown" places, for someone may remember other

facts that do not help. Or may know more than you about 'unknown' places. only about that. sorry and thanks.  
just

**by genkaku** on Sat Oct 16, 2010 3:23 am

Just -- I'm not entirely sure what you're saying, but whatever the offense, assuming it's real, I apologize.  
genkaku

**by songhill** on Sat Oct 16, 2010 5:17 am

Japanese Buddhism, in general, has never been comfortable with the idea of strict Buddhist monasticism (the 227 rules and so on). Eido Tai Shimano's sexual activities are no doubt born out of Japanese Buddhism's distaste for strict monasticism.

It was Tendai's Saichō who advocated for the Bodhisattva precepts instead of the traditional monastic rules. Full institution of the Bodhisattva precepts came in 822, when the court approved Saichō's petition, who by that time had died.

Then much later...

"An edict, number 133, issued by the new Meiji government in 1872 ordered that monks should be free to «eat meat, take wives, and shave their heads» as they chose. From that time, the secularization of monks proceeded rapidly." For the rest <http://bit.ly/bn7rOU>

Sex goes on in Buddhism. It is just a fact of life. Like most here I have heard the stories. But then, also, we shouldn't forget The Four Reliances one being, "reliance on the Dharma not (merely) reliance on the person" (<http://bit.ly/aOOfKK>).

Maybe if we spent more time with the Dharma and far less time with the politics of Zen centers and the cult of Roshi, we might gain a much deeper understanding of Buddhism that, in the end, will really benefit us and all sentient beings.

songhill

**by just** on Sat Oct 16, 2010 8:02 am

No, genkaku, it is i that should apologise. im slow to learn and quick in forgetting. disregard my post, its a hasty emotional reaction.. (another one!). Sorry.

just

**by Christopher** on Sat Oct 16, 2010 4:41 pm

genkaku wrote:

I signed it. And so did several others.

Hi Adam,

Sorry, I didn't mean to ignore you. In my one-track mind I guess it was so self-evident that you had signed it that it didn't even need mentioning!

genkaku wrote:

Don't you think that outrage, like sorrow and much of what passes for love, has its limits? [...] Keep an eye on things.

Quite. I'm relatively new to the scandal, in the "hot phase", as my teacher once put it, but I can certainly see how someone who has been witnessing this stuff for 20+ years eventually has to move on. I'll take a breather for a while and keep my eyes open.

Christopher

**by Christopher** on Sat Oct 16, 2010 4:44 pm

partofit22 wrote:

the above in your post would need to be investigated before being taken for gospel, no?

Indeed. I'm not hopeful, but we'll wait and see what happens on Dec. 8th.

Christopher

**by genkaku** on Wed Oct 27, 2010 10:26 pm

Appearing on the Zen Studies Society web site, though finding it isn't easy.

October 27, 2010

Dear Sangha,

This has been a year of many changes for The Zen Studies Society. This letter is intended to update you on the developments that have occurred.

On January 23rd, 2010, at the annual ZSS Board meeting, Eido Shimano Roshi announced his intention to retire. This year marks the 50th anniversary of his arrival in the United States. As his last project, he wanted to build a Sanmon (entrance gate) for DBZ, which had been his original vision when DBZ first opened in 1976. He has raised the funds needed to fulfill his vision, and the project is scheduled to be completed next year.

Also, in February, as part of his retirement plans, Roshi retired from his role as guest professor at Shogen Junior College (of which Yamakawa Sogen Roshi is President) in Gifu Prefecture, Japan, where he has taught

for the past 20 years. On Labor Day Weekend, September 4th, several meetings were held at New York Zendo with Eido Roshi, the

Board, and the Faith Trust Institute, who were enlisted to help guide The Zen Studies Society in response to a series of ethical breaches. The meetings included lengthy discussions during which the FTI issued a series of recommendations (now posted on our website). Additionally, the Board met with a large group of sangha members and heard their input

and suggestions. After an in-depth review and serious consideration of all points of view, the Board endorsed the following actions:

After completing the 34th Anniversary Sesshin at DBZ, Eido Roshi resigned from the Board of Directors of The Zen Studies Society.

Eido Roshi wrote and sent an open letter expressing his apology to the Sangha.

Eido Roshi will retire as Abbot on the last day of Rohatsu Sesshin, December 8th, 2010, and will be recognized as the Founding Abbot of New York Zendo and Dai Bosatsu Zendo. In this role he will be freed from his responsibility presiding over the two zendos.

It is his intention to take a brief respite

from his busy lifestyle, and with renewed vigor, work on translating Chinese and Japanese Zen texts.

On January 1, 2011, at 1 p.m., Shinge-shitsu Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi will be installed as the second Abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji. Shinge Roshi will take responsibility for teaching all new students, and for the spiritual guidance and direction of DBZ. Along with the Board and residents, she will be responsible for the care and management of the monastery.

Following his retirement from the Board in July, Eido Roshi stopped receiving new students and may see and instruct only those who mutually decide to continue their established dokusan practice. This will occur primarily during sesshin at DBZ, and on selected occasions at New York Zendo Shobo-ji, as determined by the Abbot of DBZ and the Director(s) of NYZ and subject to Eido Roshi's availability.

Eido Roshi will continue monthly Japanese Dharma classes at New York Zendo Shobo-ji.

After 20 years of dedicated service Aiho-San Shimano will be retiring from her position as Director of the New York Zendo Shobo-ji on the last day of this training period, Saturday, December 11th, 2010. She will be recognized as Honorary Director, and as such will no longer be responsible for the

direction and management of the temple. She has expressed her interest in continuing to serve the community by occasionally making flower arrangements for the altars and offering her knowledge and experience in selecting scrolls for display.

As Interim Directors, Rev. Zuiho Myodo Matthew Perez & Board Vice-President Shoteki Chris Phelan will be sharing responsibility for Shobo-ji.

In order to sustain the traditional and authentic Zen atmosphere at DBZ and NYZ, Eido Roshi is generously allowing both temples to use his personal collection of scrolls, sculptures, and ceremonial objects on a provisional basis until a more permanent resolution may be established.

Four members of the ZSS Board have resigned for various reasons since July. As of Monday, October 18th, the Board nominated and approved two new members, Rev. Shinkon Peter Glynn, who

completed his three years of training at DBZ, and Rev. Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz, shika (head monastic) at Hoen-ji.

The Board is currently reviewing the organizational bylaws to best serve the members and mission of The Zen Studies Society.

The Zen Studies Society Board is undertaking a financial review. As part of our year-end outreach we will share an updated status of our current circumstances.

The Board is continuing to examine additional ways to ensure an open, trusting, and healthy practice for all students.

Shinge Roshi and Genjo Osho have consulted with trusted colleagues in the American Zen Teachers Association.

We want to acknowledge our Dharma legacy, from Hakuin Zenji to Gempo Roshi, Soen Roshi, and Eido Roshi, as well as through such pioneers of Zen in America as Soyen Shaku Roshi, Nyogen Senzaki, and Dr. D.T. Suzuki. All of their efforts are manifested in our Dai Bosatsu Mandala. The Zen Studies Society's unique role in bridging East and West was affirmed by the recent Golden Wind Sesshin at DBZ, joined and in part led by Sogen Yamakawa Roshi of Shogen-ji.

When we think back to the early days, before Shobo-ji there was just a garage; before Dai Bosatsu Zendo, there was just a hunting lodge on a mountain. It is through the incomparable dedication of Eido Roshi and Aiho-San that we have these temples for authentic Rinzai Zen practice.

We will be sending out an update at the end of this year. The 2011 schedule will be posted online by the end of this month. In closing, we want to affirm that we will continue to build on our rich heritage, and to provide a strong vision for a healthy Zen community where we can deepen our commitment to the Bodhisattva Way.

Please understand that everything we are working toward takes time. Thank you for your encouragement, open communication, and continued support.

With Palms Together,  
 Board of The Zen Studies Society  
 Board of Directors October 18th, 2010  
 Soun Joe Dowling – President  
 Shoteki Chris Phelan – Vice President  
 Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi

Genjo Marinello  
 Zenshin Richard Rudin  
 Newly Appointed Board Members (October 18th, 2010)  
 Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz  
 Shinkon Peter Glynn  
 genkaku

**by Christopher** on Thu Oct 28, 2010 9:57 am

Please understand that everything we are working toward takes time.

I'll say. I was talking to a former ZSS member yesterday and he repeated how tense the atmosphere always is over there. Apparently no one dares openly criticise Eido at the best of times; right now it must be hell, especially on the Board. I guess that's why everyone keeps resigning - I see that my old acquaintance Carl Baldini is also no longer listed as a board member.

It's so sad because everything would be so much easier if Eido would just get the hell out of there, period. I like to compare the situation at DBZ to the one here in Germany, where two similar scandals have occurred this year. And though they were both comparatively minor transgressions, committed by people of much higher rank and with otherwise impeccable records (the President himself for a comment about the deployment of troops abroad, and the head of the Lutheran church for DUI), both of them resigned on the spot. The swiftness apparently surprised even most Germans, who would have been happy to just forgive and forget.

But again, Eido is clearly not a "normal" transgressor.

Christopher

**by christopher:::** on Thu Oct 28, 2010 1:13 pm

In Japan as well, when there is a scandal or loss of face for an organization the top person will take full responsibility, apologize formally and resign. There is (however) also a culture of covering things up and denial of potentially embarrassing information, in order to avoid such situations.

The Board is continuing to examine additional ways to ensure an open, trusting, and healthy practice for all students.  
 Shinge Roshi and Genjo Osho have consulted with trusted colleagues in the American Zen Teachers Association.



We want to acknowledge our Dharma legacy, from Hakuin Zenji to Gempo Roshi, Soen Roshi, and Eido Roshi, as well as through such pioneers of Zen in America as Soyen Shaku Roshi, Nyogen Senzaki, and Dr. D.T. Suzuki. All of their efforts are manifested in our Dai Bosatsu Mandala. The Zen Studies Society's unique role in bridging East and West was affirmed by the recent Golden Wind Sesshin at DBZ, joined and in part led by Sogen Yamakawa Roshi of Shogen-ji.

When we think back to the early days, before Shobo-ji there was just a garage; before Dai Bosatsu Zendo, there was just a hunting lodge on a mountain. It is through the incomparable dedication of Eido Roshi and Aiho-San that we have these temples for authentic Rinzai Zen practice.

Sounds like Eido and his supporters are trying to run out the clock in an attempt to preserve the narrative of Eido's "Dharma legacy" as a "dedicated" "pioneer" of "authentic" Rinzai Zen practice. And unless there is an outside force (20/20 story, 60 minutes, Newsweek article, book published, etc) that puts pressure on them, they'll probably succeed, unfortunately.

Even over at Wikipedia, a kind of neutral ground, its taken immense effort for the anti-Shimano contingency to have any accusations against him presented publicly....

In July 2010, Eido Shimano and his wife resigned from the ZSS Board of Directors after a "recent inappropriate relationship" between Shimano and one of his female students was revealed.[12][17][18] Shimano sent a letter of apology to the ZSS community in September 2010, stating that he would retire as abbot of the Zen Studies Society in December 2010.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eido\\_Shimano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eido_Shimano)

This isn't really a battle over his resignation, its the narrative of his "legacy" that is being protected and defended...

In 2004 Eido Shimano Roshi received the Buddhism Transmission Award from the Japan-based Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai Foundation given to individuals who have made a significant impact on the dissemination of Buddhism in the West; this same organization produced a two part TV documentary on Eido Shimano Roshi and Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji.

<http://www.dharmanet.org/BDKEidoRoshi1.htm>

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **genkaku** on Thu Oct 28, 2010 2:03 pm

genkaku

**by partofit22** on Thu Oct 28, 2010 2:08 pm

while reading the christophers posts, nixon almost immediately came to mind ...  
partofit22

**by christopher:::** on Thu Oct 28, 2010 2:52 pm

We humans are complex creatures.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by genkaku** on Thu Oct 28, 2010 3:52 pm

We humans are complex creatures.

Pretty simple, don't you think?

But "simple" is not simplistic.

genkaku

**by genkaku** on Fri Nov 05, 2010 6:39 pm

Of possible interest/relevance:

Western Buddhist Teachers-Activists in Everybody Else's Backyard

genkaku

**by Carol** on Fri Nov 05, 2010 6:54 pm

genkaku wrote:

Of possible interest/relevance:

## Western Buddhist Teachers-Activists in Everybody Else's Backyard

Yes, I just read it. Quite interesting. I agree with NellaLou that it's disappointing that more Zen teachers have not signed the petition for Shimano's resignation. I imagine, without knowing, that many of them believe their communications should be "behind the scenes between colleagues" or some such. But I think this whole thing has been and continues to be damaging to American Zen Buddhism, and the more Zen teachers who speak out about it, the better. We need to learn how to deal with these things, no matter how uncomfortable or close to home they are.

However, I don't share NellaLou's dripping disdain for Zen teachers signing a letter to President Obama about Burma. I find that just gratuitous curmudgeonliness.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Seigen** on Fri Nov 05, 2010 7:50 pm

That is some good journalism! Putting the ZFI comment aside (although dialogue has slowed following the appearance of said heavyhitter, has it not?), it does seem to be up to the bloggers, doesn't it? Feet to the fire and all that? I think there is a stronger sense of accountability to a public audience, which teachers do not feel. From my perspective regardless of insider politics the document is out there, and to stay away from it because one doesn't agree with the bitterly accusatory mood of its origin is to remain inside and not to grant the real value that as a document it is a public historical record of Zen in America.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Carol** on Fri Nov 05, 2010 7:53 pm

Seigen wrote:

That is some good journalism! Putting the ZFI comment aside (although dialogue has slowed following the appearance of said heavyhitter, has it not?), .

Not sure what you mean?

It is time to sit down and be still,

for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by just** on Fri Nov 05, 2010 9:27 pm

im a wannabe zen practitioner from far away from NY city and DZB , but i still dont like or approve. should i be signing any letters if the very folks living there are not able to sort out their own mess?  
just

**by Carol** on Fri Nov 05, 2010 9:50 pm

There is a dharma talk by Roshi Bodhin Kjolhede of Rochester Zen Center dated June 7,2009 <http://rzcpodcasts.blogspot.com/> Scroll down the page to the podcast titled "Watching Our Response to Rumor."

Wise and relevant to this discussion, I think. Also, I believe Roshi Kjolhede did sign the petition.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Seigen** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 12:53 am

I don't think we are talking about a witch hunt, Carol. There has been a public apology acknowledging transgression and harm, there has been a New York times article, there has been an outside consultation...we aren't really talking about uninformed children, are we? Hasn't it been the case that we are not in the position any more of scattered incomplete evidence or gossip, but appropriate measure?

Granted, it is my impression, but posts here have become a sporadic checking in, not an engaged dialogue, fading a bit since Genjo appeared. I haven't written anything, I feel the need to support the next abbot in her endeavors and have expressed that. But I am also discouraged by events as I understand them. The facts of the case to the extent that they

have been publicly acknowledged do make what remains to the historical record an important matter, and I don't think this can easily be dismissed as simply taking an outside position or view.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Carol** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 1:06 am

Seigen wrote:

I don't think we are talking about a witch hunt, Carol. There has been a public apology acknowledging transgression and harm, there has been a New York times article, there has been an outside consultation...we aren't really talking about uninformed children, are we? Hasn't it been the case that we are not in the position any more of scattered incomplete evidence or gossip, but appropriate measure?

Granted, it is my impression, but posts here have become a sporadic checking in, not an engaged dialogue, fading a bit since Genjo appeared. I haven't written anything, I feel the need to support the next abbot in her endeavors and have expressed that. But I am also discouraged by events as I understand them. The facts of the case to the extent that they have been publicly acknowledged do make what remains to the historical record an important matter, and I don't think this can easily be dismissed as simply taking an outside position or view.

I've noticed a tendency to speculate and gossip about Genjo Marinello and Roko Chayat all over the internet ... not so much here ... that reminds me of a witch hunt.

I do also think that some of the reticence to sign petitions may come from teachers who haven't read all the facts and don't want to take a stand on what they don't personally know.

Genjo posted once here -- about 5 pages ago. If that had any impact on what others want to say, I'd be very surprised.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by christopher:::** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 1:31 am

There are probably conversations and movements going on behind the scenes that none of us are aware of, or are not in a position to speak about. There are a number of ways (formal, informal, public and private) that people can help to influence change...

Last edited by christopher::: on Sat Nov 06, 2010 1:17 pm, edited 2 times in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Jok\_Hae** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 1:33 am

Carol wrote:

I do also think that some of the reticence to sign petitions may come from teachers who haven't read all the facts and don't want to take a stand on what they don't personally know.

I am not a teacher, but I did receive a letter asking to sign the petition and did not, mainly for the reasons cited above. I also do not, and I will get killed for this I am sure, feel any need to "save" Zen in America. It won't fall in a hole. Fortunately, people familiar with the situation have spoken out and the issue continues to be pressed by those intimate with it, which is a good thing. But, quite frankly I don't think it is my place to comment on it, nor is it my place to be signing petitions.

Fire away...

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

by **genkaku** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 2:21 am

Keith -- No gunfire from this perch. If you want to speak, speak. If you don't want to speak, then don't. My only hope for anyone choosing either course is that there is some clear sense of attention and responsibility.

genkaku

by **Jok\_Hae** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 2:16 pm

genkaku wrote:

Keith -- No gunfire from this perch. If you want to speak, speak. If you don't want to speak, then don't. My only hope for anyone choosing either course is that there is some clear sense of attention and responsibility.

Yes, and that's my particular struggle with this. What exactly is my responsibility? The article you linked to seem to say that because the Burma situation is so far away it is somehow less worthy of our attention. Terrible situations spring forth like mushrooms after a rain every day, non-stop. But, it seems as though NellaLou was suggesting that the subject of the thread should somehow be paramount, due to it's proximity and subject.

At the risk of digging an even deeper hole for myself, it seems to me that this is primarily an internal issue for ZSS. The fact that they are allowing this person to give Jukai seems to me to unbelievably callous. There aren't words for it, really. But, I am not there, nor have I ever been there. Surely, any students who take part in this ceremony see something that the rest of us don't. And quite frankly, I find the condemnation by folks not directly aware of the history or the current situation to be misplaced and lacking a "clear sense of attention and responsibility". So, I am not going to grab my pitchfork and torch and storm the castle with the mob. I will, and do, chant for the victims and perpetrators. The sorrow and confusion by all this seems never ending.

Keith  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by genkaku** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 2:31 pm

But, it seems as though NellaLou was suggesting that the subject of the thread should somehow be paramount, due to it's proximity and subject.

Keith -- I sensed some of that too: "This horror is more compelling than that horror," "This pain is worse than that pain" ... something like that.

But, using another pair of glasses, I thought it was interesting to note the willingness to espouse one cause while declining to espouse another. Which one of us does not do the same?

Interesting, I thought.  
genkaku

**by christopher:::** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 2:39 pm

Thanks for your posts, Keith. I share some similar conflicted feelings about this.  
 ~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~

christopher:::

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 2:42 pm

genkaku wrote:

But, it seems as though NellaLou was suggesting that the subject of the thread should somehow be paramount, due to it's proximity and subject.

Keith -- I sensed some of that too: "This horror is more compelling than that horror,"  
 "This pain is worse than that pain" ... something like that.

But, using another pair of glasses, I thought it was interesting to note the willingness to espouse one cause while declining to espouse another. Which one of us does not do the same?

Interesting, I thought.

Yeah, that kind of drills down to what exactly is the cause and are they the same? A very serious problem with an organization's teacher and the really unbelievably horrific situation in Myanmar seem to be apples and oranges, not on a magnitude scale, just different situations. And I can understand why one organization might be unwilling to get involved in another group's business...glass houses and all. Nellalou's article is a sterling example of how to get people to read your blog. Be a jerk. Sorry, there it is. Push emotional buttons at all costs. That's why people flock to these things. I am always leery of the mob mentality...just look at the last election. Fear and anger are dangerous tools and can result in blind action.

Ah well, I have probably said too much..sorry for inflicting my views on you.

Last edited by Jok\_Hae on Sat Nov 06, 2010 2:46 pm, edited 1 time in total.

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 2:45 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Thanks for your posts, Keith. I share some similar conflicted feelings about this.



Thanks Chris. I sincerely hope that no one thinks I am suggesting turning away. The folks that should have said something have (Roshi Aitken, Genkaku, etc.) and continue to do so, which is the responsible and correct thing to do.

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by partofit22** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 3:37 pm

keith, maybe when people made public that they signed the petition, they did so with no expectations in mind -- that they simply were making it known, publicly, that they agreed with the wording of the petition- if by doing so the petition gained more signatures, so be it- as in it's the signers actions, therefore, their concern-

as far being distant from responsibility, nobody is- but this doesn't mean that everyone must sign every petition- i don't know how individuals decide exactly what they are responsible for or if they are responsible for all things- because they just might be- but i find it hard to believe or how it wouldn't also be an individuals responsibility not to sign a petition-

just my 1 cent ...

partofit22

**by Seigen** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 5:11 pm

Jok Hae wrote:

The folks that should have said something have (Roshi Aitken, Genkaku, etc.) and continue to do so, which is the responsible and correct thing to do.

But it is also true that these folks have been speaking up for a long time, and their views were not accepted over that long time. Aitken was blogging on his death bed trying to make it right. He knew that appropriate action would take more than himself alone, and it did - this much is clear.

How one interprets it is one thing, but that NellaLou bothered to compare the petitions provides strong material, it's not just an attention-getting blogger's ploy but a worthy object of consideration.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by genkaku** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 5:38 pm

a worthy object of consideration.

I agree.  
genkaku

**by Jok\_Hae** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 6:10 pm

Seigen wrote:

Jok Hae wrote:

The folks that should have said something have (Roshi Aitken, Genkaku, etc.) and continue to do so, which is the responsible and correct thing to do.

But it is also true that these folks have been speaking up for a long time, and their views were not accepted over that long time. Aitken was blogging on his death bed trying to make it right. He knew that appropriate action would take more than himself alone, and it did - this much is clear.

How one interprets it is one thing, but that NellaLou bothered to compare the petitions provides strong material, it's not just an attention-getting blogger's ploy but a worthy object of consideration.

We can agree to disagree on that one. I don't feel one can make any useful comparison between the two petitions. They are completely different issues. I didn't feel the material was strong at all, really. Just sensationalism.

The issue of why some teachers sign it and some don't can be construed a 100 different ways, depending upon one's agenda.

My understanding is Roshi Aitken's views were not accepted within his organization...not particularly shocking, particularly given some of the cultural issues Christopher::: mentioned earlier. Regrettable yes, but hardly surprising. I don't know to what extent the wider Zen community or the general public knew about it.

Keith  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

by **Jok\_Hae** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 6:26 pm

partofit22 wrote:

keith, maybe when people made public that they signed the petition, they did so with no expectations in mind -- that they simply were making it known, publicly, that they agreed with the wording of the petition- if by doing so the petition gained more signatures, so be it- as in it's the signers actions, therefore, their concern-

as far being distant from responsibility, nobody is- but this doesn't mean that everyone must sign every petition- i don't know how individuals decide exactly what they are responsible for or if they are responsible for all things- because they just might be- but i find it hard to believe or how it wouldn't also be an individuals responsibility not to sign a petition-

just my 1 cent ...

Thanks for you penny.

As I am writing this the petition lists 134 signatures. I am sure there are many different reasons for signing it. As you said, determining people's motivation as to why they signed it would be tricky business. The same could be said for teachers who declined to sign it. I would maintain that writing articles or making posts that question others intentions is not, to use Genkaku's words, working with a clear sense of attention and responsibility. Sign it or don't, but maybe we can avoid judging others for their choices.

Keith

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

by **genkaku** on Sat Nov 06, 2010 7:51 pm

The South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault Australia's guidelines target a Christian setting in Australia, but I found them apropos and lacking in any particular bias. I recommend them to anyone who is interested in this thread or might find themselves in circumstances that warrant level-headed investigation.

Under "Complaints and Prevention," the following topics are addressed:

- \* Why is it the minister's responsibility to maintain the boundaries in the relationship?
- \* How should complaints of misconduct be handled?
- \* What about forgiveness?
- \* Should I report to church authorities if I feel I have been abused in a ministerial relationship?

- \* Gaining support - your entitlement
- \* What can parishioners do to prevent misconduct in the church?
- \* What can clergy do to prevent misconduct?
- \* Notes
- \* Further reading

The topics are discussed in plain and direct English here.  
genkaku

**by moon face buddha** on Sun Nov 07, 2010 10:10 am

One would hope that over time lessons are learned, people become a little wiser, and organisations put in place mechanisms by which abuses are harder to perpetrate and quicker to resolve.

However, the nature of spiritual/religious/mystical organisations which are based around a single charismatic 'enlightened' figure head is that any such abuses will unfortunately go on for years possibly without being addressed.

That old wag Robert Anton Wilson wrote "A disciple is an asshole looking for a human being to attach itself to!" [1]. Whilst that may be an overly cynical appraisal it does reflect the lack of discernment apparent in some spiritual seekers over many many years. In the UK we have had the claims surrounding the FWBO's Sangharakshita [2], and Edo Shonin [3].

There may be a particular problem with Zen due to the nature of the teacher-pupil relationship. The teacher is assumed to be enlightened, and verifies the enlightenment of the pupil. So it may be that some feel any evidence of the non-enlightened status of the teacher implies that the enlightenment of the pupils is also suspect. It becomes convenient to brush things under the carpet rather than bring the house of cards crashing down. An organisation needs to be strong enough, and confident enough, to investigate abuses and deal with them fairly and decisively.

[1] Reality is what you can get away with: an illustrated screenplay; 1992.

[2] <http://www.fwbo-files.com/>

[3] <http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php> ... 58,0,0,1,0

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by genkaku** on Sun Nov 07, 2010 2:18 pm

Whilst that may be an overly cynical appraisal it does reflect the lack of discernment apparent in some spiritual seekers

Without disrespect, I think that all spiritual seekers not only are, but need to be, assholes. How that expresses itself or how it plays out may vary, but foolishness is what puts people on the path ... or maybe I just mean this asshole.  
genkaku

RTTS removed post: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
by **ReturningToTheSource** on Sun Dec 12, 2010 6:56 am

Seigen wrote:

There has been a public apology acknowledging transgression and harm...

Sexual lust is a defiled drive rather than something that is part of discretionary willfulness.

It is something sticky, like an addiction.

Sexual drive has fuelled samsara (reproduction) for eons. Even during unsuitable times, such as during famine or war, beings continue to copulate, such is this psycho-biological drive.

Not so easy to eradicate by public apology, let alone by worship of the Bodhisatvas.

Rehab is best, if possible.

ReturningToTheSource

by **Christopher** on Wed Dec 15, 2010 2:34 pm

Here's a bizarre twist to the story:

Apparently, for some time now somebody has been trying to remove any reference to the Shimano scandal from Wikipedia, both the English and Japanese versions. That is weird enough. But his or her latest move was to submit a letter, allegedly sent to the New York Times by Shimano himself, denying everything that the NYT had related in their article. Now without a signature there's of course no proof that said letter actually exists, let alone written by Shimano (then again one could say the same thing about his resignation!), but clearly somebody out there in computerland is extremely interested in covering up the scandal, to the point of forging long letters of denial.

For those who can read Japanese, here's the alleged letter from "Eido Shimano, Abbott":

ニューヨークタイムズ

編集担当者御中

貴紙の国内版に私についての記事が掲載されてから早くも三ヶ月が過ぎようとしております。メディアやインターネット等、時代の発達に伴い、このニュースは世界中に流れ、日本語にまでも翻訳されていると聞き、深く心が痛みました。私はこの気持ちを落ち着かせようとこの三ヶ月、苦しみながら耐えてきました。今年が私が引退を決意した年でもあり、何の因果関係もない今回の記事が、その記念すべき引退を無意味なものにしてしまうのではという事に対し懸念を抱いています。

引退の日が近づく今、特に訂正を強調したい記事の内容ならびに、記者としての不適切な行為について以下の3点を指摘します。

1 今回の記事の内容一切に対して、オッペンハイマー氏による私自身へのインタビュー等の事実は全くありませんでした。また、同氏によるアトキン氏ならびに記事に登場する当該の若い女性に対する接触も全くありませんでした。記事によると同氏による私への電話連絡に対して、私からの返答が一切無かったとあるが、その様な連絡はリビングトンマナーならびにニューヨーク市内の住所のどちらにおいても全くなく、事実ではないこと。

2 記事の内容を読んだ限り、信憑性も根拠もない内容表現から、オッペンハイマー氏の情報源はまた聞き、さらにそのまた聞きによる紆余曲折した経路から入手したものであることは明白であり、また事実、記事に出てくる人物は、一人として例の夕食の席にはいませんでした。したがって 話の内容がが聞こえたということはあり得ないことです。

3 さらには、私の引退が今回の間違った告発によるものではないということ。一月に執り行われた理事会において、2010年は私の渡米50周年にあたる年で

あることに因み、大菩薩禅堂の山門建立のための基金活動を最後に、引退する決意をはっきり表明いたしました。50年が潮時だと思ったからです。

この基金募集活動をもって私は渡米50年を迎える住職としての立場から一線を退き、記念すべき最後の年を迎えたいということこそが、私の真の引退の理由であります。

しかし、記事は大きな間違いをしています。私の引退が今回の件の結果であると主張しています。

しかし、その上で更に触れておきたいことは、この記事が、掲載された時、私はスイスで接心という坐禅の修行中であり、ニューヨークに戻ってから知人や友人からはじめて知らされました、この記事がもたらした影響は深大であり、多くの人々は傷つき、そして困惑しています。更に、私文書である我々の理事会議事録がハワイまたはオープンハイマー氏の所有下にあるということは、それは不適切な形での入手、または渡されたものであります。最も不思議に思うのは、1964年以来、私とたった2度の接触しかとっていないアトキン氏が、なぜ仏教徒である私について約50年間も追いつけてきたのかということです。兎にも角にも、貴社のジャーナリストである、マーク・オープンハイマー記者が、私の今回の訴えに対してどう対応するのでしょうか。適切なる回答がなされることを求めます。

合掌

大菩薩禅堂 住職 嶋野栄道

Christopher

by **Christopher** on Wed Dec 22, 2010 9:23 pm

Here's a rough translation of the letter to the editor. Incredibly, it looks more and more like Shimano actually did write it.

Three months have passed since the article was published. My heart hurts to hear that, with the various media and internet, the news traveled all around the world and was even translated into Japanese. In the past three months, I have been struggling to keep my

mind calm. I am very concerned that the significance of my decision to retire this year, which has nothing to do with the article, might be marginalized to being useless due to the article.

As the date of retirement approaches, I want to point out the following issues in the article and the attitude of its editor.

1. The editor, Oppenheimer, didn't interview me at all on this article. Nor did he interview Aitken or any woman appearing in the article. He claimed I didn't return him a call but such a call was never made to either Livingston Manor or NYC.

From the way the article is written, especially from the expression based on no ground, it is clear that Mr. Oppenheimer relied on the sources that is nothing but hearsay. As a matter of fact, none of those appearing in the article were present at the dinner the article highlighted. Therefore it is impossible for anyone to claim she/he overheard it. (\*\* This Japanese sentence is very vague.)

3. My retirement has nothing to do with this false article. In January, at the board meeting, I told them I was going to retire after the fund raising of the gate project since 2010 is the 50th year since I came to the U.S. I thought 50th year was a good timing. My intention was to retire from the abbotship at the 50th year and make the year memorable. However the article made a wrong claim that my retirement was the result of this article. (\*\* Original sentence says "result of this incidence.")

Another thing I want to add is I was doing sesshin in Switzerland when this article broke out. I learned of it when I returned to NY from my friends and acquaintances. The impact of the article was huge, many people were hurt and confused. Besides, the fact that records of our board meeting, which are private documents, are owned by Hawaii (Univ of Hawaii) and Mr. Oppenheimer shows they were obtained in an inappropriate way. The most puzzling thing for me is why Mr. Aitkins, whom I have met only twice since 1964, has been chasing me as many as 50 years. In any case, I want to know how the editor, Mark Oppenheimer, responds to this complaint. I demand appropriate response.

As for me, I'm finally done with this issue. I mean, what else is there to say?

Christopher

**by Seigen** on Wed Dec 22, 2010 9:56 pm

Thank you, Christopher. The heart is heavy indeed. \_/\\_  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen



by **Genjo** on Thu Dec 23, 2010 6:26 pm

I just saw the letter yesterday dated Dec. 1st to the NYT Editor signed by Eido Shimano Roshi. I am shocked, disturbed and offended. In this letter he says that that he has been falsely accused. In my mind it makes a mockery of Eido Roshi's public apology of September 7th. I understand trying to "save face" but this is an attempt to rewrite history and is an example of denial pure and simple.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

by **christopher:::** on Fri Dec 24, 2010 7:19 am

Putting aside the dharma and precepts for a moment, from a Japanese cultural perspective, his attitude and response to these issues is not that surprising, imo. Fifty years given to teaching and transmitting of the Dharma, has been Roshi's gift. A few "mistakes" along the way and these Westerners are having trouble letting go, focusing on the 5% of what he did "wrong" rather than the 95% he's done right (from his pov), all the positive things he's given and shared. He probably sees himself as being like the monk Tanzan who carried the girl over the puddle in that old story Muddy Road.

Folks should be more grateful. "Let it go" already, he seems to be thinking. "Life is a miracle, a gift. Stop holding on to the past." You Americans and Europeans need to be less Victorian/Puritanical and a bit more Zen about this.

Not saying that i \*agree\* with his pov, but living in Japan for over 20 years i can see the cultural logic there.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Linda Anderson** on Fri Dec 24, 2010 7:54 am

christopher::: wrote:

Putting aside the dharma and precepts for a moment, from a Japanese cultural perspective, his attitude and response to these issues is not that surprising, imo. Fifty years given to teaching and transmitting of the Dharma, has been Roshi's gift. A few "mistakes" along the way and these Westerners are having trouble letting go, focusing on the 5% of what he did "wrong" rather than the 95% he's done right (from his pov), all the positive things he's given and shared. He probably see's himself as being like the monk Tanzan who carried the girl over the puddle in that old story Muddy Road.

Folks should be more grateful. "Let it go" already, he seems to be thinking. "Life is a miracle, a gift. Stop holding on to the past." You Americans and Europeans need to be less Victorian/Puritanical and a bit more Zen about this.

Not saying that i \*agree\* with his pov, but living in Japan for over 20 years i can see the cultural logic there.

like an oak tree in the garden...

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by slice** on Thu Dec 30, 2010 12:37 am

christopher::: wrote:

You Americans and Europeans need to be less Victorian/Puritanical and a bit more Zen about this.

Not saying that i \*agree\* with his pov, but living in Japan for over 20 years i can see the cultural logic there.

Hi christopher:::,

Victorian ethics may have been at play but nevertheless serious damage was done. I glanced over some of the accounts just the other day and hospitalization was involved. Not something to be taken lightly, even in Japan, I would think.  
slice

**by Nonin** on Thu Dec 30, 2010 12:47 am

I know of one instance in Japan where the Head Priest at my old monastery (Shogoji) engaged in a relationship with a female lay student. The congregation of lay supporters were extremely disturbed when the story broke. The abbot of our parent monastery, Zuioji, was the priest's teacher, and when he found out about the situation from the president of the congregation, he removed the head priest from his position, made him give back his brown (dharma transmission) okesa (priest's robe), and told him that if he wanted it back, he'd have to practice at Eiheiji monastery for three years as a novice monk wearing a novice's black okesa. The priest did it, straightened himself out, and has been successfully leading a group for some years now.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **Seigen** on Thu Dec 30, 2010 3:53 pm

Finally, here is James Ford, to ZSS:

<http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/2010/12/open-letter-to-board-of-zen-studies.html>

An Open Letter to the Board of the Zen Studies Society Regarding Eido Roshi

30 December 2010

The Rev'd James Ishmael Ford  
Boundless Way Zen  
Mugendo-Ji  
1030 Pleasant Street  
Worcester, MA 01602

Joe Soun Dowling  
ZSS Board President  
New York Zendo Shobo-Ji  
223 East 67th Street  
New York, NY, 10065

Dear Mr Dowling,

As a member of the North American Zen teacher mahasangha I have kept my thoughts and suggestions regarding the Reverend Eido Shimano private between myself, the Reverend Roko Sherry Chayat and the Reverend Genjo Marinello. Like others in this situation I've taken some grief from those who felt that in my position I should make a public stance. I've been willing to suffer these rebukes because I've felt I could be of more use in private.

With the roshi's December 1st letter to the New York Times, however, there has been a significant turning and I feel I must now speak publicly.

Eido Roshi has many gifts as a teacher and commands the loyalty of many students. No doubt this complicates things for you and the Board. Additionally the way our culture tends to address matters of sexuality and sex, to my mind swinging wildly between libertinism and Puritanism, rarely balanced, makes it hard to have clear and unambiguous positions. The pressures on you must be terrible. As someone committed to the establishment of Zen institutions in the west you have my genuine sympathy.

And, the repeated and frequently shocking accounts of his abuse of his position of authority, if true, are evidence Eido Roshi should not be sanctioned as a teacher anywhere in any capacity. And, at this point in time I find it near impossible to believe these accounts are not true. It is surprising his behaviors have not led to criminal prosecution, or at least civil action.

I was among those who counseled Shinge Roshi and Genjo Sensei to seek outside intervention this past year. I was heartened that you chose to go with the FaithTrust Institute and specifically the Reverend Dr Marie Fortune. I was less sanguine to learn you, the Board, were not willing to follow their counsel precisely. At the same time I wasn't there and again I felt my task was to support Roko & Genjo as they sought a way through that could bring healing to Eido's many victims while allowing your sangha and its important mission to go forward.

With Eido Roshi's letter\* it is no longer possible to seek a compromise.

I counsel you as strongly as I can to dismiss the Reverend Eido Shimano from any position of authority in the Zen Studies Society or its affiliates.

For the sake of his victims, for the sake of your sangha, for the sake of the Zen Dharma, I hope you will take this action.

Sincerely,

James

The Reverend James Ishmael Ford  
Boundless Way Zen

\*Eido Shimano Roshi's letter to the New York Times redacted by Al Billings

December 1, 2010.

News Editor

The New York Times

620 Eighth Avenue

New York, New York 10018

Re: "Sex Scandal Has American Buddhists Looking Within" – published Saturday, August 21, 2010, The New York Times National section

Dear Sir,

It has been three months since the article written about me appeared in your National Section. In this day and age, it quickly spread all over the world and, I am told, was translated into Japanese. I was hurt deeply. However, I endured for more than three months and endeavored to calm down. Since this is the year that I am planning to retire, I do not wish this article and my retirement to be linked. One has nothing to do with the other – there is no cause and effect.

As the date for my retirement is nearing, I think that at the very least, I need to point out the inappropriate attitude of the writer of the article and the misinformation contained in his piece. I highlight the following:

1. Mr. Oppenheimer did not interview me for this article, nor did he speak with Mr. Aitken or the young woman who is referred to in the article. The article states that he attempted to contact me and that I did not return several phone calls – this is just not true. I was never contacted by Mr. Oppenheimer, nor did I receive any correspondence from him at either my Livingston Manor address or my New York City address.
2. It is clear to me from reading the article and knowing the facts, that Mr. Oppenheimer obtained his information from second and third hand sources and the opinions expressed therein are neither factual nor backed up by proof. In fact, none of the individuals who have been quoted in the article were at the dinner table when the purported statement was made and there could not have "overheard" what was said.
3. In addition, I have not resigned because of these false accusations. At the beginning of this year, during a meeting of the Board of Directors in January, I made an announcement that 2010 was the 50 year anniversary of my being in America and that I planned to do a final fund raising for a mountain gate entrance to the monastery and would step down from the Abbot. This fundraising was to be the final act in a 50 year career in the United States. The article falsely states that I am stepping down from the Abbot because of allegations.

Moreover, I would like to mention the following: When the article appeared, I was in Switzerland doing a silent retreat. When I returned to the United States, many people brought the article to my attention. The effect has been profound. Many people are hurt and confused. As an aside, minutes from our Board of Directors meetings are private documents. If they wound up in Hawaii or in Mark Oppenheimer's possession, they were improperly obtained and/or delivered. Did anyone question why Mr. Aitken would write about a Buddhist monk for 50 years, when I have had contact with him only twice since 1964. I shall look forward to what your journalist, Mark Oppenheimer, has to say about the contents of my letter.

Very truly yours,

\*signed\*

Eido T. Shimano, Abbot

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Seigen** on Fri Dec 31, 2010 7:37 pm

More, finally! These are excerpts, the full letters can be found on James Ford's blog, Monkey Mind: <http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/2010/12/letters-from-zen-teachers-to-zen.html>

Joan Halifax:

To put it simply, Eido Shimano is an embarrassment to Buddhism, including all of Zen Buddhism, and Japanese Buddhism, in particular. I am concerned that if you, as his Board and monks do not take action, we will be sanctioning this kind of egregious abusive, gender-biased, predatory, misogynistic behavior in our temples and monasteries. We vow, as Buddhists to do no harm. I urge you to end the harm, and end it now.

The sexual abuse of women is no small matter globally. It takes profound commitment to deal with this issue. Humbly, i feel that we as Buddhists need to clean up the scene in our own backyard, and clean it up now. We all share this karma, and we must share the correction process as well. Compassion tells us that, and we have to not only listen but as well to act. Thus these letters you are currently receiving..... Please heed them, and heed them well.

Grace Schireson:

While I have not personally experienced the teaching power of Rev. Eido Shimano, I have also studied with the great koan master, Fukushima Keido, Kansho, at Tofukuji temple, Kyoto. Fukushima Roshi has also concurred with my discomfort over the sexual misconduct of Rev. Shimano. As a practitioner of koan, and now as a koan teacher, I understand the power of that method and the deep trust required in the relationship of student and teacher. In this regard I share with you the Zen expression: “Water drunk by the snake becomes venom, water drunk by the cow becomes milk”. Our Zen ancestors know that practice can be used for harm and become harmful to recipients.

I am also a Clinical Psychologist, who has served as an expert witness in court. I have been in contact via the phone and internet, and also face to face, with those who feel that Rev Shimano’s misconduct has caused them deep and lasting pain. Meeting face to face with these students helped me to find their experiences credible. I hope that my witnessing has felt supportive to them and to you.

The Dharma is sturdy and can survive our mistakes when our collective wisdom is expressed. But we cannot turn away from mistakes. Covering up harm, versus publicly acknowledging and witnessing the survivors’ suffering, has occurred in many cultural settings (political and etc)—it always results in more harm. Covering up, saving face, and denying wrongdoings will neither protect the Zen transmission in the West, nor will it nourish the Dharma. The Dharma thrives on our humility, ethical action and courage to each be a lamp unto ourselves. I implore you and your monks to take on the responsibility of the Dharma with the guidance of Roko Shinge Roshi and Genjo Marinello. Rev. Shimano needs to step down and away from ZSS. This is the highest compliment to your teacher—your faith and confidence in practice that is now your own so he can retire.

Dosho Port:

Eido Shimano’s recent letter to the NYTimes disappointed and saddened me. I concur with my colleagues on the many points that have already been expressed.

The one point I’d like to emphasize is that for the future of Eido Shimano’s dharma lineage, and immediately for the sake of Roko Chayat’s tenure as abbot, please remove Eido Shimano from all teaching venues and from residence in your centers.

Any other action at this time is likely to set-up Roko for failure, reflect poorly on your own integrity and that of American Zen.

Your best chance to redeem the past now appears to lie in a clean and definitive break with Eido Shimano.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by **genkaku** on Fri Dec 31, 2010 9:12 pm

Nonin wrote:

I know of one instance in Japan where the Head Priest at my old monastery (Shogoji) engaged in a relationship with a female lay student. The congregation of lay supporters were extremely disturbed when the story broke. The abbot of our parent monastery, Zuioji, was the priest's teacher, and when he found out about the situation from the president of the congregation, he removed the head priest from his position, made him give back his brown (dharma transmission) okesa (priest's robe), and told him that if he wanted it back, he'd have to practice at Eiheiji monastery for three years as a novice monk wearing a novice's black okesa. The priest did it, straightened himself out, and has been successfully leading a group for some years now.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Dear Nonin -- With respect, would you please tell us how this tale relates to the case of Eido Shimano? I can see the peace-making potential of the story, but it also seems to me that such a story of wonderful redemption leaves out the mountainous particulars in the Shimano case... a clever legerdemain to divert attention from such collections as The Shimano Archive or the citations above.

Do you assume that those claiming over a period of more than 40 years to have been wounded are simply in some kind of vindictive cahoots ... that the victims are to blame ... that the evidence is circumstantial until it goes to the U.S. Supreme Court? Do you hold to the notion that Zen Buddhism is club for good ol' boys and deserves every defense as such?

In what way does your tale make an honest peace or even an honest suggestion? I'm not trying to be insulting, but at what point might you agree that some things deserve a simple "no?"

What are your direct thoughts about the matter of Eido Shimano -- the thoughts that address matters to your satisfaction and not just your safety? What do you personally think when you hear that a sangha has been (whether based on fact or not) disrupted ... and worse?

Mr. Shimano has more than once allowed himself to be described as "ever at home in the unconditional realm." Do you personally credit this description or do you find it a bit much? Or perhaps hope you might do the same?

Please ... can you state your position from your perspective using whatever evidence or lack of evidence you find compelling?



Thank you.  
genkaku

**by Nonin** on Fri Dec 31, 2010 9:43 pm

genkaku,

I have written a letter to the ZSS Board. It has been posted on James Ishmael Ford's blog along with the others that Seigen referenced above. I believe that my letter was posted after Seigen quoted the above. The blog page is here:

[http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20 ... o-zen.html](http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20...o-zen.html)

My letter is the fourth one down, after Dosho Port's.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Nonin** on Fri Dec 31, 2010 9:54 pm

genkaku wrote:

Dear Nonin -- With respect, would you please tell us how this tale relates to the case of Eido Shimano? I can see the peace-making potential of the story, but it also seems to me that such a story of wonderful redemption leaves out the mountainous particulars in the Shimano case... a clever legerdemain to divert attention from such collections as The Shimano Archive or the citations above.

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Mr. Shimano has more than once allowed himself to be described as "ever at home in the unconditional realm." Do you personally credit this description or do you find it a bit much? Or perhaps hope you might do the same?

Please ... can you state your position from your perspective using whatever evidence or lack of evidence you find compelling?

Thank you.

genkaku,

The sarcastic tone and language of your post is rude and insulting, no matter how many "with respects" or "I'm not trying to be insultings" you include. Please own your own behavior.

You have misread and misinterpreted my post in response to Christopher:::'s post concerning behavior patterns in Japan. I posted that response as an example from my own experience that sexual misconduct by Zen Buddhist teachers in Japan is not tolerated. The danka (lay congregation of supporters) has a great deal of power in Japan, as does the Board of Directors of American Zen practice places. I am hoping that the Board of Directors of ZSS finally does the right thing.

I also truly hope that you will finally heal the deep-seated hurt and let go of the anger that you have been carrying for so many years.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Seigen** on Fri Dec 31, 2010 10:26 pm

Thank you, Nonin and genkaku both. (Nonin, I did not see your letter when I visited Monkey Mind earlier, and apologize if I overlooked it.)

genkaku especially. Persistence and timing and yes a good bit of anger is what it took for the mahasangha to see it, and I for one am grateful for yours and others' efforts - including AZTA, who gave out the rope, as it were - and am sorry that your reputation has suffered because of it, if that is true. Sometimes everyone has to step past the emotions and see the story for what it is, and thankfully that has happened.

Although it's just a few letters, really.

With palms together, Seigen  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by slice** on Fri Dec 31, 2010 10:40 pm

... has a great deal of power ...

A cause for concern if true, and if what they say about power is true.  
slice

Re: Back to the Monastery

**by christopher:::** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 1:35 am

Seigen wrote:

Grace Schireson:

While I have not personally experienced the teaching power of Rev. Eido Shimano, I have also studied with the great koan master, Fukushima Keido, Kansho, at Tofukuji temple, Kyoto. Fukushima Roshi has also concurred with my discomfort over the sexual misconduct of Rev. Shimano. As a practitioner of koan, and now as a koan teacher, I understand the power of that method and the deep trust required in the relationship of student and teacher. In this regard I share with you the Zen expression: "Water drunk by

the snake becomes venom, water drunk by the cow becomes milk". Our Zen ancestors know that practice can be used for harm and become harmful to recipients.

I am also a Clinical Psychologist, who has served as an expert witness in court. I have been in contact via the phone and internet, and also face to face, with those who feel that Rev Shimano's misconduct has caused them deep and lasting pain. Meeting face to face with these students helped me to find their experiences credible. I hope that my witnessing has felt supportive to them and to you.

With so many cases down through the years and people still suffering, why has no one been encouraged to file a law suit or made a formal complaint of rape, molestation or sexual assault with the police? Everything would have moved much more quickly if someone would step forward in that way. A doctor, dentist or psychologist who tries to seduce a patient in their office is breaking the law. They would be sued quickly, and/or receive a visit from the police.

According to the stories posted online Shimano would seduce (or molest) women during dokusan. This is against the law, isn't it? Even if he claims the relationships were consensual, the fact that initial sexual overtures happened during formal dokusan- where he was in a position of power- negates that. I'm a University teacher, and there are laws protecting our students, especially when on school grounds- in our classrooms and offices.

There is this sense of powerlessness that is very discomfoting here, but the women involved don't need to accept that, they have always had the power to force a change here, as do the folks on the ZSS board.

This may sound simplistic, but it sounds a bit like the land of Oz, where everyone is afraid of the wicked witch, but Dorothy had the power all along, just didn't realize it. It seems like \*everyone\* close to him has been hypnotized by the wizard Shimano - feels powerless to move. Does he have a special visa or is he an American citizen? Either way, I'm surprised formal legal action (or at the very least threat of action) wasn't taken long ago.

Have the courage to throw a bit of cold water on him (such as criminal charges or a lawsuit) and he might just melt away, or slink onto an airplane and head home. Bouncing him back into the monastery (as Nonin sensei described) for a few extra years in black novice monks robes 3, 4 or 5 decades ago might have helped everyone avoid a great deal of suffering.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by simpleton** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 7:45 pm

Well it's reassuring to finally see some teachers from the Western Zen community actually speak out against this abuse of students and teaching authority.

I cannot for the life of me understand why it too so long.

Personally I already wonder if it is too late for Eido's "successors". I cannot understand their silence - their inaction speaks volumes and I for one would never train with any of them because of this. In fact I would not even consider this a "lineage" of Zen at all.  
simpleton

**by Seigen** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 7:59 pm

Again, these are excerpts from Monkey Mind:  
<http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/2010/12/letters-from-zen-teachers-to-zen.html>

Sallie Jiko Tilsdale, Sensei:

I am writing as a sister in the Dharma, a teacher in American Soto Zen, and a member of the American Zen Teachers Association, to urge you to remove Eido Shimano from authority of any kind in your sangha, and from any contact with students.

I have been aware of the difficulties involving Eido Shimano for some time, and feel deep dismay and discomfort at the current situation. I am frankly shocked that the situation has gotten this far.

I understand that he has been of great importance to many people and to American Zen. However, the damage that has been done by his misconduct may be of equal importance. His students and sangha have collaborated for many years in excusing and covering up this misconduct. This situation must stop for ZSS to have any credibility in the American Zen community. I know Genjo and Roko and feel respect and compassion toward the integrity of their practice and qualities as leaders in your community. This does not, unfortunately, relieve the sangha of ZSS and, especially, its board from responsibility to completely remove Mr. Shimano from power, including contact with senior students. I can't imagine Roko or any other ethical teacher could succeed in a community which continues to minimize, hide or otherwise ignore such serious acts.

Taigen Leighton, Sensei:

To the Zen Studies Society Board and Monks practicing at Dai Bosatsu, I am reluctant to interfere or even comment in the affairs of any other sangha. As Guiding Dharma Teacher of a small sangha currently, and as a long-time member of the San Francisco Zen Center sangha, I have a deep appreciation of the difficulties of manifesting and enacting the Buddha Way in our modern American context.

Nevertheless, I am moved by the efforts of Rev. Genjo Marinello, the current struggle of the Zen Studies Society, and the flawed responses of Rev. Eido Shimano to urge you to now completely remove Eido Roshi from any position of authority at the Zen Studies Society. His ongoing damaging transgressions over many years and his unrepentant attitude now continue to damage all of American Zen, as well as the Zen Studies Society. I feel deep sympathy for all of you, and for how difficult all this must be. But I believe that the Zen Studies Society can only become a worthy support for Dharma and practice now if you find the courage to sever all ties with Eido Roshi.

Susan Ji-on Postal, Sensei:

For the past 30 years I have been dismayed by the shocking reports of sexual misconduct by Eido Shimano Roshi. As an ordained student of the late Maurine Myo-on Stuart, she personally shared her direct knowledge of this. In the early 90's a number of women who had suffered great emotional turmoil came to the Empty Hand Zendo, then at the Meeting House in Rye, and so I experienced direct accounts. In 1994, I believe, there was a gathering of Western Buddhist Teachers at Mt. Madonna Center in California, and Aitken Roshi gathered a group of teachers who had heard directly from women who were harmed, and we drafted a letter to the ZSS Board asking for Eido Shimano Roshi to resign.

In recent times I have been strongly supportive of Shinge Roko Chayat and Genjo Marinello in their efforts to provide strong healthy leadership for Zen Studies Society. Most especially, I supported the plan for some outside intervention to resolve this issue fairly and honestly. Now with Shimano Roshi's letter to the New York Times, it appears that the advice of the FaithTrust Institute is not being truly followed. With this new turning, I cannot help but speak up.

It seems essential that Shimano Roshi resign from all positions of authority at ZSS. If there are some senior students who really want to continue their studies with him, then they can find another location and do this on a private basis, not under the umbrella of Zen Studies Society. Charismatic and powerful teaching without strong holding of the Precepts is dangerous. From the time of the Buddha, not causing harm is the primary vow. I can only urge you to take firm action now – for the sake of your own sangha, the victims of abuse, and the future of this most precious Dharma.

Barry Magid, Sensei:

In addition to making clear that Eido's misconduct is the direct cause of his stepping down, I would hope that both the Board and the new Abbot would now do what Eido Shimano has never done - take personal responsibility. This should include publicly acknowledging their own past reluctance to recognize the legitimacy of the charges repeatedly brought against their teacher by so many women and that their own failure to act has made them complicit in Eido's misconduct. Like the parent who refuses to recognize their partner or relative has been abusing their child, the Dai Bosatsu community - as well as the larger Zen Buddhist community of which I am a part - must

accept that they have been "failed witnesses," guilty bystanders who through their own denial have enabled a pattern of abuse to continue unchecked.

Hogen Bays, Sensei, and Chozen Bays, Roshi:

We have heard first-hand the stories of several of the women that Eido Shimano sexually seduced and assaulted over the course of over thirty years. Their experiences and other accounts make it clear that:

- 1) Eido Shimano is a predatory sex offender (not an opportunist or someone who has wandered across boundaries once or twice).
- 2) Eido Shimano is untreated and unrepentant, his offending is ongoing, and therefore he presents a continued risk.
- 3) The decades of suffering caused by his behavior has been tremendous and far-reaching.
- 4) The women (and men) he has offended have not had a chance to receive the kind of witnessing of their stories and institutional support that could begin their healing. When they have approached the ZSS Board in the past, the response of the Board has led to further psychological trauma.
- 5) Because of the way his resignation and current events are unfolding, victims and their supporters have renewed and deep distrust that there will be any attempt at justice-making or restitution for his past wrongs, or any meaningful change in Eido Shimano's behavior in the future.

In other professions Eido Shimano's behavior would result in removal of a professional license (medicine, law and psychotherapy) and criminal and/or civil prosecution. Legal prosecution may still happen, particularly if current survivors feel that Zen Studies Society has not acted appropriately to prevent misuse of power and victimization in the future.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by simpleton** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 8:03 pm

This post says it succinctly:

[http://mumonno.blogspot.com/2010/12/eid ... -away.html](http://mumonno.blogspot.com/2010/12/eid...-away.html)  
simpleton

by **unsui** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 8:18 pm

simpleton wrote:

Well it's reassuring to finally see some teachers from the Western Zen community actually speak out against this abuse of students and teaching authority.

I cannot for the life of me understand why it too so long.

Personally I already wonder if it is too late for Eido's "successors". I cannot understand their silence - their inaction speaks volumes and I for one would never train with any of them because of this. In fact I would not even consider this a "lineage" of Zen at all.

This may be OT? Or belong elsewhere?

Before condemning this "lineage", maybe you should maybe check things out, maybe you should meet those you disparage. We know nothing (or little) of their actions or inaction; not everything is necessarily going on in a public venue or is being put on to paper. I am certain that each and every Dharma heir is actively working with regard to remedying this situation in ways they deem relevant and effective.

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

by **Seigen** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 9:10 pm

unsui, it is most certainly not off-topic and has come up before, earlier in this thread, which is not limited to Shimano by the way, there was for ex. discussion of how the apple does not fall far from the tree, and evidence to the point was made. And there was also another thread that was devoted to the legitimacy of Shimano's own ordination. Likely for a lot of people this issue is haunted by that question, and I don't see much point in pushing it away as an aside. With the publication of the letter to the New York Times, we know we are dealing with an individual who is capable of quite fraudulent behavior.

It is just very sad and tiring is all. Genjo recently gave a dharma talk about about how one half of his transmitting teacher was healthy in enlightenment and the other psychological half was all twisted up. The thought could be that Genjo was transmitted by the enlightened half, and bypassed by the other. But the intended message was to encounter everyone on the road with the full open face of a Buddha, to see beyond the limp, as it were. Here is a nice phrase from Grace Schireson's letter, "As a practitioner of koan, and now as a koan teacher, I understand the power of that method and the deep trust required in the relationship of student and teacher. In this regard I share with you the Zen



expression: "Water drunk by the snake becomes venom, water drunk by the cow becomes milk".

It may be better practice then to leave the question aside and discern on the basis of actions and harm at this point. Both Genjo and Roko are respected teachers in their own right with good reason. However, Barry Magid says it well with regard to everyone involved:

Like the parent who refuses to recognize their partner or relative has been abusing their child, the Dai Bosatsu community - as well as the larger Zen Buddhist community of which I am a part - must accept that they have been "failed witnesses," guilty bystanders who through their own denial have enabled a pattern of abuse to continue unchecked.

It's hard not to notice, that's an awful lot of limping. There's really no one to tell you how to "see past it" either, you can really get stuck there. That's when this funny word we rely on so much, too much perhaps, practice, is handy.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by **Nonin** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 9:22 pm

simpleton wrote:

Well it's reassuring to finally see some teachers from the Western Zen community actually speak out against this abuse of students and teaching authority.

I cannot for the life of me understand why it too so long.

Personally I already wonder if it is too late for Eido's "successors". I cannot understand their silence - their inaction speaks volumes and I for one would never train with any of them because of this. In fact I would not even consider this a "lineage" of Zen at all.

simpleton,

There has been no silence on this issue.

Western Zen teachers have spoken out against sexual misconduct by their peers for many years. A group of teachers spoke out about Eido Shimano's conduct in the early 90's. Their speaking out was ignored, and they were threatened by a lawsuit if it continued formally. Members of the American Zen Teachers Association have counseled teachers and sanghas where abuse has occurred, and they have also encouraged all sanghas to adopt ethical standards and publish them as Ethics Statements that outline improper behavior and provide recourse for victims of such behavior. Currently, most sanghas have instituted such statements and procedures.

The problems at ZSS are not unique, for sexual misconduct by teachers is not unique to a particular place or a particular teacher. However, the way it was handled at ZSS is unique, for it was not handled at all for an incredible number of years. However, on the other side, I can name many instances of teachers being dismissed from their teaching roles and also from their sanghas entirely for sexual misconduct. Fortunately, the ZSS Board has now assumed their rightful responsibility for the safety of ZSS students and the actions of ZSS teachers. I am hopeful that the organization will get back on the right track.

The Soto Zen Buddhist Association has adopted a clear Ethics Policy that all Soto Zen teachers who are members of the organization (most Soto Zen teachers) are expected to live by.

The American Zen Teachers Association is a loose organization of teachers from all traditions. It is not a formal organization with a charter, a Board of Directors, etc. We meet once a year and carry on lengthy discussions, many of which have been about sexual misconduct. Some of our members, some of whom are Chozen Bays, Myoan Grace Shireson, Hozan Alan Senauke, Barry Magid, Kyoki Roberts, and myself have worked intimately with sanghas dealing with sexual misconduct and with those teachers who have committed abuses.

The myth that Western Zen teachers have been silent on this issue is just that, a myth. However, all sanghas are independent and self-governing. No outsiders can insert themselves and interfere in the workings of an independent group unless they are asked. Unfortunately, no one was asked by the ZSS Board until recently, when the latest incident of sexual misconduct became public. Finally, the ZSS Board sought help from the Faith/Trust Institute and other Zen teachers were asked to make their feelings on the current issues known to the Board and to the public at large, and we have.

If you haven't read my letter on this subject, it can be accessed here:  
[http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20 ... o-zen.html](http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20...o-zen.html) Mine is the fourth teacher letter down, after Dosho Port's.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
 Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **flax3lbs** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 9:29 pm

unsui wrote:

This may be OT? Or belong elsewhere?

Before condemning this "lineage", maybe you should maybe check things out, maybe you should meet those you disparage. We know nothing (or little) of their actions or inaction; not everything is necessarily going on in a public venue or is being put on to paper. I am certain that each and every Dharma heir is actively working with regard to remedying this situation in ways they deem relevant and effective.

It's true, most of us know very little of their actions. Than also your proclamation that you are "certain" that "each and every Dharma heir is actively working with regard to remedying this situation in ways they deem relevant and effective", is just as open to question.

I am very far removed from this situation. I have no personal experience with this lineage or know of anyone that has passed through its doors. However, having a couple dharma heirs (Roko, and Genjo) as gatekeepers in determining Eido Shimano's future has its own complications. After all, over the years they've derived a certain measure of authority as teachers by being heirs of Shimano. How vigorous will they be in sanctioning their own teacher and in the process maybe sullyng their own credentials? I'm not saying this is what is happening, but from most outsiders looking in there can be a natural skepticism to how this is being handled. Also, contributing to this skepticism is the 40 year ZSS history of shoving things under the rug. Perhaps due to the nature of this situation and the organization, it can't be helped. Perhaps as a few Zen teachers have recently said, they have great faith in these two teachers integrity.

I'm not a fan for the many posts scattered about the web that are overly crude, cynical, and disparaging towards ZSS, but the skepticism I can truly understand. Time will tell. It'll probably take 10 years until we have an idea if this place survives and in what form.  
flax3lbs

by **Nonin** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 9:45 pm

unsui wrote:

Before condemning this "lineage", maybe you should maybe check things out, maybe you should meet those you disparage. We know nothing (or little) of their actions or inaction; not everything is necessarily going on in a public venue or is being put on to paper. I am certain that each and every Dharma heir is actively working with regard to remedying this situation in ways they deem relevant and effective.

unsui,

Nice post. I agree.

I have known Roko Chayat (Shinge-roshi), for many years. I also know some of her students and have taught at the temple where she is abbot, Hoen-ji in Syracuse, New York. As I mentioned in my letter to the ZSS Board, I am confident that her depth of understanding and her strong ethical standards will serve her well in guiding ZSS on the proper path in the future. I feel the same way about Genjo Marinello, whom I have known for a lesser time, but I can also vouch for his commitment to turning ZSS around. Hopefully, they and others will be successful and can guide the organization to a fruitful future through this difficult time.

In this culture, we do not blame the children for the misdeeds of their parents, nor do we hold them responsible for them.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by slice** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 10:12 pm

Nonin wrote:

You [genkaku] have misread and misinterpreted my post in response to Christopher's post concerning behavior patterns in Japan. I posted that response as an example from my own experience that sexual misconduct by Zen Buddhist teachers in Japan is not tolerated.

I'm still mystified by the "cultural logic" that Christopher mentioned. My impression is that Christopher simply hadn't read all of the case reports and didn't realize the severity of the situation. I suppose it is possible to rationalize that degree of abuse, but not on the basis of moral reasoning in Japanese culture. Japanese culture is at least as civilized as any other nation, needless to say. It also seems needless to say that Japanese Zen temples would, generally speaking, tolerate that degree of sexual misconduct.

Having said that I must say that I also misread and misinterpreted your post. It gives the impression of being a positive counterbalancing example to all the awful examples of abuse and neglect in the Shimano archive. A kind of public relations tactic. We know now that this is not the case, I'm just pointing out how easy it is to misread what you wrote. It would have been clearer, and consequently more effective for your purpose, had you directly addressed the issue of moral reasoning in Japanese culture.  
slice

**by unsui** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 10:20 pm

flax3lbs wrote:

It's true, most of us know very little of their actions. Than also your proclamation that you are "certain" that "each and every Dharma heir is actively working with regard to remedying this situation in ways they deem relevant and effective", is just as open to question.

I am very far removed from this situation. I have no personal experience with this lineage or know of anyone that has passed through its doors. However, having a couple dharma heirs (Roko, and Genjo) as gatekeepers in determining Eido Shimano's future has its own complications.

I have been fortunate enough to have experience with some of those, who are being dragged down by the weight of their association with Eido Shimano. I have a great deal of faith in their ability to transform what is going on into something that is both living and viable, especially if Eido Shimano can be kept out of any position of power or influence. I suppose this is the linchpin: The ZSS's decision regarding Eido Shimano's position from this day forth.

flax3lbs wrote:

After all, over the years they've derived a certain measure of authority as teachers by being heirs of Shimano. How vigorous will they be in sanctioning their own teacher and in the process maybe sullyng their own credentials?

I think it was summed up very well with:

“Water drunk by the snake becomes venom, water drunk by the cow becomes milk”.

We can only wait and see here, but it seems from what I can read elsewhere of recent postings that focus is not on credentials, but on the Dharma and on healing. Or, maybe, some of the focus is still on lineage, but in a selective manner. Let's hope that the milk will flow!

flax3lbs wrote:

I'm not saying this is what is happening, but from most outsiders looking in there can be a natural skepticism to how this is being handled. Also, contributing to this skepticism is

the 40 year ZSS history of shoving things under the rug. Perhaps due to the nature of this situation and the organization, it can't be helped. Perhaps as a few Zen teachers have recently said, they have great faith in these two teachers integrity.

I'm not a fan for the many posts scattered about the web that are overly crude, cynical, and disparaging towards ZSS, but the skepticism I can truly understand. Time will tell. It'll probably take 10 years until we have an idea if this place survives and in what form.

Definitely, the proof of the pudding is in the eating!

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by moon face buddha** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 10:28 pm

Sleeping with students has become such a cliché that Brad Warner brags about doing it in one of his books.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by unsui** on Sat Jan 01, 2011 11:17 pm

Thank-you, Seigen, for pointing out so many aspects. I took a trip around the net to see what was what and where - and there is certainly alot of to read!

Seigen wrote:

unsui, it is most certainly not off-topic and has come up before, earlier in this thread, which is not limited to Shimano by the way, there was for ex. discussion of how the apple does not fall far from the tree, and evidence to the point was made. And there was also another thread that was devoted to the legitimacy of Shimano's own ordination. Likely for a lot of people this issue is haunted by that question, and I don't see much point in pushing it away as an aside. With the publication of the letter to the New York Times, we know we are dealing with an individual who is capable of quite fraudulent behavior.

Re: apples. What really to me is most worrying is not what many have seemed to focus so much on: the sexual aspect, which there, regarding the "apples", doesn't seem to be smoking gun proof for - just rumors, hearsay, and the like (but I may, of course, have overlooked something), but rather more, the general manipulateness in all circumstances that Shimano seems to excell at. Especially in light of his letter to the NYT and the ZSS choosing not to act on the recommendations of the mediating agency. Can

this way of dealing with the sangha have been passed on or not? I think maybe, from what I can see here and other places, that it is becoming more and more evident that the "apples" are re-examining and re-assessing their training, growth, and relationships, in order to be true to what they have undertaken.

Seigen wrote:

It is just very sad and tiring is all. Genjo recently gave a dharma talk about about how one half of his transmitting teacher was healthy in enlightenment and the other psychological half was all twisted up. The thought could be that Genjo was transmitted by the enlightened half, and bypassed by the other. But the intended message was to encounter everyone on the road with the full open face of a Buddha, to see beyond the limp, as it were.

And this must of course mean meeting everyone! I feel rather sad about the judgmentalness I have seen, regarding those who are involved in this issue, including Shimano, the women who have been hurt, Shimano's students, the Dharma heirs, ZSS, etc.

Seigen wrote:

Here is a nice phrase from Grace Schireson's letter, "As a practitioner of koan, and now as a koan teacher, I understand the power of that method and the deep trust required in the relationship of student and teacher. In this regard I share with you the Zen expression: "Water drunk by the snake becomes venom, water drunk by the cow becomes milk".

It may be better practice then to leave the question aside and discern on the basis of actions and harm at this point. Both Genjo and Roko are respected teachers in their own right with good reason. However, Barry Magid says it well with regard to everyone involved:

Like the parent who refuses to recognize their partner or relative has been abusing their child, the Dai Bosatsu community - as well as the larger Zen Buddhist community of which I am a part - must accept that they have been "failed witnesses," guilty bystanders who through their own denial have enabled a pattern of abuse to continue unchecked.

How many were actually knowing bystanders?

Seigen wrote:

It's hard not to notice, that's an awful lot of limping. There's really no one to tell you how to "see past it" either, you can really get stuck there. That's when this funny word we rely on so much, too much perhaps, practice, is handy.

It is not the word we rely on, but the practice itself. And for this, I am truly grateful. May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

by **Seigen** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 12:06 am

Thanks, unsui. As to knowing bystanders, this at least from Susan Ji-on:  
 For the past 30 years I have been dismayed by the shocking reports of sexual misconduct by Eido Shimano Roshi. As an ordained student of the late Maurine Myo-on Stuart, she personally shared her direct knowledge of this. In the early 90's a number of women who had suffered great emotional turmoil came to the Empty Hand Zendo, then at the Meeting House in Rye, and so I experienced direct accounts. In 1994, I believe, there was a gathering of Western Buddhist Teachers at Mt. Madonna Center in California, and Aitken Roshi gathered a group of teachers who had heard directly from women who were harmed, and we drafted a letter to the ZSS Board asking for Eido Shimano Roshi to resign.

Grace Schireson as well wrote she counseled people. So I would say that there are many knowing bystanders. The issue is rather, as Barry Magid describes it, "guilty bystanders who through their own denial have enabled a pattern of abuse to continue unchecked." Denial is a powerful thing.

As for the word, it will only ever be inadequate.

With palms together, Seigen  
 Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by **christopher:::** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 1:28 am

slice wrote:

Nonin wrote:

You [genkaku] have misread and misinterpreted my post in response to Christopher:::'s post concerning behavior patterns in Japan. I posted that response as an example from my own experience that sexual misconduct by Zen Buddhist teachers in Japan is not tolerated.

I'm still mystified by the "cultural logic" that Christopher mentioned. My impression is that Christopher simply hadn't read all of the case reports and didn't realize the severity of the situation. I suppose it is possible to rationalize that degree of abuse, but not on the basis of moral reasoning in Japanese culture. Japanese culture is at least as civilized as any other nation, needless to say. It also seems needless to say that Japanese Zen temples would, generally speaking, tolerate that degree of sexual misconduct.



I'm aware of the severity of the situation. And as someone who has lived (and currently resides) in Japan for over 20 years I'm also aware of the cultural tendency here to cover things up, rationalize and/or avoid looking at embarrassing/stressful truths and even going so far as denying those truths until/unless forced by external factors to face them.

Don't want to go too far off topic, but it might be a good idea for anyone deeply interested or involved in Japanese Zen Buddhism to read Doi's Anatomy of Dependence and familiarize themselves with Japanese concepts such as tatemai, hone and giri. It may help to unravel and illuminate some of the cultural issues in play here. Especially if we wish to understand Eido Shimano's behavior and some of the cultural factors that may have enabled this situation for almost 5 decades now...

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honne\\_and\\_tatemaie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honne_and_tatemaie)

This doesn't give a complete picture, of course. We still have the Western socio-cultural factors involved, some of which may correspond to the Japanese and have helped to enable this situation. An example would be this idea that Japanese sanghas are "completely independent" and that "outsiders" should not speak up or interfere. It sounds like Shimano is invoking that logic in how he talked of Aitken roshi in his most recent letter to the NY Times, that Aitken roshi is an outsider who he has only met twice.

For Westerners the concept of "independence" sounds positive and progressive, but we are talking about traditional hierarchies, not fully democratic social systems. The cells of Al Quada and the tribal communities of Northern Pakistan are also "independent"... If your leadership is wise and enlightened this isn't a problem but when a leader has deep faults or "issues" and lacks wisdom the "independence" of sangha groups becomes just another enabling factor for abuse and dysfunction, imo.

Related issues have been raised by Stuart Lachs and mentioned before in this discussion...

A Critique of the Current State of American Zen - by Stuart Lachs

Richard Baker and the Myth of the Zen Roshi

Last edited by christopher::: on Sun Jan 02, 2011 1:37 am, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Shodo** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 1:36 am

Nonin said:  
simpleton,

There has been no silence on this issue...

Dude, you are on page 7 of the Shimano Archive stating your disbelief that people are going after Eido!

Don't you remember saying:

i have no idea why Aitken roshi is bringing all this up now...

Im sorry, I know you are going to be offended at this.... But a lot of people are wondering about the deafning silence of the ATZA... Up until it became impossible for you all not to respond when Eido's letter to the New York Times became public!

Hurt people have been screaming this stuff for years, the most we heard from the ATZA boiled down to "thou shalt not speak of others errors and faults"....

Im glad that finally the AZTA has got on board now that it is impossible to ignore, but where have you guys been???

Last edited by Shodo on Sun Jan 02, 2011 1:57 am, edited 2 times in total.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by unsui** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 1:43 am

Seigen wrote:

Thanks, unsui. As to knowing bystanders, this at least from Susan Ji-on:

For the past 30 years I have been dismayed by the shocking reports of sexual misconduct by Eido Shimano Roshi. As an ordained student of the late Maurine Myo-on Stuart, she personally shared her direct knowledge of this. In the early 90's a number of women who had suffered great emotional turmoil came to the Empty Hand Zendo, then at the Meeting House in Rye, and so I experienced direct accounts. In 1994, I believe, there was a gathering of Western Buddhist Teachers at Mt. Madonna Center in California, and Aitken Roshi gathered a group of teachers who had heard directly from women who were harmed, and we drafted a letter to the ZSS Board asking for Eido Shimano Roshi to resign.

Grace Schireson as well wrote the she counseled people. So I would say that there are many knowing bystanders. The issue is rather, as Barry Magid describes it, "guilty bystanders who through their own denial have enabled a pattern of abuse to continue unchecked." Denial is a powerful thing.

As for the word, it will only ever be inadequate.

With palms together, Seigen

Thanks again! I don't know how I overlooked Susan Ji-on Postal's strong and profoundly moving letter on the blog. I must have been in an overwhelmed modus; the entire history is difficult to gulp down in one sitting. I am somehow torn apart by the differences in tone in the letters to ZSS, but that is just an emotional reaction that I can look at later. There is an entire spectrum: from deep-felt compassion for all involved over aggressive frustration to helpful condescension --- and it apparently must be difficult to know what will be most supportive for those who may be in a position for taking action. May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by Nonin** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 2:32 am

Shodo wrote:

Nonin said:

simpleton,

There has been no silence on this issue...

Dude, you are on page 7 of the Shimano Archive stating your disbelief that people are going after Eido!

Im sorry, I know you are going to be offended at this.... But a lot of people are wondering about the deafning silence of the ATZA... Up until it became impossible for you all not to respond when Eido's letter to the New York Times became public!

Hurt people have been screaming this stuff for years, the most we heard from the ATZA was "thou shalt not speak of others errors and faults"....

Im glad that finally the AZTA has got on board now that it is impossible to ignore, but where have you guys been???

Shodo,

My name is Nonin, not "Dude."

Have you read my previous posts on this issue? You are repeating falsehoods, misrepresenting the actions of Zen teachers, and trying to re-write history to fit your negative attitudes towards those in positions of spiritual authority.

To repeat: In the early 1990's, in the early stages of the AZTA, before I became involved, a group of AZTA members led by Robert Aitken drafted a letter to the ZSS Board recommending that Eido Shimano be replaced as abbot after becoming aware of his sexual transgressions. To repeat: this letter was ignored and the group was threatened with a lawsuit.

Again, to repeat: at that time these teachers tried to ameliorate the situation but were not able to. Subsequently, there was a long period of time when no sexual transgressions became public knowledge, either because there weren't any or they remained secret. A few months ago, when the recent transgression became public, AZTA members became involved only as individuals, for the AZTA is an informal association of members from all Zen Buddhist schools. We have no Board, no by-laws, and no officers and do not and cannot act as a group. At our meeting last Summer, the Shimano issue and other issues involving clergy misconduct were discussed. Both Roko Chayat and Genjo Marinello were present, and there was lengthy discussion of the ZSS issues. Many recommendations were made, and Roko and Genjo received the support of the AZTA members present as they further attempt to resolve the issues as members of the ZSS Board.

If you had any idea of how practice places in America are organized and how they are independently run, you would not be so quick to denigrate either the AZTA or its members for its or their inability to change the situation at ZSS. Also, I have informed ZFI members through my posts here as to how AZTA members have worked behind the scenes and have counseled not only Roko and Genjo but other teachers and sanghas involved in situations similar to ZSS's. Have you read these posts?

It's very easy for people to point fingers at others and say "Why did you do this?" or "Why didn't you do this?" without having any idea of what has been done within the parameters of what can be done. Rather than point fingers in a "holier than thou" attitude towards those who either acted poorly or didn't act at all in the past, I and other Zen Buddhist teachers are supporting Roko Chayat (Shinge-roshi), Genjo Marinello, and the ZSS Board as they attempt to guide the organization in a positive direction. We are also in support of all of the Faith/Trust Institute's recommendations and are offering our personal recommendations and advice as to how to heal those directly harmed by Eido Shimano's misconduct and how to heal the organization as a whole. The letters posted on James Ford's blog are full of these recommendations and advice. You sound as if you haven't read them; please do. There have been a few links to them posted in this thread.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Gregory Wonderwheel** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 3:17 am

simpleton wrote:

Well it's reassuring to finally see some teachers from the Western Zen community actually speak out against this abuse of students and teaching authority.

I cannot for the life of me understand why it too so long.

Personally I already wonder if it is too late for Eido's "successors". I cannot understand their silence - their inaction speaks volumes and I for one would never train with any of them because of this. In fact I would not even consider this a "lineage" of Zen at all.

Thanks for sharing this point of view. Fortunately one does not have to adopt it for oneself.

First, there has not been "silence" from Eido's successors. If one hasn't heard anything then maybe it is because one has not been within hearing range.

Personally, I have been greatly encouraged by what I have heard Genjo Osho say about the situation, and I for one have complete confidence in him and would train with him when ever I get the opportunity.

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

**by slice** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 3:53 am

christopher::: wrote:

slice wrote:

Nonin wrote:

You [genkaku] have misread and misinterpreted my post in response to Christopher:::'s post concerning behavior patterns in Japan. I posted that response as an example from my

own experience that sexual misconduct by Zen Buddhist teachers in Japan is not tolerated.

I'm still mystified by the "cultural logic" that Christopher mentioned. My impression is that Christopher simply hadn't read all of the case reports and didn't realize the severity of the situation. I suppose it is possible to rationalize that degree of abuse, but not on the basis of moral reasoning in Japanese culture. Japanese culture is at least as civilized as any other nation, needless to say. It also seems needless to say that Japanese Zen temples would, generally speaking, tolerate that degree of sexual misconduct.

I'm aware of the severity of the situation. And as someone who has lived (and currently resides) in Japan for over 20 years I'm also aware of the cultural tendency here to cover things up, rationalize and/or avoid looking at embarrassing/stressful truths and even going so far as denying those truths until/unless forced by external factors to face them.

Hello Christopher,

I appreciate your elaboration, however this is not unique to Eastern culture, not by a long shot. Maybe you've forgotten what life is like in the West.

This doesn't give a complete picture, of course. We still have the Western socio-cultural factors involved...

Oh yeah, dude!

For Westerners the concept of "independence" sounds positive and progressive...

Sure, back in the wild wild West... how long did you say that you've been away from the West?

Let's not kid ourselves, please.  
slice

**by christopher:::** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 3:58 am

Good points, slice.

BTW, for anyone who hasn't yet read Vladimir K. and Stuart Lachs' analysis of the background for this situation, which includes important cultural information, I highly recommend it...

The Aitken-Shimano Letters

excerpt:

"Robert Aitken and his wife, Anne, first met Eido Shimano in 1957 at Ryūtakuji, a Rinzai monastery in Mishima, Japan. As Aitken was to write later, "we could see he was a favourite of our teacher, Nakagawa Sōen Rōshi". Shimano expressed a desire to go to America. The Aitkens hoped they could induce their teacher, Sōen Nakagawa Rōshi, to come to Honolulu to lead the annual retreat (sesshin) if they set up Shimano as a monk-in-residence at their Zen center in Hawai'i. Shimano arrived in 1960, was given accommodation at the Aitkens' home, Koko An, which also served as their Zen center, and Robert Aitken and Shimano began translating Japanese Zen texts and developing group procedures for the sangha.

It soon became apparent that all was not well in the relationship. Shimano did not live up to Aitken's expectations of how a Buddhist monk was to behave, living "anything but a retiring life", sowing discord among the group and dressing "like a young man of commerce", demanding a "substantial" salary. Shimano wanted a motor scooter though he was near a bus stop that took him easily to the University of Hawaii where he took classes. He also wanted special clothes. In a photo Aitken showed Sōen in 1961, Sōen could not recognize his own student, Shimano.

It was against this background of discord that subsequent events unfolded. In the spring of 1964, two women from the sangha were hospitalized with nervous breakdowns. One of the women spent the next five years in and out of hospital, living with the Aitkens when not hospitalized with mental illness. Aitken, feeling guilty that he had not noticed the impending breakdowns of the two women, [10] began volunteer hospital work to learn more about mental health. Shimano accompanied him on his twice weekly visits. However, it was not long before a psychiatric social worker mentioned to the psychiatrist treating one of the women that Shimano's name was recurring in the reports of the two mentally ill women. The social worker "concluded that he [Shimano] was volunteering on the ward to prey upon other vulnerable women".

Appalled, Aitken questioned the psychiatrist who was treating one of the women. Aitken's worst fears were confirmed. The psychiatrist who treated the second woman was no longer working at the hospital so Aitken wrote to him, questioning whether the allegations of sexual misconduct against Shimano were true. It took two weeks to receive a reply but the psychiatrist, Dr C. S. S., was unequivocal, writing in a letter dated August 8, 1964:

There is no reasonable doubt that this person [Shimano] while discussing the highest of intellectual and religious matters seduced and had sexual intercourse with Miss D. [name withheld]. This apparently had a very destructive result.... This business suggests that your resident monk is totally incapable of the philosophy and religion he superficially espouses.... I hope this letter will assist you in ridding your community of his perverse influence. [11]

Robert Aitken felt that he could not confront Shimano with these allegations as "Our relationship was very poor, and we did not trust each other at all." Nor did he feel that he

could go public with these allegations, concerned as he was about the two women, and believing that the allegations “could divide the group irrevocably and lead nowhere”. Aitken decided to fly to Japan and consult with his teacher, Nakagawa Sōen Rōshi at Ryutakuji. Sōen Rōshi, teacher to both Aitken and Shimano, seemed unconcerned and took Aitken to meet with Yasutani Hakuun Rōshi. Yasutani had been to America a number of times and had taken over the training of Shimano and seemed even less concerned with Aitken’s story.

The meeting with the two Zen masters was disappointing. Some twenty years later Aitken wrote:

Their attitude seemed to be that Shimano had been irresponsible, and that we should encourage him to behave himself. I could not convey my newly found conviction that we were dealing with some kind of pathology.

Aitken excuses this lack of interest by the two Japanese Zen masters to cultural differences between America and Japan, writing “it is important to understand that mental illness and character pathology are viewed tolerantly in Japan.” Aitken infers that he believes that Shimano may be suffering some form of mental illness or pathology, calling him “someone in a different dimension altogether.” Nevertheless, Shimano’s Japanese teachers “felt responsible for him, and were not prepared to disgrace him by recalling him to Japan.” Aitken returned to Honolulu with the issue unresolved.[12] Events were not only unresolved, but were about to get worse.

Aitken returned to Hawaii in August, 1964, to find that Shimano was about to leave for New York in a fury with Aitken for going to Japan behind his back after having been told that Aitken was going to California. On September 11, 1964, Aitken wrote a long letter to Nakagawa Sōen Rōshi outlining what had happened. Aitken begins by pointing out that the events have “been a real koan for me” and that he regrets, “more than I can say, my weakness in going to Ryutakuji instead of remaining at an inn and consulting with you privately.” Aitken notes that his original plan was to confront Shimano with the accusations and try to persuade him to return to Japan, and “it was weak of me not to insist on it”. Shimano’s sudden departure from Koko An, the home of the Aitkens and place of practice for the Diamond Sangha, caused a rupture within the sangha with three old-timers, including two office holders of the sangha, not showing up at meetings once Shimano left. Aitken tries to explain to Sōen Rōshi the seriousness of the situation, noting that “The accusation made by the doctors against Tai San [Shimano] is very rare, really unheard of in its rarity,” emphasizing that “You may be sure that they [the psychiatrists] are 100% confident that they have the facts when they set anything down on paper.” Aitken goes on to state that Shimano is very angry with him, “so angry that he says he does not trust himself to see me for fear that he will do violence to me” and that “he could never forgive me”. [13]

It was in this letter of September 11, 1964, that Robert Aitken confirms that he will keep “silent about the incident,” pointing out that his first responsibility is to the two women affected.[14] In a letter to Elsie and John Mitchell, dated 22 September, 1964, Aitken



relates that another friend has written saying that Shimano explains his reason for leaving Hawai'i was due to conflict with Aitken. Aitken says in this letter, "I don't mind absorbing some of the blame if that will keep the real story dark," and "I am telling people here simply that he is transferring, and I have said the same to everyone by letter when there was occasion to mention it," except to a few close associates. Aitken regularly assured his teachers, Nakagawa Sōen Rōshi and Yasutani Rōshi, that he was keeping the truth hidden. It would be many years before the events of 1964 became more widely known.

What amazes me is that none of the women have been encouraged to file law suits. Eido Shimano hasn't been afraid to make the threat of a law suit to newspapers and the AZTA. We can point fingers of blame at individuals and organizations, but the bottom line (in my opinion) is that the women harmed have had the power to bring about change but have not been encouraged to do so.

Is there some reason (other than embarrassment about how this situation "looks" ) that they haven't been encouraged to file formal charges?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by christopher:::** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 10:06 am

UPDATE:

Well, after doing a bit of research online it looks like New York's statutes of limitations are extremely short with cases like this- unless rape or minors were involved. So- there really isn't much anyone can do beyond what is being done now, which is make this story public in order to exert pressure on the ZSS board of directors to act.

Also- in regards to Nonin sensei's advice to genkaku on page 35-

I also truly hope that you will finally heal the deep-seated hurt and let go of the anger that you have been carrying for so many years.

I think that people like Adam (genkaku) who witnessed and experienced the suffering and hypocrisy in Eido Shimano's sangha first hand should be encouraged to express their anger verbally, even if it may seem to be "misdirected" at times. In many cases things have to be let out before they can be let go. People need to express their feelings, be given a safe space to work emotional knots out.

For Zen teachers who may feel "attacked" at times (or feel that the Zen establishment and "authority" is under attack) I hope you can be patient, not taking such attacks personally..

Please try to put yourself into the other's shoes, or (if possible) go past all views of self/other, students/teachers.

Healing can happen, but isn't being assisted if we hold onto the idea that a person's suffering belongs to them, alone. Isn't that part of what being a bodhisattva (and enlightened Zen teacher/practitioner) is all about?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Eido Shimano's letter to the NYT  
by **unsui** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 11:33 am

Seigen wrote:

With the publication of the letter to the New York Times, we know we are dealing with an individual who is capable of quite fraudulent behavior.

Seigen, thank-you very much for all your patience in helping me understand this situation. There is something, however, that I am confused about regarding Shimano's letter. You write here "publication". I assumed that meant that the letter had made it into the newspaper. But, I cannot seem to find it there. I have, of course, seen the signed letter in the Shimano Archives (and in more than one blog!) and read Genjo's unambiguous reaction to the letter on the Tricycle blog and here, but I can't quite seem to get it all straight on a time-line. Who, in actuality, has this letter and was it ever sent to the NYT? Or is the letter a kind of "sleeping threat" that will be "activated" if ZSS cuts the ties to Eido Shimano?

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

by **Seigen** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 1:36 pm

I'm a blogger so online is publishing in my world-view. Here is the NYT journalist, Mark Oppenheimer:

Apparently NYC Zen Buddhist leader Eido Shimano Roshi has been circulating a letter that he says he sent in reply to my article of a few months ago about his alleged sexual indiscretions. I do not know if his letter ever made it to the Times (if he sent it, he sent it four months after the article appeared).

Found here: <http://oppenheimer.squarespace.com/front-page/a-buddhist-vs-me.html>  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by unsui on Sun Jan 02, 2011 2:07 pm

Seigen wrote:

I'm a blogger so online is publishing in my world-view. Here is the NYT journalist, Mark Oppenheimer:

Apparently NYC Zen Buddhist leader Eido Shimano Roshi has been circulating a letter that he says he sent in reply to my article of a few months ago about his alleged sexual indiscretions. I do not know if his letter ever made it to the Times (if he sent it, he sent it four months after the article appeared).

Found here: <http://oppenheimer.squarespace.com/front-page/a-buddhist-vs-me.html>

Seigen, Yes, but that is exactly where I got confused! The letter was apparently showed to him by Kobutsu Malone

([http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20101226\\_Malone\\_Oppenheimer.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20101226_Malone_Oppenheimer.pdf), but Malone hasn't said where he has the letter from! Did Genjo send it to him, possibly after he first saw the letter at the end of December - or did Shimano send it per Dec. 1 -- or did an anonymous source? Genjo's posting in the Tricycle blog is the 23rd, referring to his having seen the letter (somewhere - did Shimano give him or ZSS a copy, did he see it in Wikipedia?) the day before (<http://www.tricycle.com/p/2271?page=4>). And Christopher has posted it here

<http://www.zenforuminternational.org/viewtopic.php?f=68&t=3584&start=680#p78557> in Japanese December 15 - how did this show up in Wikipedia and is this the first documentation that this letter was written?

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by Seigen** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 2:17 pm

unsui, here is what Christopher wrote, he is careful about the language. Do you think it is possible that after seeing the letter presented to them in this way - "somebody" "allegedly" - that teachers, including Genjo, automatically and without checking have acted on the assumption that it is Shimano? Nonin might have the answer as to the proof, or the confidence.

Apparently, for some time now somebody has been trying to remove any reference to the Shimano scandal from Wikipedia, both the English and Japanese versions. That is weird

enough. But his or her latest move was to submit a letter, allegedly sent to the New York Times by Shimano himself, denying everything that the NYT had related in their article. Now without a signature there's of course no proof that said letter actually exists, let alone written by Shimano (then again one could say the same thing about his resignation!), but clearly somebody out there in computerland is extremely interested in covering up the scandal, to the point of forging long letters of denial.

Off to the zendo! - Seigen  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by unsui** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 2:38 pm

Seigen wrote:

unsui, here is what Christopher wrote, he is careful about the language. Do you think it is possible that after seeing the letter presented to them in this way - "somebody" "allegedly" - that teachers, including Genjo, automatically and without checking have acted on the assumption that it is Shimano? Nonin might have the answer as to the proof, or the confidence.

Please do not conclude that I am making any assumptions on the part of the 15-20 Zen masters and teachers, who have written to ZSS - they all must know way more about what is going on and are certainly reacting from a stance of wisdom and compassion.

I am just trying to make sense of this in my own head, with the resources that are available to me. Something is wrong somewhere, is what my intuition is telling me. This letter of Shimano must have a purpose in some context.

Seigen wrote:

Off to the zendo! - Seigen

Sit well!

with palms together,  
unsui

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by moon face buddha** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 3:48 pm

Back in 1997 the Guardian newspaper published an article regarding the FWBO [http://www.fwbo-files.com/guardian\\_article\\_v2.htm](http://www.fwbo-files.com/guardian_article_v2.htm) (now renamed Triratna Buddhist Community).

In a small network of streets around the old fire station in Bethnal Green, East London, can be found Britain's last revolutionaries. But these are no socialist workers - they are the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, one of Britain's biggest and fastest growing Buddhist organisations. They believe they are evolving the Higher Individual and the New Society according to the 2,500-year-old principles of the Buddha, as adapted for the late 20th century by their revered leader, Sangharakshita - formerly known as Dennis Lingwood. They might be called the last remnants of sixties' hippie idealism.

Some - and they include many senior Buddhists - watch their success with alarm, and privately accuse them of peddling a quixotic ideology which owes as much to Nietzsche and 20th century psycho-therapy as to a highly eclectic pot-pourri of eastern Buddhist traditions.

Even more disturbing, the cases of three vulnerable young men have emerged which detail sexual manipulation and oppressive authoritarian cult behaviour which, in the case of one man, has been cited as a significant factor leading to his suicide  
Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by Jundo Cohen** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 4:23 pm

Eido "Roshi"'s case, and others like it, may someday be seen as one of the best, most refreshing things to happen in Buddhism in centuries ...

I think it a fallacy to believe that Buddhists, no matter the level or depth of the practitioner, are ever completely free during this life from being just human. It is a religious, heroic image created by the many old Buddhist stories which scrubbed clean all the tales of the ancestors of the past, robbing them of every flaw and placing them on golden pedestals. A Buddha or Ancestor (Jesus or any Saint in any religion) dies and ... century by century ... those in the religion (looking from afar at what those attainments actually were on the part of their "religious heroes" and with need to depict their power) start to imagine, fantasize and exaggerate the wonderful nature of the teacher and teaching into something super-human. What was merely "Great, Profound and Wonderful" must become "Mysterious, Wondrous and (often) Ridiculous". The result is called an "hagiography"

A hagiography is a biography, usually of a saint or saintly person, and usually written to idealize their life or justify their sainthood. In other words, a hagiography is usually a positive presentation of a life, rather than an objective or critical biography. When using a

hagiography as a research source, the purpose and style must be taken into consideration, as the writer probably omitted negative information and exaggerated or even created positive information about the subject of the hagiography. Lives of the saints are typically hagiographies.

All human beings, from 'Great Bodhisattvas' right on down to the rest of us, are just human beings ... and that means rough edges, cracks and ugly spots, flesh, fallings down and flaws. (At least, of course, until we eventually become Perfect Golden Buddhas ... assuming that even those ideals reside anywhere beyond our flawed human imaginations) Human beings are human. That includes Zen and other Buddhist teachers, no less.

And it is a breath of fresh air that we finally realize so about Buddhist practice. It is also a chance for the true POWER of this practice to manifest ... for it is a practice for flawed human beings who wish to be better. The true value of this Buddhist Way is proven there.

That is at the heart of this "unending practice" ... which is also enlightenment itself.

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

Re: Eido Shimano's letter to the NYT  
by **Nonin** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 5:07 pm

unsui wrote:

Who, in actuality, has this letter and was it ever sent to the NYT?

The letter was sent to the NYT but never published. Eido Shimano then sent the letter around and it was eventually made public through a variety of sources, mainly on the internet.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Eido Shimano's letter to the NYT  
by **unsui** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 5:25 pm

Nonin wrote:

unsui wrote:

Who, in actuality, has this letter and was it ever sent to the NYT?

The letter was sent to the NYT but never published. Eido Shimano then sent the letter around and it was eventually made public through a variety of sources, mainly on the internet.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Thank-you, Nonin. That was the missing piece for me! I have become wary about trusting what I find on the internet, especially if it shows up on a multitude of sites, with no citations regarding the original source.

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

by **Kojip** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 6:38 pm

Jundo Cohen wrote:

All human beings, from 'Great Bodhisattvas' right on down to the rest of us, are just human beings ... and that means rough edges, cracks and ugly spots, flesh, fallings down and flaws. (At least, of course, until we eventually become Perfect Golden Buddhas ... assuming that even those ideals reside anywhere beyond our flawed human imaginations) Human beings are human. That includes Zen and other Buddhist teachers, no less.

Respectfully Reverend. I think the issue here is not just the flawed behavior of a teacher. It is behavior that most average people who never practice a day in there lives would never engage in, let alone someone claiming to model wisdom. This thread is so long for a reason, and it is not because people expect perfection. I honestly don't get it.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by simpleton** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 6:58 pm

Nonin wrote:  
simpleton,

There has been no silence on this issue.

Western Zen teachers have spoken out against sexual misconduct by their peers for many years. A group of teachers spoke out about Eido Shimano's conduct in the early 90's. Their speaking out was ignored, and they were threatened by a lawsuit if it continued formally....

If you haven't read my letter on this subject, it can be accessed here:  
[http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20 ... o-zen.html](http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/20...o-zen.html) Mine is the fourth teacher letter down, after Dosho Port's.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Nonin,

Fair enough - I was unaware of threats of lawsuits from ZSS etc, so take back what I said about silence on this issue.

Credit to you and others for speaking out now via your letter.  
Respectfully,  
simpleton.  
simpleton

**by Nonin** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 7:03 pm

Kojip wrote:

Jundo Cohen wrote:

All human beings, from 'Great Bodhisattvas' right on down to the rest of us, are just human beings ... and that means rough edges, cracks and ugly spots, flesh, fallings down and flaws. (At least, of course, until we eventually become Perfect Golden Buddhas ... assuming that even those ideals reside anywhere beyond our flawed human imaginations) Human beings are human. That includes Zen and other Buddhist teachers, no less.

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never engage in, let alone someone claiming to model wisdom. This thread is so long for a reason, and it is not because people expect perfection. I honestly don't get it.

Kojip,

You are hitting on something here that is important, and that is "Why do some practitioners and teachers who manifest deep spiritual depth engage in unethical conduct that most people would never engage in?"

There is a thread running through Zen Buddhism that accounts for some of this, and I'm going to open another thread in the Zen Practice in Daily Life forum at [viewtopic.php?f=23&t=5876](http://viewtopic.php?f=23&t=5876) here to explore it. Please join me there.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by simpleton** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 7:06 pm

Jundo Cohen wrote:

Eido "Roshi"'s case, and others like it, may someday be seen as one of the best, most refreshing things to happen in Buddhism in centuries ...

Jundo,

As a teacher on this forum, PLEASE reconsider what you have written here.

I take your point that teachers are also human, but to express this series of scandals and the huge harm done to many innocent people as "one of the best, most refreshing things to happen in Buddhism in centuries" strikes me as being: i) Deeply untrue and ii) Deeply hurtful to those said victims

I will refrain from saying anything further. I sincerely hope I have misread/misunderstood your post.

Rgds

simpleton.  
simpleton

by **Seigen** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 7:58 pm

The full letter is below, it now appears on Monkey Mind with the others:  
<http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/2010/12/letters-from-zen-teachers-to-zen.html>

Wendy Egyoku Nakao, abbot, Zen Center of Los Angeles:

On this first day of the new year, I want to take a few moments to write to you as the abbot of the Zen Center of Los Angeles. I offer bows of appreciation for the good news of the installation of Roshi Shinge as Abbot of ZSS and DBZ.

I am writing to voice my support for terminating Roshi Shimano's presence and teaching at the ZSS in light of his sexually predatory and unrepentant behavior. I urge the ZSS Board to boldly and courageously recognize that Roshi Shimano needs help and to find a course of treatment for him.

I urge you to facilitate the ongoing and thorough education of everyone at ZSS and DBZ on all facets of why this behavior has been so devastatingly harmful for the women involved and frankly, for everyone in your Sangha and the Maha Sangha, and why it is not to be tolerated in any way.

I urge you all to fearlessly stand in the fire of directly looking at the organizational-and-sangha-culture structures and behaviors that have protected this dynamic and enabled it to exist for far too many years. Perhaps this will be the most painful part, but I know, from my own experience, that when you stand in the fire and are unflinching in your investigation leaving no stone unturned, a path of liberation emerges and a vista comes into view for a deep and broad maturing in the Dharma.

I implore you to work tirelessly to take care of the people in your Sangha (including those long gone from your properties because they were harmed or could no longer bear to be part of your culture) in all the ways that Zen people, who hold close the vows to end suffering and the Great Vows of Bodhisattvas, are committed to do. Please do not fear losing buildings and grounds or even your organization at the expense of taking care of the Sangha treasure.

As the abbot of the Zen Center of Los Angeles for these past 12 years, I know first hand the effort that is involved in healing a Sangha and creating a viable Zen practice place that truly serves the wholeness of human beings.

Finally, I offer my support in whatever way it may be useful to Roshi Shinge, Genjo Osho, and yourself.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by **flax3lbs** on Sun Jan 02, 2011 10:35 pm

I suppose we could have another discussion about the ultimate realm and how experiencing it doesn't confer automatic purity, or moral responsibility. But really, I think most here know this. Most aren't expecting perfection from their teachers. I have no special ability to judge the root of a certain teacher or lineage. I'm sure no one else does either, but we can see the leaves. We can see the leaves of Dai Bosatsu in the Aitken archives. We can see the leaves through a few direct witnesses that have at one time or another been a part of Dai Bosatsu. And most glaringly, we can see the leaves of Eido Shimano, particularly with his most recent (and hopefully his last) attempt at manipulation. This is a teacher with grave faults. Sexual predator, perhaps sociopath. A man very concerned with his position and authority. Also evidence of financial greed, questionable fund raising, a generous pension plan.

I can live with a teacher that has more than a robe and his eating bowls. I have no qualms if they have a dishwasher, washer, dryer, and a car. But the long list of this man's shortcomings blow the mind. A person who lies, deceives, and tries to manipulate his environment to his own selfish agenda. I'm supposed to have trust that this person is a teacher of the dharma? I'm supposed to believe he has the insight to see it in others (his dharma heirs), and his ability to guide and teach them with all his propensity for deception? I think it's no surprise that so many people hold a healthy skepticism.

Enjoy your discussion. I don't need it. As much as teachers give the wise advice to, "let go, let go", for now I'll have to hold onto a poor opinion of this "lineage".  
flax3lbs

by **Jundo Cohen** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 6:20 am

simpleton wrote:

Jundo Cohen wrote:

Eido "Roshi"'s case, and others like it, may someday be seen as one of the best, most refreshing things to happen in Buddhism in centuries ...

Jundo,

As a teacher on this forum, PLEASE reconsider what you have written here.

I take your point that teachers are also human, but to express this series of scandals and the huge harm done to many innocent people as "one of the best, most refreshing things to happen in Buddhism in centuries" strikes me as being: i) Deeply untrue and ii) Deeply hurtful to those said victims

I will refrain from saying anything further. I sincerely hope I have misread/misunderstood your post.

Rgds  
simpleton.

Hi Simpleton,

I simply meant that it may be one of the "best things" for helping to bring this practice down to earth and out of the clouds, alive in real people's complex lives and not the "Buddhist Heavens". In other words, it will relieve us of some of our more childish delusions of Teachers, Ancestors, Buddhas and Practice.

It also has potential to show us a bit of the true "Lotus in the Mud", a Jewel hidden in our tattered sleeve in this living Practice ... how to practice day by day in a world where any of us, even a "Roshi", can lose the Way.

Kojip wrote:

Respectfully Reverend. I think the issue here is not just the flawed behavior of a teacher. It is behavior that most average people who never practice a day in there lives would never engage in, let alone someone claiming to model wisdom.

Kojip, I am simple minded on this too, and am just a "do not mistake a few bad apples for the whole beautiful orchard" kind of fellow. There are some medical doctors who are butchers, yet that does not make all or most medical doctors to be heartless, negligent fiends ... and so many work wondrous cures each day, dedicating their lives to the aid of others. There are some airplane pilots who should not be in the cockpit (despite passing all the tests), yet still thousands of dedicated pilots make thousands of skilled landings each day without incident, bringing the people in their care just where they need to go. Same for any calling or profession, good and bad people everywhere.

What our Practice does accomplish, if diligently followed, is to free us from the worst hidden in our human nature (at least among most long time practitioners I know ... apparently, not so for Eido and his ilk). It does work to make us better people. (In fact, most clergy I have met ... not just Buddhist clergy, but of all religions ... are good, caring, ethical people, the bad apples like Eido Shimano aside). Most of the Zen teachers I have met ... especially those with a few years and some maturity under their belt ... tend to be lovely, gentle, well rounded, self-actuated, moderate, compassionate, healthy people - balanced, living life with fullness and well. It would be a shame if someone like "Eido Roshi" were taken as representative of all Buddhist teachers everywhere, or used as the basis to claim that the Buddhist Way is without value ... for the countless good and decent teachers are proof otherwise.

The Buddhist Sutta and Sutra, the Vinaya, Jataka tales, are filled with countless stories of Buddhist adepts who "went wrong", lost the way, transgressed a Precept and harmed others. It is nothing new. In walking this Way, step by step, we must always exercise great care not to loose our way ... for it is always possible in the next step (until we arrive at the Perfect Pure Land at least).

Gassho, Jundo

PS- By the way, "Simpleton's" comment made me reflect of Eido's victims. They are not being much talked about in all the condemnation of Eido. Is anyone seeing to them, are they being taken care of? Can any amends be made? Or would that have to involve lawyers, as with the Catholic Church?

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by slice** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 7:58 am

Jundo Cohen wrote:

simpleton wrote:

Jundo Cohen wrote:

Eido "Roshi"'s case, and others like it, may someday be seen as one of the best, most refreshing things to happen in Buddhism in centuries ...

Jundo,

As a teacher on this forum, PLEASE reconsider what you have written here.

I take your point that teachers are also human, but to express this series of scandals and the huge harm done to many innocent people as "one of the best, most refreshing things to happen in Buddhism in centuries" strikes me as being: i) Deeply untrue and ii) Deeply hurtful to those said victims

I will refrain from saying anything further. I sincerely hope I have misread/misunderstood your post.

Rgds

simpleton.

Hi Simpleton,

I simply meant that it may be one of the "best things" for helping to bring this practice down to earth and out of the clouds, alive in real people's complex lives and not the "Buddhist Heavens". In other words, it will relieve us of some of our more childish delusions of Teachers, Ancestors, Buddhas and Practice.

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Kojip, I am simple minded on this too, and am just a "do not mistake a few bad apples for the whole beautiful orchard" kind of fellow. There are some medical doctors who are butchers, yet that does not make all or most medical doctors to be heartless, negligent fiends ... and so many work wondrous cures each day, dedicating their lives to the aid of others. There are some airplane pilots who should not be in the cockpit (despite passing all the tests), yet still thousands of dedicated pilots make thousands of skilled landings each day without incident, bringing the people in their care just where they need to go. Same for any calling or profession, good and bad people everywhere.

Hello Jundo Cohen,

To use your own metaphors, does anyone ever say that it may have been one of the best, most refreshing things that ever happened to a patient after a surgeon had butchered them, or after a pilot had flown a plane full of innocent passengers into a building? They might say that but the chance of its appropriateness would be slim to none. And in the case of none they might just say something like, "yeah, that was inappropriate, sorry," and in so doing owning the point.  
slice

**by Linda Anderson** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 8:09 am

Well, I'm not fooling around here... Jundo, stay with refreshing, if you mean it. I think you do. And, I agree tho it's not easy.

Linda

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by christopher:::** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 9:21 am

Jundo Cohen wrote:

PS- By the way, "Simpleton's" comment made me reflect of Eido's victims. They are not being much talked about in all the condemnation of Eido. Is anyone seeing to them, are they being taken care of? Can any amends be made? Or would that have to involve lawyers, as with the Catholic Church?

Hi Jundo.

I think this (in bold) is exactly why people are unhappy with your words and phrasing. We may not be talking about the victims but i think they are held in most people's minds as we write and read here. Eido Shimano's actions are harmful in that they caused suffering for specific people.

So to say "It is nothing new" or "it may be one of the "best things" for helping to bring this practice down to earth and out of the clouds, alive in real people's complex lives and not the "Buddhist Heavens" or "it will relieve us of some of our more childish delusions of Teachers, Ancestors, Buddhas and Practice" is being insensitive to all those people directly effected by these specific actions.

This is a very simple point. Shimano's actions were harmful, and it seems clear from many of the posts here that the situation has not yet been resolved, for many people.

There may be positive effects from the resolution of this situation, yes. But most of us would not say "it may be one of the best things"....

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Jundo Cohen** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 9:51 am

Well, whatever the way it is said, something very positive will come of this if there are true reforms in the Zen community about how such situations are regulated, and if the view of Teachers, Ancestors and Buddhas comes down to earth.

Not all positives are negatives, not all negatives are positives. Hitler was the worst thing that ever happened to the Jews, and perhaps the "best" for bringing about a return after thousands of years of a Jewish Homeland (which, by the way, may not have been the "best" thing for the Palestinians ... but may be the "best" for some Palestinians or the world in the long term in some other way ... or the "worst" ... ). Karmic effects are rarely black and white.

And by the way, when we look at Eido Tai Shimano, we all need to look at ourselves.

Buddhist teachings tend to point to the real "wrongdoer" in life as human "greed, anger and ignorance", and in that sense, both the person who is the target of violence AND the person who does violence are "victims". So, for example, even a violent murderer, rapist or child molester is acting so because of the inner rage, excess desire, dissatisfaction, divisive thoughts within them, all holes they feel the need to fill through their harmful actions. Everyone is a victim of greed, anger and ignorance.

THAT, BY THE WAY, does not necessarily excuse or forgive the person's volitional conduct ... and there are debts that have to be paid, either in society (we may understand that a child molester is acting due to his own past suffering, yet society is perfectly right in removing such a person from being able to do further harm to others, either through prison or other effective means, and seeking otherwise that the debt be paid) or the universe itself (if one believe's in literal Karma for volitional acts, then the debt will be paid in future lives and hells). Thus, many Nazis in WWII were "victims" of their inner anger, bigotry, racism, hunger for power, and perhaps own poor childhoods ... yet society was justified in stopping and punishing them, demanding self-reflection, atonement, compensation of victims, reforms to prevent it happening again.

But, we must all recognize that we --all-- have the inner POTENTIAL for the best and worst of human behavior within us, under the right (or wrong) conditions. "There but for the grace of Buddha go I". Furthermore, we are all so interconnected that, in a very real sense, I am ultimately you and you are me. Thus, I feel that Buddhists should take actions necessary to prevent and punish wrongdoing, but always (or as we humanly can ... for it is hard to forgive some things) without thoughts of revenge or anger. It is simply necessary medicine to keep society safe.

So, Eido Roshi is you and me and the other guy (as are his victims). Look in the mirror, and stop pointing fingers a an easy target, but at Greed, Anger and Ignorance ... and yourself. We need to look at ourselves.

No less, we need to look at ourselves to see what we ... you and I ... are doing to aid and comfort the victims. What are you doing? What steps do we take from here?

That is my "best" answer.

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

by **christopher:::** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 12:26 pm



I think i understand your point, Jundo, but one thing I'm getting a strong sense here is that nondual reasoning and language is extremely limited (and even potentially destructive) if it isn't accompanied by compassionate action, meeting others in direct ways (face to face) that help to reduce their suffering. In regards to that, I think your earlier questions and the answers (actual compassionate responses) that are found for them are what's most essential, and can be most helpful.

Jundo Cohen wrote:

"Simpleton's" comment made me reflect of Eido's victims. They are not being much talked about in all the condemnation of Eido. Is anyone seeing to them, are they being taken care of? Can any amends be made? Or would that have to involve lawyers, as with the Catholic Church?

Maybe others will have more ideas and information on this. Roshi's pension, for example, might be divided among some of the women who have experienced the greatest suffering. Or is there a need for assistance with some fund raising?

What has been done, can be done, should be done to help care for them?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by slice** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 12:42 pm

Jundo Cohen wrote:

Well, whatever the way it is said, something very positive will come of this if there are true reforms in the Zen community about how such situations are regulated, and if the view of Teachers, Ancestors and Buddhas comes down to earth.

Not all positives are negatives, not all negatives are positives. Hitler was the worst thing that ever happened to the Jews, and perhaps the "best" for bringing about a return after thousands of years of a Jewish Homeland (which, by the way, may not have been the "best" thing for the Palestinians ... but may be the "best" for some Palestinians or the world in the long term in some other way ... or the "worst" ... ). Karmic effects are rarely black and white.

And by the way, when we look at Eido Tai Shimano, we all need to look at ourselves.

Buddhist teachings tend to point to the real "wrongdoer" in life as human "greed, anger and ignorance", and in that sense, both the person who is the target of violence AND the person who does violence are "victims". So, for example, even a violent murderer, rapist or child molester is acting so because of the inner rage, excess desire, dissatisfaction,

divisive thoughts within them, all holes they feel the need to fill through their harmful actions. Everyone is a victim of greed, anger and ignorance.

THAT, BY THE WAY, does not necessarily excuse or forgive the person's volitional conduct ... and there are debts that have to be paid, either in society (we may understand that a child molester is acting due to his own past suffering, yet society is perfectly right in removing such a person from being able to do further harm to others, either through prison or other effective means, and seeking otherwise that the debt be paid) or the universe itself (if one believe's in literal Karma for volitional acts, then the debt will be paid in future lives and hells). Thus, many Nazis in WWII were "victims" of their inner anger, bigotry, racism, hunger for power, and perhaps own poor childhoods ... yet society was justified in stopping and punishing them, demanding self-reflection, atonement, compensation of victims, reforms to prevent it happening again.

But, we must all recognize that we --all-- have the inner POTENTIAL for the best and worst of human behavior within us, under the right (or wrong) conditions. "There but for the grace of Buddha go I". Furthermore, we are all so interconnected that, in a very real sense, I am ultimately you and you are me. Thus, I feel that Buddhists should take actions necessary to prevent and punish wrongdoing, but always (or as we humanly can ... for it is hard to forgive some things) without thoughts of revenge or anger. It is simply necessary medicine to keep society safe.

So, Eido Roshi is you and me and the other guy (as are his victims). Look in the mirror, and stop pointing fingers a an easy target, but at Greed, Anger and Ignorance ... and yourself. We need to look at ourselves.

No less, we need to look at ourselves to see what we ... you and I ... are doing to aid and comfort the victims. What are you doing? What steps do we take from here?

That is my "best" answer.

Gassho, Jundo

It's the spiritual teachers job to turn tragedy into meaning. We get it, Jundo, but let's face it, your alchemy failed in this case, failed badly. It would be refreshing and the maybe the best thing for you to simply admit that now. And wouldn't admitting that you failed support the mirror gazing attitude that you're advocating...

I of course apologize for pointing this out.  
slice

**by christopher:::** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 1:10 pm

Nonin shared these ideas from Robert Aitken in the other discussion. The post is a bit long but does (i think) help to clarify what we are discussing here now.

Nonin wrote:  
All,

This post is going to be a bit long, so let me apologize in advance!

The question is: how can some Zen adepts engage in unethical practices, including, but not limited to, sexual misconduct, when most people, non-practitioners, practitioners, and most Zen teachers would not engage in them?

The simplest answers in regard to sexual misconduct are loneliness (especially single people), unhappiness, bad marriages, unfulfilling personal relationships, thinking that you can get away with it, and of course greed ( I want it, disregarding the other person), hatred (or aversion, discontent with your present situation), or delusion (thinking that the enlightened being (yourself) is above the karmic consequences of your behavior. The list could go on and on.

The complex answer lies in an issue that has been a part of Zen Buddhism since its beginnings. The best modern exploration of this issue occurs in Robert Aiken's book, *The Mind of Clover; Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics*. In the first essay, "The Nature of the Precepts," Aitken discusses a famous interchange between the Samurai warrior Musashi Miyamoto and the Zen Master Takuan. Miyamoto asks Takuan how to conduct himself in battle. Takuan replies:

"The uplifted sword has no will of its own, it is all of emptiness. It is like a flash of lightning. The man who is about to be struck down is also of emptiness, as is the one who wields the sword. . . .

Do not get your mind stopped with the sword you raise; forget about what you are doing, and strike the enemy. Do not keep your mind on the person before you. They are all of emptiness, but beware of your mind being caught in emptiness."

Well, even though Takuan says don't be "caught in emptiness," he recommends that Miyamoto do so, dwell in the absolute, forget about the relative, and then you are blameless. But what about the first Pure Precept: "A follower of the Way does no harm." And what about the Prohibitory Precept on killing: "A follower of the Way does not kill but rather cultivates and encourages life." Takuan has gone a little off by ignoring these.

Robert Aitken comments on Takuan's statement thusly:

"The Devil quotes scripture, and Mara, the incarnation of ignorance, can quote the Abhidharma. The fallacy of the Way of the Samurai is similar to the fallacy of the Code of the Crusader. Both distort what should be a universal view into an argument for partisan warfare. The catholic charity of the Holy See did not include people it called

pagans. The vow of Takuan Zenji to save all beings did not encompass the one he calls the enemy."

Later on in his book, in the chapter on the precept against killing, Aitken re-examines Takuan's statement:

"The Buddha-nature view is summed up in the Heart Sutra. "There is no old age and death, and also no ending of old age and death." It is important to see into this passage clearly. The first point is that in the world of nirvana, the real world of empty infinity, there is nothing to be called death. From this point of view, Takuan Zenji is right: there is no one killing, no killing, and no one to be killed. The peace of infinite emptiness pervades the universe.

. . . If there is no sword, no swing of the sword, no decapitation, then what about all the blood? What about the wails of the widow and children? the absolute position, when isolated, omits human details completely. Doctrines, including Buddhism, are meant to be used. Beware of them taking life of their own, for then they use us. Nirvana, the purity and clarity of the void, is the name we give to the total peace one experiences in deepest realization. But that is the same sea that we experience rising and falling in samsara, the relative world of coming and going. We cannot abstract depth from surface, nor surface from depth. Killing, even in an exalted state of mind, cannot be separated from suffering."

Nor can stealing, lying, cheating, improper sexual conduct, or any of the other unethical behaviors covered by the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts.

One of the earliest examples of how we can go off if we only dwell in the absolute and neglect the relative and the precepts occurs in a Zen Buddhist text called *The Dialogue of the Contemplation Extinguished*. the text is sometimes attributed to Bodhidharma, but there is no historical evidence of this. The dialogue is between a master called "Attainment" and his disciple called "Gateway" and is a brilliant exploration of the absolute side of existence. However, the following passage was pointed out to us and examined by my master, Dainin Katagiri, when his disciples studied the text (trans. by Gishin Tokiwa) with him many years ago:

#### Part VI

1. Gateway asks, "Does the Way lie only in the spiritual body? Or does it also lie in grass and trees?"

Attainment says, "The Way has no place where it does not pervade."

2. Asked, "If the Way is so pervasive, why is it that to kill a man is criminal whereas to kill grass and trees is not criminal?"

Answered, "to speak of crime and non-crime follows the discriminative mind, and is based on particularity; neither is the right Way. Only because men [and women] of the world, not having attained the Way, falsely set up their own [and other] selves, is killing intentional. The intention bears fruit of karman. Hence the speaking of crimes.

Grass and trees, having no discriminative mind, originally accord with the Way. Since they are free from ego-centeredness, their killer engages in no calculation. Hence no arguing about crime or non-crime.

Now the one who is free from ego-centeredness, who thus accords with the Way, looks at his body as at grass or a tree, and suffers the cutting of his body with a sword as trees in a forest do. Therefore, Manjusri's grasping a sword against Gautama [Buddha] and Angulimalya's holding a dagger against Sakyamuni are all in accord with the Way. Both attain the No-origination, and completely realize the mirage-like transformation of what are hollow and vacant in their identity. That is why there is no arguing about either a crime or a non-crime."

However, as Robert Aitken has said, "What about the blood? What about the wails of the widow and children?"

Whenever we try to justify our behavior by citing the absolute and deluding ourselves by thinking that we can abide there and ignore the relative, we go off, as Zen adepts do when they ignore the precepts, which are meant to guide us as we make our way in the relative world, and engage in unethical practices.

The law of cause and effect governs all our actions. No one can escape it, even the Zen adept who foolishly thinks that he or she is beyond it. In more recent Zen Buddhist literature, the Wild Fox koan speaks to this issue:

Every day when Zen master Baizhang spoke in the hall, there was an old man who would attend along with the assembly. One day when the congregation had departed, the old man remained.

Baizhang asked him, "Who are you?"

The old man said, "I'm not a person. Formerly, during the age of Kasyapa Buddha, I was the abbot of a monastery on this mountain. At that time a student asked me. 'Does a great adept fall into cause and effect or not?' I answered, saying, 'A great adept does not fall into cause and effect.' Thereafter, for five hundred lifetimes I've been reborn in the body of a fox. Now I ask that the master say a turning phrase in my behalf, so that I can shed the fox's body."

Baizhang said, "Ask the question."

The old man said, "Does a great adept fall into cause and effect or not?"

Baizhang said, "A great adept is not blind to cause and effect."

Upon hearing these words, the old man experienced unsurpassed enlightenment. He then said, "Now I have shed the body of a fox. I lived behind the mountain. Please provide funeral services for a monk who has died."

When Zen adepts ignore the law of cause and effect and fail to live ethically according to the precepts, their training, practice, and attainment is incomplete, and they create suffering not only for themselves but also for others.

Thanks for sticking with me through this!

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Linda Anderson** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 6:43 pm

christopher::: wrote:

I think i understand your point, Jundo, but one thing I'm getting a strong sense here is that nondual reasoning and language is extremely limited (and even potentially destructive) if it isn't accompanied by compassionate action, meeting others in direct ways (face to face) that help to reduce their suffering. In regards to that, I think your earlier questions and the answers (actual compassionate responses) that are found for them are what's most essential, and can be most helpful.

Jundo Cohen wrote:

"Simpleton's" comment made me reflect of Eido's victims. They are not being much talked about in all the condemnation of Eido. Is anyone seeing to them, are they being taken care of? Can any amends be made? Or would that have to involve lawyers, as with the Catholic Church?

Maybe others will have more ideas and information on this. Roshi's pension, for example, might be divided among some of the women who have experienced the greatest suffering. Or is there a need for assistance with some fund raising?

What has been done, can be done, should be done to help care for them?

I don't think this is an either/or. Nobody is disregarding the so-called co-participants and the damage done. (won't use the v-word) Like anything in life, there may have been some who walked thru the fire unscathed. I sincerely hope that having encountered such trauma, they had the good fortune to learn and heal. What else can we do when devastation of any kind happens. Although, I have seen a few folks who are still carrying sangha trauma 30 years later.

I think the point is seeing the natural reality... a fire devastates the old wood and structure of the forest. A new forest will soon fill in. ... just the new forest is left.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Shonin** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 7:56 pm

As I see it...

It is necessary to prevent this abuse from happening again.  
 It is necessary to make it clear that this is not appropriate behaviour  
 It is not necessary to crucify Eido Roshi or assassinate his character or teaching legacy

Leaving an old man shamed and penniless would not benefit anyone  
 Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
 My blog

Shonin

**by Linda Anderson** on Mon Jan 03, 2011 8:03 pm

Shonin wrote:  
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I agree, I don't think the image of the fire swept that away. My point was more looking at "how did it serve". I think I have acknowledged consequences in various places above also. Seems a bit similar to what has happened in Tibet, like boxes and lids as I've heard some describe it.

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by flax3lbs** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 2:03 am

Shonin wrote:

It is not necessary to crucify Eido Roshi or assassinate his character or teaching legacy

Leaving an old man shamed and penniless would not benefit anyone

That's easy to respond to. Eido Shimano has done quite a thorough job of assassinating his own character.

As to his teaching "legacy", we'll just have to forever disagree on that one. I'm with many who believe he's caused far more pain and suffering than he's alleviated. Buildings, practice centers, a few dharma heirs does not constitute a legacy. I can only imagine all the people that have gone through there. The numerous mass exoduses because either the situation was intolerable or they were powerless to change things.

As to his shame, like his character, he brought that on himself. I don't think he'll end up penniless. He'll be taken care of. To be honest, the most optimistic hope I have is that he comes to some acknowledgment of what he's done, and tries to make amends. Unfortunately, due to his past history and the recent NYT letter, he appears to still be a long way off from this goal.  
flax3lbs

**by Shonin** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 7:52 am

flax3lbs wrote:

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OK, that is how you feel.

But by your own statement if "Eido Shimano has done quite a thorough job of assassinating his own character" and "As to his shame, like his character, he brought that on himself" then that is already done and there is no need for any of us to add anything, to pour more oil on the flames.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

**by Shodo** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 4:34 pm

Shonin said:

OK, that is how you feel.

But by your own statement if "Eido Shimano has done quite a thorough job of assassinating his own character" and "As to his shame, like his character, he brought that on himself" then that is already done and there is no need for any of us to add anything, to pour more oil on the flames.

Are you saying nothing further should be done?

Personally, I think that the above sentiments have been used many times since the 70's to keep Eido Shimano where he is.  
 Fourty years, it really \*is\* time for desicive action.

Unfortunately, however, there was this on Jan Chozen Bays facebook page:

Kensei Koji

I live in Syracuse, NY and have been a student of Shinge Roshi, who is now the abbot of Dai Bosatzu monastery as of yesterday, for the past seven years. I was her attendant on the evening that she sat us all down in our zendo this past May... to tell us about Eido Roshi's behaviors. Since May, I have been back to sit with the sangha twice.

On that evening in May, we were told that, even though he has committed these heinousacts, he still has "the True Dharma Eye" and "dwells in the absolute." These ideas were presented as excuses and justifications of Eido Roshi's behavior. Our sangha, out of loyalty to Shinge Roshi, has turned a blind eye to Eido's acts, and given him a pass. As far as I can tell, only one other person besides myself has stood up and said that Eido's behavior is intolerable, that he needs to be removed from all positions of authority, that Shinge Roshi needs to sever all ties with him, and that we won't come back into the sangha until these things happen.

When I spoke privately with Shinge Roshi, she said that she had no intention of breaking their student - teacher relationship, that he was her teacher no matter what, that he served as an excellent reminder of how absolute power corrupts and she would continue to learn from him, as he has "the true Dharma eye."

So, now I'm looking for another teacher.

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... i\\_Koji.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...i_Koji.pdf)

In the words of John Coffee from "The Green Mile":

""He kill them with they love", John said. "They love for each other. You see how it was?" I nodded, incapable of speech. He smiled. The tears were flowing again, but he smiled. "That's how it is every day", he said, "all over the world."

Eido uses the love of his students against themselves...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Shonin** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 5:10 pm

Shodo wrote:

Are you saying nothing further should be done?

Personally, I think that the above sentiments have been used many times since the 70's to keep Eido Shimano where he is.

Fourty years, it really \*is\* time for desicive action.

No. Please read my original post just above. The very first thing I said was that it was necessary to prevent Eido Roshi from doing this again.

Shonin wrote:

As I see it...

It is necessary to prevent this abuse from happening again.

It is necessary to make it clear that this is not appropriate behaviour

It is not necessary to crucify Eido Roshi or assassinate his character or teaching legacy

Leaving an old man shamed and penniless would not benefit anyone

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by Shodo** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 5:59 pm

No. Please read my original post just above. The very first thing I said was that it was necessary to prevent Eido Roshi from doing this again.

How do you get to 3 without a degree of it happening from 1 and 2...?

Remember, it's been 40 years of these sort of blow ups - and the internet has made it much more difficult to play damage control.

And now that it's pretty much stated that Roko will not be severing her ties to Eido... how can 1 and 2 even be performed?

Will Roko be at DBZ 24/7?

Who will be in charge if/when she isn't?

It is necessary to prevent this abuse from happening again.

It is necessary to make it clear that this is not appropriate behaviour

It is not necessary to crucify Eido Roshi or assassinate his character or teaching legacy

People have been saying the 1st thing for 40 years... some quite loudly.  
 The 2nd thing is a given.  
 The 3rd thing... no. No I am not sure about that.

If Joan Halifax can call him a sociopath, and Aitken Roshi can call him a crook with a criminal mind... It really is time for the Zen Community to call a spade a spade.  
 The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.  
 The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by doormat** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 6:28 pm

Eido Shimano has pretty much told the world that he doesn't accept any responsibility for his actions when he responded to the New York Times the way he did. However, for many, having him truly recognize his errors would help them heal. When he dismisses their complaints as he did with his Times article, he's dismissing them as suffering beings. Moreover, letting the world know that these sorts of actions are not what Zen is about and that we have ideas for living a life of proper conduct is something I think we would all like him to actively try to establish by example. However, he doesn't own up to his transgressions and I don't think we've yet seen him say he'll stop. Under these circumstances, it's natural to think that crucifying him and assassinating his character is the only way he'll open his eyes to his problems and try to fix things. Crucifying him and assassinating his character seems to be necessary. The very least, the noise it creates will provide a warning for others - whether it be to keep an eye on their own teachers or keep an eye on him.

...my teaching consists in the cessation of sufferings arising from the discrimination of the triple world; in the cessation of ignorance, desire, deed, and causality;...an objective world, like a vision, is the manifestation of Mind itself.-Lankavatara  
 doormat

**by moon face buddha** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 6:44 pm

I personally find the idea that someone can cause this much suffering over such a long period of time and be totally unrepentant; and then slide into a quiet retirement whilst retaining the prestige attached to the position he used to abuse others as rather distasteful. Whilst it may be seen to be an expedient way to remove the abuser from day-to-day effective running of the sangha, it does rather give the impression that the abuser is more important than the abused.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by Seigen** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 7:08 pm

To be concrete, I recall that one of the things at stake are the temple art objects. I have never been there, but they must have some beautiful and meaningful sacred objects for our tradition. Why is there an issue? What would it mean for Eido Shimano to leave the temple with such possessions, very powerful and likely quite valuable trappings?

This is conjecture in that I don't know what is there or anything about actual circumstances, I use it only as an example of how complex the nitty gritty details of all of this can be, and to illustrate that there is a lot of symbolic and financial import in every move from here on. Art simply drives this fact home in a particular way.  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Shonin** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 8:19 pm

Shodo wrote:

If Joan Halifax can call him a sociopath, and Aitken Roshi can call him a crook with a criminal mind... It really is time for the Zen Community to call a spade a spade.

How many pages of calling a spade a spade do we need? And how many of the commentators really know him anyway? I don't know him. I do know that he has acted inappropriately by seducing or attempting to seduce female students. Does that make him a sociopath or a crook with a criminal mind? Not in itself. He's not a child molester or a rapist. He is now no longer in a position where he can do this. But whatever his nature, he is what he is. Is it also necessary to demonise him? To paint him as evil? Of course it is necessary to prevent further suffering, but surely the compassionate thing to do is to try to understand him and all the causes of these events and the suffering of his victims - rather than to demonise him, make endless value judgments about him, call a 'crook' etc.  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

by Nonin on Tue Jan 04, 2011 9:40 pm

I agree, Shonin.

It's pretty clear to pretty much everyone, except maybe to Eido Shimano himself, that he should not be allowed to function in a position of authority in which he would be able to continue his destructive behavior and harm students. It's also clear that he needs help. Whether he acknowledges this himself and seeks it out or whether he can be convinced of this and seeks it out is another matter. He hasn't done it yet, and he's 77 years old.

At this point, I don't see any good in either calling him names or in attempting to diagnose and psychoanalyze him, especially by those who don't know him and have never met him. Some of this has even come from people who are mental health professionals and who should know that offering diagnoses without examining someone one-to-one and working with them is highly un-professional.

What's most important to me is that ZSS right itself without Eido Shimano taking any further role in the organization. Hopefully, this will occur.

I have been reading all the letters by Zen Buddhist teachers that have been sent to the ZSS Board and published on James Ford's blog and elsewhere. One of my favorites is this one by Zoketsu Norman Fischer. Forgive me for copying it here if you've already read it:

I am writing in support of the many other American Zen teachers who have already written urging you and the Board to disassociate yourselves completely from Eido Shimano.

As a former abbot and leader at the San Francisco Zen Center, I lived through our troubles there with Richard Baker Roshi. So I appreciate the pain and complexity of what you are dealing with. I understand that expressions of dismay and outrage that reference professional standards and psychological syndromes, while probably true and certainly important, do not fully capture the reality that you face. Despite Eido's many serious transgressions, I am sure that in your experience, and in that of others in the sangha, he still appears, at least in part, as a powerful and wise teacher, and that to cast him out may well feel like betraying your own practice of these many years.

My own experience is that this is not so. To be faithful to a teacher and a teaching is to do the strong and difficult thing when required to do so. Though he may resist it with all his heart, there is no doubt that what Eido needs and wants from his students is toughness and honesty in times of crisis. No doubt this is what he himself has always tried to manifest. Now it is your turn to give him the courtesy and respect he deserves by being strong and awakened in your response to his conduct. Though your excluding him will be difficult for him, I think it will also be of great benefit. He deserves this expression of courageous love and appreciation – you can do what you need to do without demonizing or diagnosing him. Not to respond strongly and clearly is to collude with him at his worst

rather than to assume his best. It is time to cut through with kind, simple and straightforward action.

I think we in the West have been mistaken in imagining that in Asia teachers control their sanghas absolutely. This is not the case. Teacher misconduct is not tolerated anywhere in Asia, and the disciplining of teachers is not inconsistent with the necessary respect and obedience for the teacher that is essential for Zen practice. The reason teacher misconduct is not tolerated in Asia is no less true here: bad conduct that goes unaddressed weakens the entire Dharma community. This is why so many letters from Zen teachers have been filling your mailbox: your problems are ours. The days of American Zen lineages as closed family systems is over. Zen practice cannot survive unless we realize that we are responsible to each other – and that we are here to support each other.

Know then that you and the ZSS Board must take this strong action not only for Eido, and not only for yourselves, but for us as well. And know that many of us stand ready and willing to support you in whatever way you need.

I bow to Zoketsu Norman Fischer for his wonderful assessment of the issue at hand.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by unsui** on Tue Jan 04, 2011 10:56 pm

Nonin and Shonin!

I am very grateful for your postings, both the thoughts and the letter from Zoketsu Norman Fischer... This perspective has been lacking.

unsui

**by flax3lbs** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 1:59 am

Shonin wrote:

OK, that is how you feel.

Yeah, we've all heard this line at some time during heated discussions when people differ in opinions. It's quite obvious, yes it's how I feel, yes that's my view. As is the same for everyone on this board. We bring our life experiences, world views, and personality quirks and share our points of view. No one is claiming a more factual representation of the events that have ensued. But when used like this as a reply, it's really just plain condescending, dismissive, and most times just cuts off further discussion. If you feel others are belaboring something, perhaps you should move on, or at least comment with a willingness to exchange ideas.

Shonin wrote:

How many pages of calling a spade a spade do we need? And how many of the commentators really know him anyway? I don't know him. I do know that he has acted inappropriately by seducing or attempting to seduce female students. Does that make him a sociopath or a crook with a criminal mind? Not in itself. He's not a child molester or a rapist.

How many commentators can fit on the head of a pin? It's really an insult that you're pulling out this, "he's not a child molester or a rapist". This is a false argument. Creating some imagined comparison between what he did and something else that's sure to be worse. And again, it's an avoidance of having to discuss any of the real issues. The sexual transgressions are bad enough, but there are also other broader issues. It's a bit annoying that those who are so tired of us belaboring all of this can't quite remember all of it. Are you sure you're reading everything?

Shonin wrote:

He is now no longer in a position where he can do this. But whatever his nature, he is what he is.

As to your statement that he is no longer in a position where he can do this. That's not correct. Last I heard his status is retired Abbot who can still teach senior students and give teishos at sesshin. This is not what the Faith Trust Institute recommended. I think I can fairly say this was a compromise the board came up with. Only recently has there been a call to remove him from all teaching responsibilities.

Umm, "he is what he is"? I'll let that stand as is, it's not worthy of comment.

Shonin wrote:

Is it also necessary to demonise him? To paint him as evil? Of course it is necessary to prevent further suffering, but surely the compassionate thing to do is to try to understand him and all the causes of these events and the suffering of his victims - rather than to demonise him, make endless value judgments about him, call a 'crook' etc.



Again, just pure exaggeration (demonize, paint evil?). I will admit on one unspecified blog that there is freedom of any kind of expression. On this forum, I believe the moderators do their best to keep it civil. These are essentially personal attacks and deflects blame on the people making the comments. It's a lazy response to people you disagree with. I've had some strong words I've said about him, no doubt. But I also said this on my previous post, "the most optimistic hope I have is that he comes to some acknowledgment of what he's done, and tries to make amends". I suppose when I express compassion towards the man, that part gets ignored.

flax3lbs

**by hungryghost** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 2:24 am

Moderators note: Please refrain from meta-discussion and be mindful not to engage in personal attacks. It is understood this is a delicate subject, but please keep things civil. Thanks!

hungryghost

**by christopher:::** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 3:33 am

Many of us here have pointed fingers of blame at Shimano roshi, and so I think Shonin makes some valid points that we should be careful about demonizing him and going overboard. At the same time, if we really want to understand this kind of situation, how it happened and what factors are in play shouldn't we perhaps be talking more about the power structures and beliefs of Zen Buddhism that were imported from Japan, as well as common problems arising in tight-knit leader-centered spiritual communities that have played an enabling role here?

A recent post from blogger Nathan (Tokugo) that addresses this issue....

Eido Shimano and Social Responsibility for the Wider Sangha

excerpt:

I have written a little bit about this situation in the past, but have mostly stayed away from it, given that I am not a member of this sangha, nor intimate with the details of the case. But I've seen what happens to a sangha when leadership goes astray and power abuses are committed, and believe that whatever happens in one community can happen in all of them, if we don't take the opportunity to learn from it. In addition, as I suggested in this post, it's imperative that Buddhist sanghas - especially in places of more recent transplant like the U.S. - take a deep look at the power dynamics of their group and the

teachings around power, and put in place specific, concrete plans that address power and use of power within the community.

As I said in April, taking someone like Eido Roshi out of his teacher's position is a necessary, but not sufficient step. Each of us is, in a certain way, responsible for upholding the integrity of the sangha. And you can take that in terms of a specific sangha one is involved in, but also the sangha of the world as a whole. It begins with our commitment to practice, and fans outward from there. May we all wake up together, one step at a time.

\* Update: Here is an ongoing discussion from the Tricycle blog.

Here is a post from Mumon supporting the removal of Shimano.

And here's a post reminding us a little about Zen history concerning teachers, and the serious consequences that come from trying to protect corrupt or abusive teachers.

And Nella Lou's current post on the commonplace struggle humans seem to have around leadership.

And finally, here's an amazing letter from Zen teacher Joan Halifax Roshi.

We can go round and round blaming or defending Eido Shimano. If we don't step back and mindfully examine the surrounding cultural, psychological and social/community factors involved history is pretty sure to repeat itself.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by So-on Mann** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 3:54 am

I think that last post was a good way to wrap up this long thread, anyone else agree?  
Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by christopher:::** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 4:01 am

So-on Mann wrote:

I think that last post was a good way to wrap up this long thread, anyone else agree?

Starting a new discussion to explore these points concerning the abuse of power, or just ending discussion of the Eido Shimano topic, completely?

I think it's good to give people a space to express their ideas (and feelings) and explore something as important as this. This situation is still changing, in flux...

Shifting the focus of the discussion is a good idea though, I agree with that.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Nonin** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 4:17 am

Nah, let's continue until everyone burns out. This is a topic and a situation that effects all Zen Buddhist practitioners. Different people are offering differing opinions and events are outstripping our ability to keep up with them. These events are being discussed everywhere, in the press, on a myriad of blogs, and elsewhere on the net. The AZTA listserv has 6 or 8 comments a day, and new letters are being posted by teachers that offer nuanced ways of viewing the situation.

Let's continue here, a place where knowledgeable people like Genjo Marinello, a ZSS board member in sesshin right now, are posting up to date info. This is also a place where moderators keep a close eye on things so that we all remain civil when discussing this hot topic. Roko Chayat was installed as abbot of ZSS on Jan. 1st, and people are expecting some form of news from ZSS in the near future as their Board wades through the latest uproar over Eido Shimano's letter to the NY Times. This is a topic that won't go away until there is some resolution of it.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by christopher::: on Wed Jan 05, 2011 4:20 am

Fair enough, Sensei.

I just started a new discussion anyway, using Nathan (Tokugo)'s post in the OP....

Power Dynamics in Sanghas & Communities

So if ZFI's moderators choose to close this discussion at some point, I hope people will join us over there.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by Carol on Wed Jan 05, 2011 4:23 am

Here is Joan Halifax Roshi's powerful letter. It pretty much sums it up for me after months of watching, considering, reading and sometimes writing about this sad situation.

I do believe the ZSS board -- or at least Genjo, who has written publicly about this -- believed that Eido Roshi was contrite, and were trying to find a way forward based in part on that belief. I think it is now clear that Eido Shimano is not contrite, and that changes many things. I agree that Shimano must be permanently retired from all teaching and dokusan at ZSS and/or any facilities associated with it. I cannot see any other way forward for the reasons Halifax states so well below.

[http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note\\_id ... 9&comments](http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=...9&comments)

Letter from Roshi Joan regarding Eido Shimano by Joan Halifax on Friday, December 31, 2010 at 5:33am

Dear Daibosatzu Board and Practitioners,

I am Founding Abbot of Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a woman, a Zen practitioner since 1965, and someone who was sexually assaulted by one of her Buddhist teachers years ago. I have been following the discussion on the AZTA listserv for many months about the Eido Shimano "case". I use the term "case" not to mean koan, but in a legalistic sense. For just as the former Israeli president has just been convicted in a court of law of rape and sexual harassment, so also is Eido Shimano vulnerable to such an indictment.

For many years, I have heard about the sexual behavior of Eido Shimano toward his female students; there has long been talk about many of the Buddhist teachers who have violated sexual boundaries with their students. Sadly, the list of Buddhist teachers who have had intercourse with their students is not short. We have also been aware of not only

of teachers having sex in the dokusan room but of teachers engaging in sexual violence toward their students as well.

For those of us who are not only teachers but women, the misogyny that we have encountered when we have brought these violations to the attention of others has been often concerning. For like many rape victims, we have been seen as somehow culpable, have been ignored, criticized, or shunned.

I want to say that I am grateful and am relieved that Eido Shimano has resigned from his abbacy and the Zen Center Board, and that you have identified good, strong leaders to take over your center. We live in a time when there should be zero tolerance of the violation of professional boundaries, and most particularly sexual abuse on the part of leaders, whether they be a president of a country, a prime minister, or a minister, whether psychologist or social worker, whether monk or manager.

Somehow, many of us in the Zen mahasangha thought this situation at your center was moving toward a decent resolution under the aegis of the Faith/Trust Institute. I need to tell you that, among many others, I am shocked and dismayed by the seeming lack of real remorse and understanding on the part of Eido Shimano as per his recent letter to the NYTimes. His behavior verges on sociopathy, or a total lack of feeling, of shame, and of regard for others.

This situation is complicated by another level as well. Perhaps it is too difficult for Eido Shimano's students and the Board of his organization to look with clear eyes at the depth of his delusion. Forgive my presumption, but let me share a little psychology with you. Accordingly, the Antisocial personality disorder (adyp or Atu) is defined by the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual as "...a pervasive pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others that begins in childhood or early adolescence and continues into adulthood."

"Characteristics of people with antisocial personality disorder may include:

Persistent lying or stealing

Apparent lack of remorse<sup>[3]</sup> or empathy for others

Cruelty to animals<sup>[4]</sup>

Poor behavioral controls — expressions of irritability, annoyance, impatience, threats, aggression, and verbal abuse; inadequate control of anger and temper

A history of childhood conduct disorder

Recurring difficulties with the law

Promiscuity

Tendency to violate the boundaries and rights of others

Aggressive, often violent behavior; prone to getting involved in fights

Inability to tolerate boredom

Poor or abusive relationships

Irresponsible work behavior

Disregard for safety

"Other common characteristics of those with Antisocial Personality Disorder include superficial charm, shallow emotions, a distorted sense of self, a constant search for new sensations (which can have bizarre consequences), a tendency to physically or verbally abuse peers or relatives, and manipulation of others without remorse or empathy for the victim. Egocentrism, megalomania, lack of responsibility, extroversion, excessive hedonism, high impulsivity, and the desire to experience sensations of control and power can also be present."

I think this description must be somewhat familiar to many of you.....

Many of us have experienced being under the spell of a teacher or person of authority. Some of us have seen our own students caught in the trance of positive projections. But our practice is about waking up and ending suffering, being real and being courageous in dealing with mara, and actualizing compassion, even a compassion that might seem ruthless. We have to realize that the three-fold training is clear on the matter of sex and ethics, physical abuse and sangha relationships, and the role of wisdom and compassion in relation to the three jewels. And we have to see our teachers in a totally realistic light, including their feet of clay.

I also want to say that it is not that Eido Shimano is a scapegoat for all other spiritual teachers who have violated sexual boundaries and engaging in sexually abusive (and probably addictive) behavior. I hope that by bringing this situation to the world's attention through Aitken's now-public archive, the NYTimes article, and the increasing storm of emails, blogposts, and communiques (including facebook), the sexual abuse of women by Buddhist teachers will diminish, if not end, through strong negative sanctions of those who have engaged in activities such as this.

Yet under the circumstances you find yourselves in, I think it might be difficult to stand up to someone like Eido, between the denial, guilt and shame associated with unconsciously enabling him, and the power dynamic between Eido and his students, coupled with cultural differences. But sometimes, we simply have to take a stand, and take a stand for the greater good, even though it is difficult to do. This is a time when I hope that the DBZ Board will do exactly this, and not fall into the pattern of denial and retreat that has prevailed at your center (and at many other Buddhist centers as well).

Like family members in dysfunctional families, it is important to realize that every one of us is complicit in some way, including the wider Buddhist community, as we all knew what was going on. At last, you are hearing from members of the greater sangha, and the message is clear: firmly and forever retire your founding abbot, forbid him to teach ever again, and formally forbid him to see students in the privacy of the dokusan room or in any kind of interview situation. I would also ask you to commit to adequate remediation for those who were subject to his predation and his sexual and physical abuse, and make public your stance in all this. If you do not respond responsibly, then you will be held accountable in one way or another, sooner or later. Even if you walk away from your board or your monastery ( a form of denial), you will carry this history of abuse with you, and your passivity in relation to it.

To put it simply, Eido Shimano is an embarrassment to Buddhism, including all of Zen Buddhism, and Japanese Buddhism, in particular. I am concerned that if you, as his Board and monks do not take action, we will be sanctioning this kind of egregious abusive, gender-biased, predatory, misogynistic behavior in our temples and monasteries. We vow, as Buddhists to do no harm. I urge you to end the harm, and end it now.

The sexual abuse of women is no small matter globally. It takes profound commitment to deal with this issue. Humbly, i feel that we as Buddhists need to clean up the scene in our own backyard, and clean it up now. We all share this karma, and we must share the correction process as well. Compassion tells us that, and we have to not only listen but as well to act. Thus these letters you are currently receiving..... Please heed them, and heed them well.

I do feel deeply about this issue since so many women have passed through my zendo diminished and damaged as a result of having been subjected to sexual boundary violations by their teachers; some have been physically abused; others have been psychologically intimidated and then forced into sex. Some women were plainly deluded and hungry for acknowledgment, and in some way, power; others were coerced, shamed, and some were threatened; others were entranced and tricked. In the end, after all is said and done, most have wanted to abandon their Buddhist practice, finding Buddhism too passive and uncaring, if not dangerous.

As a result of what I have borne witness to in others and myself, as well as bearing witness to women who have been raped in the context of war or extreme family abuse, I would suggest here that we need to actualize a compassion that is more skillful and much braver at this time. I hope you will consider that standing aside might not be the best route in terms of this situation with Eido Shimano. I hope you will be courageous and forthright and not take the road of compromise. For it has been compromise, I believe, and lack of ethical resolve that has given rise to our collective suffering in this situation, the individual suffering of the women who have been subjected to this abuse, and to the deep suffering in your sangha.

Joan Halifax

Founding Abbot

Upaya Zen Center

PS: By the way, one of your ex-monks has written to the AZTA that letters will have no impact on your decisions regarding Eido Shimano. I hope this is not the case. Even this monk's statement shows that he lacks the morale resolve to take a public step; it seems he, like others in your community, feels that there is no decent resolution and he is hopeless. I hope you do not share his sentiments, but have the courage to put an end to this abuse forever in your community.

It is time to sit down and be still,

for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Shodo** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 3:43 pm

Given the above letter from Joan Halifax Roshi... a strange question.

What does it mean to pass a precept koan if the person who approved it was a sociopath?

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Nonin** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 5:26 pm

I liked most of Joan's letter, but her presentation of the psychological guidelines for "antisocial personality disorder" and implying that Eido Shimano suffers from it was unnecessary and highly unprofessional. No mental health professional should be diagnosing anyone that they haven't personally examined and worked with. I'm very surprised that Joan would do this.

As Zoketsu Norman Fischer stated in his letter to the ZSS Board, "... you can do what you need to do without demonizing or diagnosing him."

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin



**by Carol** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 6:46 pm

Shodo wrote:

Given the above letter from Joan Halifax Roshi... a strange question.

What does it mean to pass a precept koan if the person who approved it was a sociopath?

I think it is quite possible to have a very deep koan practice while working with a teacher with personal flaws, even serious personal flaws. Most teachers have flaws, sometimes serious flaws. The practice has come down to us anyway, and is a vehicle for awakening. Passing a koan isn't some final determination of a student's clear seeing -- not as I understand it. I have "passed" many koans that I've returned to later time and again and continued seeing more deeply into them.

I think/hope if Zen has taught me anything it is that we cannot define another person, or ourselves, with terms like sociopath or saint ... or any other terms. There is no self. There is only constantly changing activity, arising and falling away. So, in some circumstances a person may exhibit sociopathic behavior, and in other circumstances exhibit saintly behavior ... and everything in between.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Carol** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 6:51 pm

Nonin wrote:

I liked most of Joan's letter, but her presentation of the psychological guidelines for "antisocial personality disorder" and implying that Eido Shimano suffers from it was unnecessary and highly unprofessional. No mental health professional should be diagnosing anyone that they haven't personally examined and worked with. I'm very surprised that Joan would do this.

As Zoketsu Norman Fischer stated in his letter to the ZSS Board, "... you can do what you need to do without demonizing or diagnosing him."

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Well, I'm glad she said it. I think it is appropriate to call it like you see it. We "diagnose" all the time ... whenever we say someone is egotistical, for example, or childish, or self-absorbed, or whatever. What is important to me is that we understand that the diagnosis is not the person, it is a description of their behavior. In the case of Eido Shimano, his conduct has most of the hallmarks of sociopathic behavior. Recognizing that is not "demonizing" him -- it is clear seeing, IMO, so long as we recognize that the diagnosis is not the person. That allows us to view this with compassion for all beings, and to take appropriate action to alleviate suffering.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by simpleton** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 7:01 pm

Carol wrote:

Shodo wrote:

Given the above letter from Joan Halifax Roshi... a strange question.

What does it mean to pass a precept koan if the person who approved it was a sociopath?

I think it is quite possible to have a very deep koan practice while working with a teacher with personal flaws, even serious personal flaws. Most teachers have flaws, sometimes serious flaws. The practice has come down to us anyway, and is a vehicle for awakening. Passing a koan isn't some final determination of a student's clear seeing -- not as I understand it. I have "passed" many koans that I've returned to later time and again and continued seeing more deeply into them.

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I agree with a lot of what Carol says here. Teachers/people can have insight but also still have unresolved psychological issues.

However, just to add further, for what it's worth... Have I personally trained with a teacher who still had some flaws? Yes. Would I train with Shimano? No.

simpleton

by **Linda Anderson** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 7:10 pm

I think the "diagnosis" is unprofessional and unnecessary. We can call it like we see it using our observations and feelings, even our values. A diagnosis is a theoretical definition which does not actually touch the reality of cause and effect or the pain experienced. I think it does also give personal satisfaction and a sense of control over the situation to the one who is diagnosing. Not to mention that each person hearing it then filters it through their own system of meaning. And, we much as we judge all the time, it can also be avoided. A diagnosis creates a significant separation which holds it outside.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

by **simpleton** on Wed Jan 05, 2011 7:20 pm

Shonin wrote:  
As I see it...

It is necessary to prevent this abuse from happening again.  
It is necessary to make it clear that this is not appropriate behaviour  
It is not necessary to crucify Eido Roshi or assassinate his character or teaching legacy

Leaving an old man shamed and penniless would not benefit anyone

Shonin,

In a court of law, full examination is made of the accused's actions - the fact that the accused may not like it is immaterial. The fact that some see this as being harsh towards the accused is immaterial. Without this examination, the facts cannot be revealed.

You can imply that speaking honestly is hurtful and wrong speech. You can ignore the real victims and make out that Shimano is the big victim. However were this true, I doubt that so many of the main Zen teachers in the West would be speaking out the way they do.

simpleton

by Shonin on Wed Jan 05, 2011 11:19 pm

simpleton wrote:  
Shonin,

In a court of law, full examination is made of the accused's actions - the fact that the accused may not like it is immaterial. The fact that some see this as being harsh towards the accused is immaterial. Without this examination, the facts cannot be revealed.

A valid point, apart from the small matter that he isn't in a court of law and has broken no laws.

simpleton wrote:  
You can imply that speaking honestly is hurtful and wrong speech.

You could argue that a racist is 'speaking honestly' when he expresses his contempt and hatred towards some ethnic group. But don't misunderstand me. I'm all for honest speech, when that is speech about reality and an honest attempt to see the whole situation clearly. But that is not all that I see going on in this thread.

simpleton wrote:  
You can ignore the real victims and make out that Shimano is the big victim.

Eido Roshi abused some people's trust and some people were genuinely hurt. And I have the greatest sympathy for those people. However, I don't know any of those people, I'm not in contact with them and I don't see any of them in need of defense against character assassination on this thread.

I just don't think that this verbal violence and moralising from people who had no involvement in the matter is helping anyone. I really think that understanding, reconciliation and rehabilitation is a better solution than all this moral judgement.  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

by Seigen on Thu Jan 06, 2011 12:07 am

Where is the boundary between description and judgment, and where does "morality" appear? Linda was specific about separation, Carol about the value of description. I don't

think making an abstract charge against "morality" is very helpful, Shonin, it does carry its own tone.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by simpleton** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 12:56 am

Shonin wrote:

simpleton wrote:

Shonin,

In a court of law, full examination is made of the accused's actions - the fact that the accused may not like it is immaterial. The fact that some see this as being harsh towards the accused is immaterial. Without this examination, the facts cannot be revealed.

A valid point, apart from the small matter that he isn't in a court of law and has broken no laws.

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I just don't think that this verbal violence and moralising from people who had no involvement in the matter is helping anyone. I really think that understanding, reconciliation and rehabilitation is a better solution than all this moral judgement.

Shonin,

I think you are twisting many of the words in my post - but lets leave that aside. You seem to be caught up in the idea that people who condemn Shimano's actions are involved in character assassination & verbal violence. Frankly I'm more than a little

surprised at your view. I've made it clear I'm no fan of Shimano's or his lineage - if expressing that is character assassination/verbal violence then OK I'm guilty. However to accuse many others on this thread, and by implication many of the leading Zen teachers in the US of character assassination/verbal violence is frankly taking things a little far and doesn't seem much like honest speech to me. To answer your last point, you assume all those posting have had no involvement in the matter whereas actually several have. Further I believe there have been several attempts at the understanding/reconciliation approach and again I believe that Shimano has "side-stepped/ignored" this.

I'm genuinely sorry if this topic causes you some annoyance/anguish, but if we say nothing/do nothing/downplay the situation for fear of offending someone, then we condone actions that have caused and continue to cause great hurt/pain and confusion to innocent people. In addition we may allow others to fall into the same situation and become future victims.  
simpleton

**by christopher:::** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 1:07 am

Carol wrote:

Shodo wrote:

Given the above letter from Joan Halifax Roshi... a strange question.

What does it mean to pass a precept koan if the person who approved it was a sociopath?

I think it is quite possible to have a very deep koan practice while working with a teacher with personal flaws, even serious personal flaws. Most teachers have flaws, sometimes serious flaws. The practice has come down to us anyway, and is a vehicle for awakening. Passing a koan isn't some final determination of a student's clear seeing -- not as I understand it. I have "passed" many koans that I've returned to later time and again and continued seeing more deeply into them.

I think/hope if Zen has taught me anything it is that we cannot define another person, or ourselves, with terms like sociopath or saint ... or any other terms. There is no self. There is only constantly changing activity, arising and falling away. So, in some circumstances a person may exhibit sociopathic behavior, and in other circumstances exhibit saintly behavior ... and everything in between.

Hi Carol,

I don't want to knock your perspective, but given the points raised here and in the unethical practices by Zen adepts thread, I can't agree with this. If a teacher has serious personal flaws or sometimes exhibits sociopathic behavior, they shouldn't be looked upon as a Zen "master" or wise dharma teacher, imo. They are not passing on the dharma anymore, they haven't "got it" yet and so can be doing students harm. The dharma is

passed on by people who have mastered it, in my view, and someone with very serious personal flaws hasn't "got it" yet.

I think this is an important point and is in part why we've gotten to this stage, because people think teachers can pass on wisdom when they lack a full understanding of it. I wouldn't go near a dharma teacher with serious personal flaws and would advise others to stay away as well. They can fix my car or perform an operation on my child, if they have those skills, but I wouldn't turn to them looking for spiritual guidance.

Perhaps I'm misunderstanding your point though, cause I think Joan Halifax's letter (which you agree strongly with) is saying this as well, that such character flaws in a spiritual teacher are very dangerous.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Carol** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 1:33 am

christopher::: wrote:

Carol wrote:

Shodo wrote:

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Hi Carol,

I don't want to knock your perspective, but given the points raised here and in the unethical practices by Zen adepts thread, I can't agree with this. If a teacher has serious personal flaws or sometimes exhibits sociopathic behavior, they shouldn't be looked upon as a Zen "master" or wise dharma teacher, imo. They are not passing on the dharma

anymore, they haven't "got it" yet and so can be doing students harm. The dharma is passed on by people who have mastered it, in my view, and someone with very serious personal flaws hasn't "got it" yet.

I think this is an important point and is in part why we've gotten to this stage, because people think teachers can pass on wisdom when they lack a full understanding of it. I wouldn't go near a dharma teacher with serious personal flaws and would advise others to stay away as well. They can fix my car or perform an operation on my child, if they have those skills, but I wouldn't turn to them looking for spiritual guidance.

Maybe that's just how I see it?

Hey, feel free to knock my perspective.

The dharma gets passed through broken vessels all the time, so far as I can tell. "Forget your perfect offering ... " says the great poet Leonard Cohen.

We have no disagreement that Shimano did serious harm to some of his students and I would, in fact, advise others to stay away. On the other hand, I have little doubt that Shimano passed on the dharma to many who are more awake and wiser for the experience.

The question I responded to was "What does it mean to pass a precept koan if the person who approved it was a sociopath?"

I think that depends very much on the depth of the student's inquiry into the koan and very little on the teacher's personal flaws or perfections. That has been my own personal experience. I really do not think the two should be confounded. One does not become a saint because one's teacher is a saint. One does not become a sinner because one's teacher is a sinner. The Zen method of koan introspection takes students into the deep questions of life and death. It is up to the student to penetrate those depths. A teacher can point in the general direction, but cannot take you there. And I believe a teacher can point in the right general direction even if the teacher has not been there him or herself. Also, I believe it is quite possible to see clearly in some circumstances and to see quite confusedly in other circumstances. That was probably the case with Shimano. I think it's the case with me and you and everyone else, too.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol



**by christopher:::** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 2:14 am

Hi Carol.

Rereading my post it's clear that some of my buttons were pushed, I got a bit defensive/offensive. Sorry about that.

I still disagree though, and am concerned that people point fingers at someone like Shimano as a bad egg, without recognizing how this view (that the Buddha's dharma can be passed on by teachers with serious character flaws) may be faulty.

I'm heartened though by all the wise letters from current teachers and Rev. Nonin's recent thread on Zen adepts, where he has encouraged us to examine this directly. I guess perhaps we have different ideas about what the dharma is, and the purpose of practice.

I was drawn to the dharma because Buddha seemed to provide answers for how to understand, transform and unravel our personal flaws, how we can all become wiser and more compassionate beings, how we can actualize our own Buddha Nature. I don't see how to learn that without going to those who understand this process deeply, who have done that work on their own.

Someone may know the answers to koans, know all the history and teachings of the sutras and how to sit zazen properly, but that's just mechanics (method) from my view. If they haven't untangled most of their own knots (and are not constantly working on freeing their minds from afflictions) they are not really cultivating (or transmitting) the true dharma eye, imo.

Last edited by christopher::: on Thu Jan 06, 2011 2:51 am, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by just** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 2:37 am

ZZS is making a mockery of it all.

ES is playing it strong, eeling his way with lawyers and close members.

The 'maha sangha' is absolutely powerless, its a little cult they are encountering.

He is in control, all the others are only suckers.

He is playing by his own melody, your are all in for a BIG ride.

Frozen to the point of no action, you wish to share some karma understanding.

Seeing this way and that, there he , oops, goes of with the cow.

If you want better results, you will have to buckle up,  
or you are in for a whole new experience.

If you dont, no one will be laughing but ES.

Get real, fast.

YES, YOU, ZZS! You are the main fkups, you are where the blame is now!

or else, for crying out, just let him be!

they want him, let them have him!

whats it to you?

what shall it be?

two people, three opinions will not do here.

you're up against a special gibbon monk, and you haven't seen all his cards yet!

well, anyway, ranting about a matter that does not concern me. use your judicial system, if you can.

just

**by Carol** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 7:03 am

There is a growing list of letters from Zen teachers to the Zen Studies Society board posted on James Ford's blog here.

It is time to sit down and be still,

for you are drunk,

and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by Carol** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 7:07 am

christopher::: wrote:

Hi Carol.

Rereading my post it's clear that some of my buttons were pushed, I got a bit defensive/offensive. Sorry about that.

I still disagree though, and am concerned that people point fingers at someone like Shimano as a bad egg, without recognizing how this view (that the Buddha's dharma can be passed on by teachers with serious character flaws) may be faulty.

I'm heartened though by all the wise letters from current teachers and Rev. Nonin's recent thread on Zen adepts, where he has encouraged us to examine this directly. I guess perhaps we have different ideas about what the dharma is, and the purpose of practice.

I was drawn to the dharma because Buddha seemed to provide answers for how to understand, transform and unravel our personal flaws, how we can all become wiser and more compassionate beings, how we can actualize our own Buddha Nature. I don't see how to learn that without going to those who understand this process deeply, who have done that work on their own.

Someone may know the answers to koans, know all the history and teachings of the sutras and how to sit zazen properly, but that's just mechanics (method) from my view. If they haven't untangled most of their own knots (and are not constantly working on freeing their minds from afflictions) they are not really cultivating (or transmitting) the true dharma eye, imo.

Hi Christopher -- no offense taken and no apologies are necessary. This issue pushes most peoples buttons in one way or another. I think we'd all like certainty and some absolutes here, where there are none. So we each grasp onto the piece of the truth that is most important to us. The question I ask myself continually is "What is it that I am not seeing?" Because the truth is much larger than my vision of it.

Kind regards,

~Carol

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by Shonin** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 7:32 am

Seigen wrote:

Where is the boundary between description and judgment, and where does "morality" appear? Linda was specific about separation, Carol about the value of description. I don't think making an abstract charge against "morality" is very helpful, Shonin, it does carry its own tone.

I don't doubt that this carries 'its own tone'. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not 'against tones'. We all agree that it is inappropriate and that he should be prevented from being in a position where he can do this. (Frankly, I don't think that continuing to see a few senior students who are aware of the situation is problematic.) I just suspect that the level of moralising, labelling and amateur diagnosing going on with Eido Roshi right now is an obstacle rather than a help to genuine understanding. None of us know why he behaved in this way. But I do think that a reconciliation committee will bear more fruit than a verbal lynching.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by Shodo** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 7:53 am

This is, a disturbing account...

...very cultish.

Fresh in the Shimano Archives.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... ccount.pdf>

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by christopher:::** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 9:09 am

Carol wrote:

Hi Christopher -- no offense taken and no apologies are necessary. This issue pushes most peoples buttons in one way or another. I think we'd all like certainty and some absolutes here, where there are none. So we each grasp onto the piece of the truth that is most important to us. The question I ask myself continually is "What is it that I am not seeing?" Because the truth is much larger than my vision of it.

Kind regards,

~Carol

I do agree with you there! So true.

Shodo wrote:

This is, a disturbing account...

...very cultish.

Fresh in the Shimano Archives.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... ccount.pdf>

Yes, troubling, if accurate. It does correspond to Roshi's bio over at the Zen Studies website....

<http://www.daibosatsu.org/abbot.html>

This is a very delicate situation though, which sounds like it needs some kind of compassionate intervention, probably private- not public. I hope all the Zen teachers who have written letters will continue to reach out to Shinge Roshi, with phone calls, visits.

If this is how things are within the sangha it looks like outward public pressure may not have much effect.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Linda Anderson** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 9:14 am

Shodo wrote:

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...very cultish.

Fresh in the Shimano Archives.

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... ccount.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...ccount.pdf)

Yes, disturbing yet not surprising, given the last 40 years. AND, encouraging that one person saw through it and acted on his own instincts and wisdom. Yes, ofcourse, there were others...

It's a great lesson to go deeper, go past our fears of not belonging.

Linda

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by christopher:::** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 12:30 pm

Hi Linda. This is really difficult, cause it does sound like many who studied with Shimano were effected in powerful and troubling ways. That's a lot of people and a lot of suffering over the course of 40+ years, a lot of healing that's needed, and straightening out of understandings about the essential nature of ethics in dharma practice. The simple retirement of Shimano, even if he never meets with a student again, will probably not \*fix\* the situation. The problem seems to have spread out to those who studied with him, some of whom are now Zen teachers.

There's a letter from Tenshin D.S Hill, posted last November that I just read over at Tricycle and also Robert Aitken's blog. It's a very uncomfortable read, but fits with the letter Shodo just shared. I posted it here about 2 hours ago but decided to remove it, as he went into detail about the problems at ZSS, and what he witnessed. Anyone who wishes to read can go over to Aitken's blog or Tricycle.

See Tricycle Blog:: Reply by tenshin on November 23, 2010, 4:00 am

We have to avoid demonizing people as individuals, but anyone who truly wishes to help has to be willing to listen to these stories, hear what people had witnessed and experienced, imo.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Seigen** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 3:21 pm

Yes, those are very painful to read, both Kensei Jim Spencer and Tenshin D.S. Hill. There was also this in Tenshin's letter:

The Board, while taking decisive action, needs to move mindfully through this minefield, and not risk doing something stupidly and in haste. Suon, this means you. There are a number of moves I think the Board needs to take to come out of this on both the moral and legal high ground, to restore credibility to the institution and to develop a culture of transparency. Put another way, as Jiro mentioned in one of his letters, to remove your heads from the sand.

First, I recommend that the Board be seated with individuals who have not been under the spell of Eidosho or Aiho-san. In other words, the Board must be squeaky clean..

Second, I recommend expanding the size of the Board to include outside Directors from other institutions.

Third, the bylaws need to be changed so that the Abbot (and Former Abbot, if ever reappointed) have either non-voting positions on the board or in the least can never be

Director, Treasurer, or any other position of power. The Abbot should be entirely focused on the practice and his/her students.

Fourth, a suggestion I made to the Board in 1996 that fell on deaf ears at the time, ZSS/DBZ/SBJ should annually publish their financials like any other good non-profit – Hozo-san is an expert in this area, and can help the Board through the not-for-profit territory and requirements.

Why all of this? Transparency and credibility need to be re-established. I have donated to ZSS for the past fifteen years and, I, for one, would like to know where my donations are going.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

**by Carol** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 4:42 pm

"Demonizing" ... "moralizing" ... "diagnosing" ... "enabling" ... "excusing" ... "participating" ... "condoning" ... "denying" ... "amateur psychologizing" ... "cultish acquiescence" -- these are some of the labels we have used to condemn and/or dismiss one another's perspectives here. If it is hard for us -- most of whom have not been involved and do not know the people involved -- to listen, to hear, to consider perspectives that differ from our own, then think how very much more difficult this must be for those closer to the situation who have all been so deeply wounded.

I once walked away from a teacher I adored because some areas of his conduct were troublesome, and worse, because of his treatment of those who challenged him on it -- berating, labelling and ostracizing them. He clearly suffered from paranoid delusions in my not-so-amateur opinion. At the same time, I have no doubt that many times this teacher had a clear-seeing eye and much wisdom and compassion. He had in fact been deeply instrumental in my own awakening, and the love and gratitude I feel towards him is immense. I do not see these two things as contradictory. I would have stayed had there been some way for me to help him open his eyes and heart to what he was doing -- but there was none that I could find, sadly, though looking back I sometimes think "if I had done or said this or that, it might have reached him." Hindsight ... and not being a Buddha, I made mistakes.

I think it is most important in these situations to be open to how it is for others ... to deeply open our true dharma eyes to the suchness of each one of us as we struggle and suffer with the great challenge and mystery of life. "Ah, so that's how it is for you," said the monk in the koan when another monk saw it differently. Each monk described his specific and particular experience, and the other heard and acknowledged it. If we can do that, then none are left out of our compassion and wisdom can find fuller expression through our actions.

Eido Roshi, to me, is a tragic figure ... someone who lost his way in emptiness sickness doubtless because of many causes and conditions. To see this in no way diminishes the harm and pain he has caused others. And to describe his sickness in no way demonizes him, IMO, but instead helps to understand and take appropriate action for the benefit of all involved, including Eido Roshi himself. You see a person so identified with the deluded creations of his mind that he cannot find a way out, cannot find the path to liberation because he believes he has already found it. This happens to all of us, to a greater or lesser extent, whenever we believe we have found the "truth" and that there is no further inquiry needed and nothing more for us to see or do about the great matter. Eido Roshi's case is an extreme one, that's all.

The fact that he is a Roshi, was given dharma transmission by an eccentric but widely revered Zen Master (who may subsequently have attempted to repudiate him, though I understand it is not possible to revoke dharma transmission in the Rinzai lineage), has established a great dharma center in the west for passing on the Japanese Rinzai tradition, has had many students, and has given dharma transmission to some of them ... all compound these problems and create karma writ large. His illness didn't just affect him and his immediate circle of family and friends, or even just his sangha and students, but is affecting many many people who care about the dharma and its transmission in the west.

It is a good thing that this is arousing a great inquiry. I hope it brings many people to look deeply into our own projections and beliefs about Buddhism and Zen and teachers and students and what enlightenment might mean and the twists and turns along the path ... and to engage in radical honesty about who we are and how we are all in this together ... leaving none out of our hearts ... while still cultivating a clear eye towards conduct and taking clear action where needed to protect the vulnerable, heal the sick, awaken all beings, step through every dharma gate and to fully embody the great Buddha Way.

The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences ... What can that possibly mean? In our tradition there are three great bodhisattvas -- Manjushri - great wisdom, Avalokiteshvara - great compassion, and Samantabhadra - great action -- all are necessary.

Nine deep bows,

~Carol

PS, I'm most moved by the letter from Wendy Egyoku Nakao, Roshi, posted over at James Ford's blog. She is the one who stepped in to pick up the pieces at ZCLA after Maezumi Roshi's disgrace and she knows whereof she speaks.

Dear Joe Soun:

On this first day of the new year, I want to take a few moments to write to you as the abbot of the Zen Center of Los Angeles. I offer bows of appreciation for the good news of the installation of Roshi Shinge as Abbot of ZSS and DBZ.



I am writing to voice my support for terminating Roshi Shimano's presence and teaching at the ZSS in light of his sexually predatory and unrepentant behavior. I urge the ZSS Board to boldly and courageously recognize that Roshi Shimano needs help and to find a course of treatment for him.

I urge you to facilitate the ongoing and thorough education of everyone at ZSS and DBZ on all facets of why this behavior has been so devastatingly harmful for the women involved and frankly, for everyone in your Sangha and the Maha Sangha, and why it is not to be tolerated in any way.

I urge you all to fearlessly stand in the fire of directly looking at the organizational-and-sangha-culture structures and behaviors that have protected this dynamic and enabled it to exist for far too many years. Perhaps this will be the most painful part, but I know, from my own experience, that when you stand in the fire and are unflinching in your investigation leaving no stone unturned, a path of liberation emerges and a vista comes into view for a deep and broad maturing in the Dharma.

I implore you to work tirelessly to take care of the people in your Sangha (including those long gone from your properties because they were harmed or could no longer bear to be part of your culture) in all the ways that Zen people, who hold close the vows to end suffering and the Great Vows of Bodhisattvas, are committed to do. Please do not fear losing buildings and grounds or even your organization at the expense of taking care of the Sangha treasure.

As the abbot of the Zen Center of Los Angeles for these past 12 years, I know first hand the effort that is involved in healing a Sangha and creating a viable Zen practice place that truly serves the wholeness of human beings.

Finally, I offer my support in whatever way it may be useful to Roshi Shinge, Genjo Osho, and yourself.

Hand to heart across the miles,

Wendy Egyoku Nakao, abbot  
 Zen Center of Los Angeles  
 Month of New Beginnings  
 It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

by **slice** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 5:05 pm

Carol wrote:

The question I responded to was "What does it mean to pass a precept koan if the person who approved it was a sociopath?"

I think that depends very much on the depth of the student's inquiry into the koan and very little on the teacher's personal flaws or perfections. That has been my own personal experience. I really do not think the two should be confounded. One does not become a saint because one's teacher is a saint. One does not become a sinner because one's teacher is a sinner. The Zen method of koan introspection takes students into the deep questions of life and death. It is up to the student to penetrate those depths. A teacher can point in the general direction, but cannot take you there. And I believe a teacher can point in the right general direction even if the teacher has not been there him or herself. Also, I believe it is quite possible to see clearly in some circumstances and to see quite confusedly in other circumstances. That was probably the case with Shimano. I think it's the case with me and you and everyone else, too.

You make it sound like a Zen teacher is superfluous, and maybe even an unnecessary potential hazard.  
slice

by **Carol** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 5:35 pm

slice wrote:

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You make it sound like a Zen teacher is superfluous, and maybe even an unnecessary potential hazard.

Yes, I may have given that impression. But I don't believe it is true. I think a teacher is a very necessary potential hazard.

Joking aside, my experience has been that teachers can be very clear-seeing sometimes and very confused sometimes -- just like the rest of us. I think it is easier for them to see clearly about others than about themselves and their own conduct. This isn't surprising. They're human. I think it is a dangerous and infantilizing expectation that they would not be human, make mistakes, and so on. I think the myth of the enlightened teacher is a myth. Buddhas are very rare indeed.

Even given all that, I believe that flawed human beings can and do often help and teach others. That has been my experience.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by slice** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 6:09 pm

A dangerous and infantile expectation that a religious authority should conduct themselves within even normal ethical parameters? I really don't think it's too much to expect that a Zen priest not abuse students to the point of mental breakdown and hospitalization. Call me naive, if you will.  
slice

**by just** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 6:15 pm

Thank you Carol for that good post.  
How many questions and stances arise around this, may be seen in the following document.

Please note that it is dated October 1993!

And that the fourth name is Roko Chayat.

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/19931022R\\_Womans\\_Workshop.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/19931022R_Womans_Workshop.pdf)

sorry for the spelling, its that copy/paste problem.

University of Hawai'i at Mmoa

Library - Archives

Women's Workshop Minutes

October 22-24, 1993

## Attendees

Jikei Jean Bankier  
 Tashi Linda Baylor  
 Kiun Joan Block  
 Roko-san Sherry Chayat  
 Shiun Valerie Foote  
 Reiho Ellen Meyers  
 Frances Pdello  
 Kanze Elizabeth Roberts  
 Kuon Maicia Spitz  
 Jiun Em Tarasewicz  
 Kochi Kathy Woodworth  
 Joshin Marc; Ziese

On Friday evening the attendees arrived at the DBZ guest house and were given copies of letters written by Eshin Brenda Lukcman, Agetsu-san, and ^R ^H very kindly sent gifts to all of the workshop attendees. There was an informal supper at the guest house and optional zazen at the monastery.

On Saturday morning there was optional morning service, zazen, meals and morning meeting at the monastery. There was also a zazen period for workshop attendees only in the guest house d o .

Two discussion periods were held\* Before beginning the first discussion Kuon outlined various rules of procedure. Everyone was encouraged to be completely open regardless of their opinions. Courteousness and tolerance towards the other participants was requested. It was agreed by all the attendees that everything said at the workshop would remain confidential. Fran Perriello was asked to act as Secretary and mail copies of the meeting minutes to all attendees. sent along copies of three articles (ie; "Zen Teachers and Sex: A Call for Enlightened Standards," "Abuses of Power and the . Precepts," and "The Dharmasala Conference" ) for the workshop attendees to read.

The issues of trust in student-teacher relationships and the responsibilities of women in practice were discussed. Kuon and Roko-san acted as moderators.

The views/concerns/questions expressed by one or more attendees were:

- Many of the women who have been involved with Roshi have been traumatized by the experience-some for years. Roshi doesn't seem to have been adversely affected by these relationships but the women have been.
- Roshi has the reputation of "loving them and leaving them."
- What is the demarcation between "ignorant" v. "enlightened" behavior?
- Is it possible to surmise the nature of behavior by looking at the end results of a person's actions?
- Roshi is a human like everyone else but is being judged by a harsher standard than we are.
- The mass exodus of people in 1967,1975,1979,1982,1986 and 1 993 has caused a loss of extremely talented people and very few senior students remain.
- Some of the people who left would like to come back but can't because they do not feel safe and/or can't practice at a ZSS facility as long as teacher/student relationships are allowed to happen,
- Others feel that so much had happened that they are not sure a reconciliation is possible.

- People want Roshi to "stop it! ," This wish is framed within the context of compassion and gratitude.
- The scandals have been destructive to the Sangha and to individuals.
- People are dismayed about Roshi's apparent view that members can easily be replaced and feel he does little to try to heal the wounds that have been created.
- Telling people to "get out" when they don't agree with him is arrogant and unacceptable.
- The scandals have hurt everyone-not just women.
- Roshi's advances toward women are indicative of emotional immaturity, thoughtlessness, and insecurity.
- Roshi has a compulsive addiction that needs to be cured.
- Perhaps Roshi displayed affection towards certain women because he felt they needed some warmth and kindness in their lives.
- Roshi is an excellent koan teacher but he is not strong on the Precepts.
- Roshi's behavior and lifestyle do not epitomize that of a Buddhist priest.
- The Dalai Lama is a teacher many consider a very "moral," compassionate person. Some felt it was easier for him than Roshi to stick to the Precepts because he is constantly surrounded by monks and nuns (ie; he never has the opportunity to get in trouble)-and Roshi isn't.
- In Japan the women monks are not allowed to many-the males are. Any fraternizing between the sexes is monitored carefully by the jisha.
- Roshi is a lonely person and his whole lifestyle (ie; traveling constantly etc.) is very hard on him.
- One can be enlightened yet not actualize certain behavior.
- Students (especially new ones) are vulnerable-many view a Zen master as a "godlike" being who would never consciously hurt anyone. They trust such an individual implicitly.
- Zen is loaded with exotic cultural trappings. This creates a great deal of confusion, especially among newer students, because they may not know what is "appropriate" within the context of the practice.
- All of the ritual etc. used in Zen causes a further separation of the teacher from his students.
- Roshi is isolated from his students and has too much power.
- Roshi and Aiko-san do not want students to talk to each other. They want a "veil of secrecy" to surround everything.
- The Japanese model can be used as a vehicle to abuse power by an "unscrupulous" teacher. Dokusan is an example.
- Roshi and Aiko-san consider public discussions of the student-teacher issue as a loss of face.
- Japanese culture has a tremendous impact on the practice. American students consider this a problem but Roshi and Aiko-san don't
- Americans are very forthright and expect total disclosure of all facts-the Japanese are more subtle.
- Sometimes Roshi feels victimized too. The whole Zen master mystique may be an attractant to some women. Some women do throw themselves at him.
- Even if a woman does try to initiate -a liaison, it is still Roshi's responsibility to not allow it to happen.

- No one is aware of any instances where Roshi propositioned a women-was turned down and then refused to continue being her teacher.
- The student-teacher issue is just symptomatic of deeper problems.
- Roshi won't change his behavior to correct the problem. He refuses to take responsibility for his actions.
- Roshi doesn't perceive himself as having a problem.
- There is a need to abandon idealism.
- Teaching comes in amazing forms. Some have learned more from Roshi's mistakes than his triumphs,
- Regardless of what has happened some people still consider Roshi their teacher.
- Roshi has engaged in other behavioral patterns such as deception which have also caused tremendous hurt and pain.
- Rod has the reputation of being untrustworthy and manipulative. This has also been a 'turn ooff' for some people.
- Roshi has not been a leader. He refused to prevent Junpo from engaging in certain types of unacceptable behavior.
- Junpos behavior and his being made a & m a heir caused a lot of people to become disillusioned and angry. Many people didn't want to come back to DBZ as a result Some people left the Sangha permanently.
- Junpo also propositioned women but he was more open about it then Roshi was.
- The Zen Studies Society has no long-term viability.
- American Zen has a horrible reputation because of sex, drug and money scandals.
- Zen is very patriarchal-all of the real power rests with men. Women are not treated as equals and are under-represented in the power hierarchy.
- Roshi does not treat women differently from men.
- Student-teacher liaison incidents would be less common if there were more women Roshis.
- There has been the illusion that silence would make everything alright.
- The Ethical Conduct Guidelines enacted by the Board were the best thing that's happened to the organization in a long time.
- These Guidelines should be read as part of sesshin cautions at both DBZ and Shobo-ji.
- The Board needs to be more proactive. The Board has not stood up to Roshi enough.
- The Board has been very active this year and the Directors do care about how the Sangha feels.
- Soen Roshi felt there were problems with Eido Roshi but even he couldn't affect any change in his behavior.
- Some American Zen teachers have had problems with Roshi's behavior but they are really spread thin and there is not a well organized network to speak out against what has happened.
- Add more teachers so that Roshi is not the only person who trains students.
- Have sesshins with Roshi not present.
- The Bylaws should be changed to make the Zen Studies Society more democratic. It is currently an autocratic organization where no one has any say in what happens. .

- Don't throw everything out to correct a few problems. Try to affect change within the framework of what you already have.
- Women who come to a Zen Studies Society facility should be warned in advance about Roshi.
- Roshi has to be willing to learn from his students. He refuses to "grow."
- Suggesting any reform/improvement could be interpreted by Roshi as a lack of gratitude and/or trying to remove his power.
- There is a problem with unenlightened people telling others what to do.
- Roshi sometimes misjudges people and their motives.
- The argument that there is nothing to judge/no one to judge has been used to justify abusive behavior.

After a lengthy discussion of the above-mentioned items, the group came up with a list of action items. These were:

- 1. Create a Big Sister/Brother mentoring program for new /resident students.
- 2. Request the Board of Directors call an annual Sangha meeting.
- 3. Change the Bylaws to help the organization move towards a more democratic/American model.
- 4. Have "women only" and "old timer" sesshins in the guest house without Roshi present.
- 5. Role modeling of other Zen centers.
- 6. Sangha responsibility/accountability.

After the afternoon discussion was adjourned the participants enjoyed an inf0- dinner in the guest house. Evening zazen and a dharma talk by Louis Nordstrom at the monastery were optional.

On Sunday morning there was optional morning service, zazen and morning meeting at the monastery. A zazen period for workshop attendees only was held in guest house do .

The group discussed the issue of fear. Kim acted as the moderator.

The views/questions expressed by one or more attendees were:

- Why didn't all of the women at DBZ attend the workshop? Were they afraid of retribution from Roshi and/or Aiho san?
- Some of the people who attended the workshop were asked how they had the courage to come.
- A lot of people have some/a lot of fear of Roshi as well as Aiho-san.
- People have heard Roshi say he wouldn't seduce women students again before and don't believe him anymore. They are afraid he will do it again.
- There is a total lack of trust within the organization that can't be easily cured.
- There is fear that nothing will change within the organization until Roshi retires/leaves.
- There is fear that nothing will come out of this workshop and/or our concerns will not be taken seriously.

After dialoguing about this issue, the group discussed what would be the best vehicle (if any) for presenting the conclusions and suggestions that came out of the workshop. A debate ensued and it was decided by the majority of attendees that a letter should be written. The document would be addressed to Roshi, the Board of Directors and the Sangha and would outline the topics discussed. The letter was composed and typed at DBZ. Eleven attendees signed it (see attached.)

It was agreed that Kuon would mail out the letters and request the Shobo-ji and DBZ Directors to post a copy on the zendo bulletin boards for Sangha members to read. After the discussion adjourned the participants held a closing ceremony with chanting and

zazen. An informal lunch at the monastery was optional.

All participants departed in the afternoon.

CONFIDENTIAL

just

**by Carol** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 6:18 pm

slice wrote:

A dangerous and infantile expectation that a religious authority should conduct themselves within even normal ethical parameters?

That's not what I said. It's not necessary to twist my words to make your point.

However, in case my point was not clear -- I meant that the expectation that Buddhist teachers are fully (or nearly) enlightened Buddhas is dangerous and infantilizing precisely because it can cause people to discount their own critical ability to evaluate a teacher's conduct by normal ethical standards.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by slice** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 6:21 pm

Carol wrote:

slice wrote:

A dangerous and infantile expectation that a religious authority should conduct themselves within even normal ethical parameters?

That's not what I said. It's not necessary to twist my words to make your point.

Sorry, but that implication was in the air, I think.

slice



**by Carol** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 6:26 pm

slice wrote:

Carol wrote:

slice wrote:

A dangerous and infantile expectation that a religious authority should conduct themselves within even normal ethical parameters?

That's not what I said. It's not necessary to twist my words to make your point.

Sorry, but that implication was in the air, I think.

I added 2nd a paragraph to my previous post to clarify what you may have mistakenly read into my statement.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by slice** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 6:46 pm

Carol wrote:

slice wrote:

Carol wrote:

slice wrote:

A dangerous and infantile expectation that a religious authority should conduct themselves within even normal ethical parameters?

That's not what I said. It's not necessary to twist my words to make your point.

Sorry, but that implication was in the air, I think.

I added 2nd a paragraph to my previous post to clarify what you may have mistakenly read into my statement.

Yes that makes your meaning clear. Thanks for elaborating.  
slice

**by Nonin** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 7:18 pm

slice wrote:

Carol wrote:

The question I responded to was "What does it mean to pass a precept koan if the person who approved it was a sociopath?"

I think that depends very much on the depth of the student's inquiry into the koan and very little on the teacher's personal flaws or perfections. That has been my own personal experience. I really do not think the two should be confounded. One does not become a saint because one's teacher is a saint. One does not become a sinner because one's teacher is a sinner. The Zen method of koan introspection takes students into the deep questions of life and death. It is up to the student to penetrate those depths. A teacher can point in the general direction, but cannot take you there. And I believe a teacher can point in the right general direction even if the teacher has not been there him or herself. Also, I believe it is quite possible to see clearly in some circumstances and to see quite confusedly in other circumstances. That was probably the case with Shimano. I think it's the case with me and you and everyone else, too.

You make it sound like a Zen teacher is superfluous, and maybe even an unnecessary potential hazard.

Slice,

You have misunderstood what Carol has said. She made it clear in this and previous posts that when practicing koan introspection, a teacher is essential. As she said, "A teacher can point in the general direction, but cannot take you there." And I may add, when you come back to the teacher to present the koan, they can let you know if you get it or don't, and if you don't, tell you to keep working.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by slice on Thu Jan 06, 2011 7:29 pm

right... even Carol agreed that she "may have given that impression." An impression may be unintentional.

slice

**by Nonin** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 7:31 pm

She didn't give that impression to me.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

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Nonin

**by slice** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 7:42 pm

That's good. I would hope that a Zen teacher believes that they and their fellows work is not superfluous or hazardous.

slice

**by Shodo** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 8:16 pm

The latest entry to the Shimano Archive... From Andy Jiro Afable.

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... Malone.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...Malone.pdf)

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Shodo** on Thu Jan 06, 2011 11:59 pm

So, are the allegations that Jiro Afable alludes to true?

... this is getting worse and worse.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

by **Nonin** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 2:22 am

Shodo wrote:

So, are the allegations that Jiro Afable alludes to true?

... this is getting worse and worse.

No, they are not, at least not all of them that I know about, and the situation at ZSS is not getting worse but better. Roko Chayat (Shinge-roshi) did not have an affair with Eido Shimano. She has denied this in the past many times. I know her well, and I believe her. Also, the statements that a former student at Hoen-ji made are mis-representations of what Roko said. Again, Roko is one of my sources for this, as is another of her students. In the simplest circumstances a group of people will not recall events in same way, often differing significantly on key points. In emotionally charged situations it is even more complicated and confusing.

Please be aware that the Shimano archives will only list messages and letters that attack Eido Shimano, Roko, and the ZSS Board. Many of those missives are either incorrect or misrepresentations based on the writers' personal bias, so the Shimano archives are not a reliable source of information. They spread much hearsay, unfounded allegations, and untruths mixed in with whatever accurate information may appear there. Don't believe everything you read on the Shimano archives.

I am close to a couple of ZSS Board members and they tell me they can't believe the inaccuracies and mis-information that are being spread around. The Board is working through a resolution of the issues confronting them and intends to release a statement about them and a course of action for the future soon. When, I don't know.

Also, I can't think of anyone, except perhaps Eido Shimano, who doesn't think that he needs to fully retire and not have any further role at ZSS. Besmirching the name of his successors, the ZSS Board, and others trying to set the organization on the proper course benefits no one.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

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Nonin

by **flax3lbs** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 7:38 am

Nonin,

Keep invoking your direct access to ZSS people as some kind of authority. I'm sure you know that many of us have our doubts about what we see as a dysfunctional organization. Even some of the public letters from Zen teachers go into this. I know, I know, I'm not sitting down to dinner with them. I don't know them.

Here are a few things from you on an old post (May 22, 2010) as a reminder. This was before everything had blown up when the woman stood up to proclaim a relationship with Shimano. There were mumblings on the internet over Shimano's faults as they say, "15 years ago".

Nonin wrote:

One priest who's been working with Eido for the past fifteen years tells me that he's not seen nor heard of any sexual misconduct for those fifteen years.

This would be Genjo. And it was something he said in regards to Eido Shimano's sexual behavior. I'm paraphrasing, but I recall something like this, "I've been studying with Eido Shimano for 15 years, and if anyone would know, I would".

And this ...

Nonin wrote:

Also, one of Eido's long-term students regards the latest round of postings on the internet as nothing more than "sanctimonious vilification." Most of it has been circulated by Stuart Lachs, who was a long-term student of a teacher whose sangha exploded as the result of the teacher's sexual misconduct. Stuart has put a great deal of effort over the past years in trying to discredit not only specific Zen teachers but also the dharma transmission process itself. I don't even bother to read what Stuart writes anymore because he has too many personal axes to grind. Another person behind the recent internet postings has had a running feud with Eido and his sangha for many years over a variety of issues. I know the person, and I wouldn't trust what he says on this issue.

Hmm, who could "Another person" be, Kobutsu, Genkaku? Doesn't really matter. Some other untrustworthy fellow. But even if I'm generous and allow Eido Shimano's supporters to characterize these people as filled with "sanctimonious vilification.", perhaps even overzealous or having an axe to grind. Let's even go further and say rumor mongers. Whatever these peoples' true character, whatever faults they may have (as we all do), I ask you, who's had a better picture of Eido Shimano's character than some of these people? I would even say they've had a better picture than Roko and Genjo. We are talking about character here. I won't even go into the indeterminable notion of whether he has the "True Dharma Eye".

And now from your current post.

Nonin wrote:

I am close to a couple of ZSS Board members and they tell me they can't believe the inaccuracies and mis-information that are being spread around.

Well, at least this is less inflammatory; we've lost the whole sanctimonious vilification bit.

A few more reminders from recent history that I think we can attribute to some of the ZSS board members.

When ZSS received a letter from a woman describing some old encounters with Shimano, her account was some how passed to the old man. Than he wanted to arrange a personal face to face meeting with this woman (monitored by 3rd parties ... but still). Excellent decision! Who allowed that to occur? Talking about not having a clue.

Eido Shimano presiding over a jukai ceremony in the fall after things blew up, and there was already a commitment not to take on new students. The tone deafness continues on.

And certainly this will not persuade you, but a little entertainment for the rest of us. A little hypothesis.

Let's take 60% of the information in the Shimano archives as true. We have an autocratic one man show in control of things for mostly 40 years. A man with many faults and shortcomings. Most importantly for this case, the habit of lying, deceiving, and manipulation. You choose the others. An organization that's shown over these past 40 years to make virtually little changes in its decision making process. The man in charge has either pushed away or ignored any of those people that have tried to call him to task. He's mostly had hand picked people sympathetic to him. Those that weren't, either left or were pushed out. Two people who are his hand picked successors, and in some measure beholden to him, are now on the board. Let alone the fact we can assume most on the board are already sympathetic to him. Here's the kicker. Let's say this was some unknown organization you never heard about, you came across it in the newspaper. Would you trust this ship to right itself?

And the New York Times letter that really turned all of this on its head. The dam broke and a few Zen teachers could no longer uphold the unwritten rule to comment on another Sangha's affairs. I'm sure it wasn't the intent of these Zen teachers to lay down a gauntlet, but in practical reality this is what has happened. Too bad the board couldn't find the moral fortitude on their own. We'll see ...

Last edited by flax3lbs on Fri Jan 07, 2011 4:31 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
flax3lbs

**by Shodo** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 4:15 pm

Nonin said:

Also, the statements that a former student at Hoen-ji made are mis-representations of what Roko said. Again, Roko is one of my sources for this, as is another of her students. In the simplest circumstances a group of people will not recall events in same way, often differing significantly on key points. In emotionally charged situations it is even more complicated and confusing.

But what about page 6 of the Shimano Archive, 10/22/93 entry... listed confidential.

"Minutes of the Meeting of Twelve Zen Studies Society Sangha Women Who Met at the DBZ Guesthouse to Consider "The Shimano Problem."

Roko Sherry Chayat is a moderator for one of the days, but she was also a participant...

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1993 ... rkshop.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1993...rkshop.pdf)

Where these just women wanting to discuss the "Shimano Problem"...? Then what is the need for confidentiality?

Where these women all women who had liaisons with Eido Shimano?

I understand these questions annoy you - but just because they are being asked doesn't mean that the questioners are evil.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Carol** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 4:39 pm

Shodo wrote:

Nonin said:

Also, the statements that a former student at Hoen-ji made are mis-representations of what Roko said. Again, Roko is one of my sources for this, as is another of her students. In the simplest circumstances a group of people will not recall events in same way, often differing significantly on key points. In emotionally charged situations it is even more complicated and confusing.

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Where these women all women who had liaisons with Eido Shimano?

I understand these questions annoy you - but just because they are being asked doesn't mean that the questioners are evil.

From what I have heard and read many/most of women came because they were concerned about how women were treated at ZSS, not necessarily because they had individually been mistreated or had liaisons with Shimano.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **Nonin** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 6:01 pm

Shodo wrote:

"Minutes of the Meeting of Twelve Zen Studies Society Sangha Women Who Met at the DBZ Guesthouse to Consider "The Shimano Problem."

Roko Sherry Chayat is a moderator for one of the days, but she was also a participant...

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1993 ... rkshop.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1993...rkshop.pdf)



Where these just women wanting to discuss the "Shimano Problem"...? Then what is the need for confidentiality?

Where these women all women who had liaisons with Eido Shimano?

I understand these questions annoy you - but just because they are being asked doesn't mean that the questioners are evil.

Shodo,

This meeting occurred in 1993. There was a need for confidentiality so these women could speak freely and directly without fear of repercussion in any form. This is a common procedure when discussing such a topic.

All the women at this meeting were not ones who had liaisons with Eido Shimano.

After this meeting, some women who did have liaisons left ZSS and Roko left in solidarity with them, not because she had an affair with Eido. Later on, I'm not sure how long, she returned to ZSS.

I hope that this answers your questions.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

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Nonin

**by Nonin** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 6:17 pm

flax3lbs,

My main concern at this point is to support the ZSS Board so that they can remove Eido Shimano from any position of authority at ZSS and move forward in a proper direction. I quote Board members, including Roko and Genjo, because they are in positions of authority at ZSS and can tell me which rumors are true or false. These people are persons of integrity. I know them, and I'm confident that they would not intentionally mislead me.

I see no use in continually re-hashing the past and pointing fingers at whoever did or didn't do what. Situations are constantly changing, and I revise my views depending on

what comes before me day-by-day. I haven't revised my view that Eido Shimano needs to go away ever since I became aware of recent transgressions. I have never revised my view that Roko and Genjo are persons of integrity who have the strength of character, the depth of understanding, and the ethical values to guide ZSS in the proper direction if they are given the opportunity and the support. Roko has been given this opportunity by the ZSS Board, of which Genjo is a member. She has the support of the Board and of the many Zen Buddhist teachers who have written letters to the ZSS and also of the many who have not, as they have expressed on the AZTA listserv.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

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Nonin

**by flax3lbs** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 7:23 pm

Nonin,

Thanks for your reply.

I also realize in other posts there has been this concern over re-hashing the past. Hindsight is 20/20, and it can be abused to simply point out that someone may have been in error. Please believe me, that wasn't the intent. Hindsight can also be instructive; we can learn, maybe see a few patterns and hold some attitudes in a loose, cautionary way. We do our best not to be too rigid as if we could predict the future. Of course, everything is changing; none of us has any idea of what will happen next. And it's that next that I do my best to keep an open mind about. Yet, I also want to sometimes re-hash to help explain my view, and point out patterns that I see through my imperfect filter.

I appreciate your posts Nonin. I want to hear from everyone regardless of viewpoint. And as I sit on my cautionary perch in regards to ZSS, I will look forward to any pertinent information you wish to share through your association with them.

flax3lbs

**by Shodo** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 7:36 pm

Nonin said:

My main concern at this point is to support the ZSS Board so that they can remove Eido Shimano from any position of authority at ZSS and move forward in a proper direction. I quote Board members, including Roko and Genjo, because they are in positions of authority at ZSS and can tell me which rumors are true or false. These people are persons of integrity. I know them, and I'm confident that they would not intentionally mislead me.

Understood, and a fair point.

But also, please understand that there are many, MANY folks out here who do not regard the word of Roko and Genjo as very trustworthy... and they feel that they have very good reason not to think they are trustworthy. (I do not include myself in this because I know neither one.)

And these same folks have the view that ZSS has ZERO chance of policing itself without outside help.

When the Faith Trust folks gave a recommendation and ZSS didn't choose to follow it - they were not surprised.

As James Ford Roshi said:

I was among those who counseled Shinge Roshi and Genjo Sensei to seek outside intervention this past year. I was heartened that you chose to go with the FaithTrust Institute and specifically the Reverend Dr Marie Fortune. I was less sanguine to learn you, the Board, were not willing to follow their counsel precisely.

DaiBosatsu seems to have had a very unhealthy culture for a very long time... there are many stories circulating about peoples experiences there... some that would make your skin crawl (and not all about the Abbott, Kobutsu's experience in particular was horrifying) - and the advise for folks to let go of the past doesn't really work too well, as there was no closure for them because nothing was ever done about it.

In fact, I personally feel that if it had not been for the Shimano Archives, and bloggers and the many MANY angry ex-ZSS folks out there... there would have been no change at all.

It is the constant pressure from outside that is keeping this whole thing going - the many Zen Masters coming out after the December 1st letter by Eido to the New York Times have helped a LOT.

Personally, I think that the ZSS just wishes this would all just go away...

I remain hopeful yet pessimistic.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

by **slice** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 7:44 pm

flax3lbs wrote:

A little hypothesis.

Let's take 60% of the information in the Shimano archives as true. We have an autocratic one man show in control of things for mostly 40 years. A man with many faults and shortcomings. Most importantly for this case, the habit of lying, deceiving, and manipulation. You choose the others. An organization that's shown over these past 40 years to make virtually little changes in its decision making process. The man in charge has either pushed away or ignored any of those people that have tried to call him to task. He's mostly had hand picked people sympathetic to him. Those that weren't, either left or were pushed out. Two people who are his hand picked successors, and in some measure beholden to him, are now on the board. Let alone the fact we can assume most on the board are already sympathetic to him. Here's the kicker. Let's say this was some unknown organization you never heard about, you came across it in the newspaper. Would you trust this ship to right itself?

I would not. In fact I wouldn't be surprised if such a ship were to go further off-course, because if there's no acceptance of being off-course then one is forced to justify their course, which then leads to being further off-course. This is how a minor indiscretion can turn into cruelty.

slice

by **Nonin** on Fri Jan 07, 2011 9:12 pm

flax3lbs wrote:

Nonin,

Thanks for your reply.

I also realize in other posts there has been this concern over re-hashing the past. Hindsight is 20/20, and it can be abused to simply point out that someone may have been in error. Please believe me, that wasn't the intent. Hindsight can also be instructive; we can learn, maybe see a few patterns and hold some attitudes in a loose, cautionary way. We do our best not to be too rigid as if we could predict the future. Of course, everything is changing; none of us has any idea of what will happen next. And it's that next that I do my best to keep an open mind about. Yet, I also want to sometimes re-hash to help explain my view, and point out patterns that I see through my imperfect filter.

I appreciate your posts Nonin. I want to hear from everyone regardless of viewpoint. And as I sit on my cautionary perch in regards to ZSS, I will look forward to any pertinent information you wish to share through your association with them.

flax3lbs,

Thank you for your reply. Yes, we never know what will happen next. I am hopeful, and I'm pinning a lot of my hopes on Roko and Genjo and other Board members who share their views. I've been assured that Joe Soun Dowling, ZSS Board Chairperson, whom I do not know, will be authoring a statement in the near future that addresses the main issue, Eido Shimano's involvement with ZSS. When this will be forthcoming, I do not know, so we have to wait.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by Shodo on Fri Jan 07, 2011 11:28 pm

Nonin, I have a question that was asked me to ask you over on genkaku's blog... in regards to this quote regarding the 1993 meeting at DaiBosatsu where you said:

All the women at this meeting were not ones who had liaisons with Eido Shimano.

the question was this:

Shodo-

Would you please ask Nonin why the 1993 woman's meeting was held at DBZ instead of elsewhere, and why no women who were sexually abused were present?

Thanks

Also, this posting from Margaret Wilkie, who sat on the ZSS board bears some considering:

"There were six of us on the board at Zen Studies who left including Peter Matthiessen. Haven't seen Eido since. I just wrote him a letter and we were through. He had no remorse. He thought Americans were stupid and had no bones about saying it. We were crude and uncivilized. He thought nothing of women. The head of the Syracuse Zendo, left with her husband . She went back and he was responsible for their break-up. She

went back and studied with him and got transmission and runs a group and feels fine about it We six who had left the Daibosatsu zendo and Zen studies kept in touch.."

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1999 ... Wilkie.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1999...Wilkie.pdf)

It is easy to see why folks have suspicions, so many folks who were there say otherwise...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

by **Nonin** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 12:13 am

Shodo,

Why are you asking questions for other people? Why can't they come here and ask them themselves?

However, I see that my statement about the women at this conference (which was held in 1993!!!) can be mis-interpreted. I meant to say that there were a lot of women at this conference and that some of them had sexual liaisons with Eido Shimano but most of them didn't, including Roko.

I don't know why the meeting was held at Dai Bosatsu.

All I can say about Margaret Wilkie's statement is that I've heard contradictory statements from Roko and others involved.

That meeting was held in 1993!!!!!!!. How about focusing on what's happening now!

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **Carol** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 12:48 am

While it is obviously true that Shimano had "liaisons" with women students and did a LOT of damage both to the women and to the sangha over the years, I think it is also obviously true that there is a lot of malicious gossip out there and that not everything everyone says or remembers is true.

Having worked in an organization where the wounds were deep and unresolved for a couple of decades myself, I know that people begin attacking anyone and everyone who doesn't see it the way they do or doesn't do what they think they should do -- speculations begin about motives, insinuations and character assassinations, and so on and so forth. There is so much anger and it colors everyone's view.

That's why I believe almost nothing of what I hear from these kinds of places -- I reserve judgment and try to view everyone with the utmost compassion, since they are obviously suffering a great deal. But that doesn't mean everything they say or believe is true. Probably most of it isn't true -- except that Shimano had sex with women students and really harmed them.

I have nothing but respect for the current board of directors, which has been trying to work their way through this incredibly difficult situation. It has not been easy, but it is clear they've been taking steps and trying to find their way through. I understand that some of the monks who reside at DBZ want Shimano to stay. They are part of the community, too. So a "compromise" may have seemed to be the best solution. But no longer. Those who cannot accept his complete separation from DBZ will probably have to leave themselves. There isn't any other way to rebuild the credibility, much less the health, of that organization.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

by **just** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 1:04 am

That meeting was held in 1993!!!!!! How about focusing on what's happening now!

exactly!whats happening now is the result of silence and deception that goes 30 years b4 '93!

keeping it secret and 'between good friends', led to this, and hopefully will never be the same way that is used in the future.

Why are you asking questions for other people? Why can't they come here and ask them themselves?

They have been asking, for 40 years, and this stance is one reason they were not heard, and nothing was done.

Now that every thing, or only some, as i suspect, is known, i hope that future possibility of similar incidents will

not be allowed by such 'hush, hush' policies and 'wait a minute, a year, a decade, we will get it right' while the sangha is suffering.

Sorry, but i really dont know what to say, Reverend Nonin.

And, no, i dont think this should be settled privately, quietly.

Because of the victims of the , yes, past, and the security of future student, our sangha brothers and sisters.

just

**by christopher:::** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 1:05 am

It's really impossible to know for sure about what is happening and what has happened at ZSS. We only have the narratives and observations of various people. If we make the assumption that most people are not fabricating lies then the crucial issue being raised here is whether the present leadership was perhaps installed because they can be manipulated.

I don't think any of us can know for sure but clearly, in Japanese culture, this is often the case in governance, where shoguns control emperors and retired party leaders control prime ministers from behind the scenes. A similar situation happens in America as well. People in positions of "authority" are sometimes chosen and placed there because they bow to another "authority"...

related letters, from people inside ZSS:

Kensei Jim Spencer's account

Shinge Roshi's formal public bio:

<http://www.daibosatsu.org/abbot.html>

The November letter from Tenshin D.S Hill, posted at Tricycle and Robert Aitken's blog.

See Tricycle Blog:: Reply by tenshin on November 23, 2010, 4:00 am



In the last one Tenshin Hill describes an incident where a visiting woman was sexually manipulated by several Diabosatsu monks while on retreat. The residing "authority" at the time was unaware of this abuse, may have observed the woman crying but not know why.

These questions people are asking now are very important because they deal with the culture of the organization, not just present leadership. Shimano sensei seems to be a master of deception, and influence.

He's retiring, one way or another... The issue of concern here (in my opinion) is with what he's leaving behind, what (besides the dharma) has been "transmitted" to those who have looked to him for guidance?

Since it seems impossible to answer these questions with certainty it makes sense for the wider Zen Buddhist community to seek new leadership there, with individuals from outside the organization who do *\*not\** hold any allegiance to Shimano roshi, imo. Last edited by christopher::: on Sat Jan 08, 2011 1:21 am, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by just** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 1:20 am

Hopefully, he will leave behind a law or an organisation that deals with people like him.  
just

**by christopher:::** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 1:31 am

just wrote:

Hopefully, he will leave behind a law or an organisation that deals with people like him.

Exactly. Where does power and authority reside in a sangha? Is decision-making democratic, with elected boards and membership-chosen leaders or autocratic with boards and leaders "selected" by those already in power?

Something So-on posted in the Power Dynamics in Sanghas & Communities discussion...

So-on Mann wrote:

I guess I have a hard time relating, because I am plugged in to a quite healthy sanghas, and the other ones I am familiar with are happily chugging along as well.

Our sangha has established strong ethics guidelines and has mechanisms within an elected board made up of the membership to deal with possible abuses of power. We also have dispute resolution mechanisms... so what to do when and if anything troublesome arises between teacher and student, or between student and student, is all laid out beforehand.

I was born and raised in the Unitarian Universalist tradition and this is how things have always been done there. Communities select their own leadership and boards, everything is democratically run. Ministers are invited to come to lead the community "spiritually," but they don't have political power (centralized decision-making authority) over the community.

Many Zen sanghas both here and in Japan have evolved similar organizations over the last few decades.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by just on Sat Jan 08, 2011 1:53 am

I was born and raised in the Unitarian Universalist tradition and this is how things have always been done there. Communities select their own leadership and boards, everything is democratically run. Ministers are invited to come to lead the community "spiritually," but they don't have political power (centralized decision-making authority) over the community.

an excellent example!

strange but i think a lot of similar examples are to be found within Zen tradition.

and the opposite, sadly.

yes, an organised american democratic maha sangha, surveillance organisations, and both sangha and national laws..

many, many good ways to deal with potential future problems, FTI for ex., and so on, ..

Anything but the silence that breeds suffering.

The silence when one should be shouting, for the sake of everything and everybody involved.

just

by **Nonin** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 4:45 am

Christopher:::

You posted links to the following:

Kensei Jim Spencer's account

Shinge Roshi's formal public bio:

<http://www.daibosatsu.org/abbot.html>

The November letter from Tenshin D.S Hill, posted at Tricycle and Robert Aitken's blog.

See Tricycle Blog:: Reply by tenshin on November 23, 2010, 4:00 am

In the last one Tenshin Hill describes an incident where a visiting woman was sexually manipulated by several Diabosatsu monks while on retreat. The residing "authority" at the time was unaware of this abuse, may have observed the woman crying but not know why.

Roko Chayat has said that Kensei Jim Spencer's account is inaccurate, as has another of Roko's students that I have spoken with. I stated this earlier in this thread. As I also stated before in this thread: In the simplest circumstances a group of people will not recall events in same way, often differing significantly on key points. In emotionally charged situations it is even more complicated and confusing. The mere fact that a statement has been made is no guarantee of its accuracy.

The letter from Tenshin D.S. Hill is slanderous, and what he said has been refuted by others present at DBZ at the time. I'm surprised that you linked to it.

Also, why did you post Shinge Roshi's bio? What did you mean to show by it?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by christopher:::** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 5:10 am

Hi Nonin sensei,

I provided that link because Shinge Roshi's "official" descriptions of Shimano Roshi correspond with statements described in Jim Spencer's account...

"..Shinge Roshi expresses her gratitude for "Eido Roshi's uncompromising and penetrating Dharma Eye, which reveals directly the luminous power of the unconditioned mind."

from Shinge Roshi's formal public bio:

<http://www.daibosatsu.org/abbot.html>

BUT to focus too much on their relationship is probably not helpful. Rather, the topic of bringing greater democracy to the sangha is much more important, imo. And in that respect Shinge Roshi's professed teaching style, goals and values are wonderful, exactly what is needed.

From her biography:

Shinge Roshi's teaching style is informed by her faith in democratic process and a relational way of working with others that is shaped in part by the Syracuse area, with its history of Native American respect for the earth, women's suffrage, and unconventional faith communities. She has led the Hoen-ji Sangha to form deep connections with its neighboring cultures and traditions. "Here we are in the cradle of democracy," she says, speaking of the ancestral lands of the Onondaga Nation, where the Zen Center makes its home. "It was the Onondagas to whom the founders of the United States looked for guidance when crafting the Constitution; the clan mothers of the Haudenosaunee inspired women of European ancestry in their struggle for equal rights."

The question is, can she help bring transparency, integrity and democracy to ZSS successfully with Shimano Roshi still close by? His continuous influence seems to be the primary problem right now, and that looks like something everyone who has posted here and elsewhere (including all the teachers who recently wrote letters) agrees upon.

If I recall correctly- in the Japanese movie Rashomon the various conflicting narratives of blame for a crime are never resolved, the "truth" of what happened is unclear. The resolution occurs in the final scene when responsibility is taken to care for the newborn child, when the decision is made to focus on doing what's most compassionate and wise-right \*now\* - eyes looking to the future.

If everyone takes such an approach things will hopefully work out well. Get past pointing fingers of blame and focus on what needs to be done now, in order to create a positive future for the majority of people closely involved.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Shonin** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 9:04 am

christopher::: wrote:

If I recall correctly- in the Japanese movie Rashomon the various conflicting narratives of blame for a crime are never resolved, the "truth" of what happened is unclear. The resolution occurs in the final scene when responsibility is taken to care for the newborn child, when the decision is made to focus on doing what's most compassionate and wise-right \*now\* - eyes looking to the future.

Very nice example (and a great film)  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

by **partofit22** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 11:05 am

"It was the Onondagas to whom the founders of the United States looked for guidance when crafting the Constitution"

"The question is, can she help bring transparency, integrity and democracy to ZSS successfully with Shimano Roshi still close by?"

no doubt native americans influenced the shaping of the constitution- however, while shaping the united states, native americans weren't wanted close by- americans have a long standing reputation of "doing away with" for personal gain-  
partofit22

by **Dan74** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 12:27 pm

I would've liked to hear more personal stories of the people involved including Eido Shimano (unlikely of course).

I don't quite understand why this is such a relevant and emotional issue for others.

It is hard for me to imagine that anyone who trained with him would be oblivious to the fact that far from a Zen master this is a corrupt human being. So I would be reluctant to trust his successors. But my familiarity with Japanese Zen is limited and with Rinzai is

nill, so perhaps somehow one could hide this under all the formalities and the inscrutable Japanese master persona. I don't know.

I just don't see how a heart-to-heart transmission is possible when the said heart is filled with delusion.

If someone who trained under Shimano could shed some light on this (or other matters), I would be grateful.

\_/\\_

Dan74

**by Shonin** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 12:54 pm

Dan74 wrote:

I would've liked to hear more personal stories of the people involved including Eido Shimano (unlikely of course).

I don't quite understand why this is such a relevant and emotional issue for others.

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I just don't see how a heart-to-heart transmission is possible when the said heart is filled with delusion.

If someone who trained under Shimano could shed some light on this (or other matters), I would be grateful.

\_/\\_

I also see value in the therapeutic expression of emotion by the victims but little or no value in such expression by those who are not involved.

My teacher is Genjo Marinello Osho, who is of course a student of Eido Shimano Roshi (although until a few years ago he trained with Genki Roshi who is now retired). I don't know Eido Roshi at all. But I do have great confidence in the integrity and wisdom of my teacher -and I'm not necessarily easy to please on that point. Genjo Osho is also very human and open about his foibles and mistakes as well as those of his teacher. He is not all-knowing and seems to have genuinely failed to spot Eido Roshi's continued abuse,

perhaps by trusting him too much. Genjo Osho seems to regard his teacher as both a genuine zen master as well as very much a flawed human being.

I admit to being slightly alarmed when I realised who my teacher's teacher was. But am reassured and moved by Genjo Osho's embodiment of even-handedness, openness and compassion. I suppose I must put less stock in the idea of 'heart-to-heart' transmission than many do. What is transmitted and what does it mean? I don't think that some pure essence is transmitted unsullied from person to person all the way back to the Buddha, an essence which can become contaminated with impurities. The teacher-student relationship is important, but each person's awakening is unique and - to a larger extent than is traditionally understood in Zen - not dependent just on the teacher. My teacher's real 'dharma fathers' include Rinzai, Buddha, Hakuin, Hui-Neng, Nagarjuna, Dogen, Genki Roshi, Jesus, Ghandhi, Nelson Mandela, George Fox, Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, Freud, Jung and Carl Rogers - the whole universe of causes and conditions ultimately - and not just the 'good, wise' parts. Doesn't a lotus flower have it's roots in mud? I don't have the slightest sense that his Zen is 'corrupted' by his association with Eido Roshi. Rather, I get the sense that he understands him pretty well, openly criticises his actions and sees the problems clearly for what they are. On the other hand, he is not willing to reject him, or abandon him, but to see him and describe him just as he is, warts and all and to take the appropriate, compassionate steps for everyone involved, not necessarily without making any mistakes at all but to the best of his ability, and with a spirit of genuine kindness.

Last edited by Shonin on Sat Jan 08, 2011 2:10 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

by **Dan74** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 1:29 pm

Thanks, Shonin!

I see where you are coming from (I think?) and hope these turbulent times for your teacher lead to further growth and an ultimately good resolution.

Shonin wrote:

Genjo Osho seems to regard his teacher as both a genuine zen master as well as very much a flawed human being.

I would be interested in hearing more about this from Genjo Osho (or anyone else with experience here).

Dan74

**by christopher:::** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 1:44 pm

Excellent post, Shonin. Thanks so much for that.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Shonin** on Sat Jan 08, 2011 2:01 pm

Dan74 wrote:

Shonin wrote:

Genjo Osho seems to regard his teacher as both a genuine zen master as well as very much a flawed human being.

I would be interested in hearing more about this from Genjo Osho (or anyone else with experience here).

Well, this is something that comes up a lot in Genjo's dharma talks these days and has done since this latest controversy broke. There is feed to these talks here.. Talks about Eido Roshi start with this one: Kanchiketsu  
And include the latest one: Meeting a Person of the Tao  
And a number of the talks in between.

Personally I find these as entertaining as they are illuminating.  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by christopher:::** on Sun Jan 09, 2011 2:07 pm

Shonin wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

Shonin wrote:



Genjo Osho seems to regard his teacher as both a genuine zen master as well as very much a flawed human being.

I would be interested in hearing more about this from Genjo Osho (or anyone else with experience here).

Well, this is something that comes up a lot in Genjo's dharma talks these days and has done since this latest controversy broke. There is feed to these talks here.. Talks about Eido Roshi start with this one: Kanchiketsu  
And include the latest one: Meeting a Person of the Tao  
And a number of the talks in between.

Personally I find these as entertaining as they are illuminating.

Thanks for these, Shonin. I haven't checked out the links yet (and my not get to them for a bit) but will refrain from commenting on this topic until i do.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Jundo Cohen** on Sun Jan 09, 2011 2:58 pm

This is a letter I just posted to the AZTA (American Zen Teachers Association). I am not a particularly senior or influential member there at all, so it will likely mean next to diddly squat. However, I am ashamed at myself for being silent too long. I am ashamed too that ... once again ... there seems to be a consensus gathering among many "teachers" to allow the Sangha involved to handle this internally, and work out some kind of "honorable departure" for Mr. Shimano.

Rev. Kobutsu Malone told me about this case a couple of years ago, asking me to join in doing something. I stood silent, because it was "not my teacher, not my sangha, not my problem". However, now that the details are crystal clear ... on the wrongdoing and the years of cover-up ... no one can stand silent. Mr. Shimano must not be allowed an "honorable exit", the Sangha that covered this up for decades can not be allowed to handle it and "work it out".

I am posting it here and at Treeleaf as the the best places I can think of to say this. Shame on us if this is papered over again ...

Dear All,

I will briefly speak as a newer member of this organization, junior to many

people here whom I respect whose opinions may differ. For the first time since joining this body, I am ashamed.

This is not a normal case of a teacher who, perchance, had an affair with a student, or a drinking problem, or bought himself a BMW with Sangha funds, or other like personal or minor fault. Nor is it something that happened over the short term or recently.

Instead, this is the story of a teacher who engaged in case upon case of serial sexual abuse for decades, all while his Sangha and students looked the other way and covered it up, all while many here knew yet chose to do nothing. I know that Mr. Shimano is too just a victim of greed and ignorance, the real culprits here. However, at the same time, a teacher of the Precepts who intentionally acts again and again, over decades, to harm the innocent, showing little if any remorse in case after case, repeating the harm over decades with no self-reflection ... is a kind of monster in our midst. Shame on us for not decrying this in the strongest terms, allowing any kind of "honorable exit".

Thus the calls of "give them more time to work it out" are about 10 years too late. They have had years, and chance upon chance. To "give them more time" and allow a "graceful exit" for Mr. Shimano is not the right answer here. He must be condemned by all of us in the strongest and most unambiguous terms, we must deny him any respect (his years of service do not outweigh the damage done here), the members of this organization must denounce the years of cover up, we should publicly admit our own role in not doing enough. Moreover, we must now publicly turn our backs on Mr. Shimano. Furthermore, we must turn our backs on the ZSS ... treat them as *persona non grata* ... unless and until they exhibit real reforms.

If it were a case in which such events had happened but once or twice, or nobody in the organization knew, or there had not been cover up after cover up for YEARS then my opinion would be different. However, this is our moral equivalent of the child abuse scandals plaguing the Catholic Church. If we allow Mr. Shimano to make a graceful exit, if we allow things to be papered over again ... our own shame is compounded.

Our students are watching. Right now, opinion I am hearing among people observing is that the "teachers of the Precepts" look like a bunch of hypocrites trying to protect their own.

Shame on all of us.

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by moon face buddha** on Sun Jan 09, 2011 3:56 pm

The Quakers say that it is our duty to speak truth to power.

““The liberties of our country, the freedoms of our civil Constitution are worth defending at all hazards; it is our duty to defend them against all attacks. We have received them as a fair inheritance from our worthy ancestors. They purchased them for us with toil and danger and expense of treasure and blood. It will bring a mark of everlasting infamy on the present generation – enlightened as it is – if we should suffer them to be wrested from us by violence without a struggle, or to be cheated out of them by the artifices of designing men.” -Samuel Adams

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by Shodo** on Sun Jan 09, 2011 6:35 pm

Nonin said twice:

which was held in 1993!!!

To which the best response is from Jundo:

Thus the calls of "give them more time to work it out" are about 10 years too late. They have had years, and chance upon chance. To "give them more time" and allow a "graceful exit" for Mr. Shimano is not the right answer here. He must be condemned by all of us in the strongest and most unambiguous terms, we must deny him any respect (his years of service do not outweigh the damage done here), the members of this organization must denounce the years of cover up, we should publicly admit our own role in not doing enough. Moreover, we must now publicly turn our backs on Mr. Shimano. Furthermore, we must turn our backs on the ZSS ... treat them as persona non grata ... unless and until they exhibit real reforms.

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our own shame is compounded.

Our students are watching. Right now, opinion I am hearing among people observing is that the "teachers of the Precepts" look like a bunch of hypocrites trying to protect their own.

Shame on all of us.

Gassho, Jundo

It is honestly starting to look like the same old thing that has been happening since the 70's.... Scandal, lots of talk and waving of hands, then in the end - nothing

Nobody out here trusts the ZSS to police itself, or to effectively deal with Mr Shimano. And as for the bolded above in Jundo's quote - until I see REAL reforms such as above I will regard the Shimano lineage as a poisoned one, and will advise anyone within earshot to avoid it like the bubonic plague.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by flax3lbs** on Sun Jan 09, 2011 9:43 pm

Jundo,

I am very grateful for your public letter. One of the best presentations of this messy affair.

Over the past few months of verbal exchange there has been the occasional, "we're all imperfect human beings". Such a response to this case is so Pollyannaish. It's as if people have lost the ability to make distinctions.

I will always do my best to find respect and compassion for all human beings. But I don't have to pretend respect for the title of this supposed teacher. He should have never been one, is not one.

Although there has been much silence from the Zen community over these many decades, I'm guessing there has also been a general shunning. Many teachers have most likely done their best to steer students clear of this specific lineage. Now with such public exposure, I'm sure there have been a loss of donors, loss of students, and a greater loss of support in the greater Zen community. And for the future, there will be far less interest

from potential new students. Why even waste time trying to parse through this mess for the “truth”, better to look elsewhere.

To the Zen Buddhist community and to the greater human community, how will this organization show its compassion? Compassion that has been lacking for 40 years.

I'm not in the habit of using Buddhist type valedictions, but ...

Nine prostrations for your letter and your efforts.  
flax3lbs

**by Nonin** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 2:16 am

All,

I was given permission by Genjo Marinello to copy to you the following statement made by him on the AZTA listserv. The "latest incident" referred to was the sexual transgression by Eido Shimano that came to light last Summer:

"Before the latest incident was reported to any one of authority at ZSS it had been 15 years since the last sexual boundary complaint. This was before I showed up or began working with Eido Roshi. I had heard stories, and was assured that this kind of behavior was behind us. It was years later I was asked to join the ZSS board, in all that time hearing no new complaints.

Others will disagree with me, but as soon as the board I joined heard of a new complaint, in my mind, we took immediate and timely action. I have not been happy every step of the way since then, thought of leaving several times, but stuck it out on the board because it is a sincere group of human beings doing their best under very difficult circumstances. Overall, I remain proud of the steps we have taken since June, and believe the steps we are now taking will bring closure and a real chance for healing to begin."

I am very hopeful at this point and I'm pinning my hopes on Roko (Shinge-roshi), Genjo, and the ZSS Board to do the right thing(s).

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **Gregory Wonderwheel** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 2:47 am

Having sat sesshin at Chobo Ji with Genjo Osho, I have complete confidence that he walks the straightforward path and will continue to do so as far as humanly possible.

There is an important distinction to be made between saying "no" to certain conduct and attacking a person for that conduct. There is the human phenomenon that vitriolic attacks against the personality are much less likely to get a fair hearing than firm but direct feedback about conduct. but sadly many people do not understand this. I have myself cast vitriol when under the sway of emotion and so I'm speaking from experience.

Still, as Zen students, we do have to realize that even Hitler and Stalin were human beings, as was Angulimala, and that any attack on their conduct must be done from the basis of acknowledging, accepting, and manifesting our shared humanity.

The conduct of Eido Shimano Roshi that has been alleged by credible witnesses is deserving of the strongest shout of "No," just as the congregation should have shouted "No" when Nanquan (J. Nansen) held up the cat and threatened to cut it in half. Sadly, the assembly was silent and the cat was cut in half. Sadly, ZSS was too silent for too long, but anyone who knows the group dynamics of non-profit organizations is familiar with at least one example of a founder or charismatic leader going off the rails with the board of directors flumoxed about what to do and being fooled by their own good intentions.

I'm not suggesting that Eido Roshi's conduct was an intended teaching moment like Nanquan's, but that Eido Roshi is as human as the rest of us. No one should feel competent to judge Eido Roshi who has not experienced the deep shame of their own wrongful conduct. I have not met a single human being who does not have bad conduct they would rather hide and deny.

There are some people who are shouting that anyone associated with Eido Roshi or ZSS, including Eido Roshi's dharma heirs and ordainees, should be forsaken for not having intervened earlier. But to say that Eido Roshi's dharma heirs or anyone associated with him is to be shunned just because of the association is like saying don't never buy a Volkswagen because it was built under Hitler's orders.

The person who can't distinguish Eido Roshi's true awareness from Eido Roshi's delusions probably can't distinguish between their own true awareness and delusions either. The fruit of Eido Roshi's successful cultivation should not be thrown out because of the spoiled fruit of his personal failures.

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, “The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness.” ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

by **Nonin** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 3:43 am

Gregory,

Your above post is one of the most thoughtful and sanest posts we've had on this thread. I thank for your wisdom and for sharing your views on this matter with us.

With bows,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **Shodo** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 4:25 am

Gregory Wonderwheel said:

There are some people who are shouting that anyone associated with Eido Roshi or ZSS, including Eido Roshi's dharma heirs and ordainees, should be forsaken for not having intervened earlier. But to say that Eido Roshi's dharma heirs or anyone associated with him is to be shunned just because of the association is like saying don't never buy a Volkswagen because it was built under Hitler's orders.

BAM!

Godwin's Law!

But seriously...

I have every intention on giving ZSS, Roko and Genjo every benefit of the doubt if they are successful at separating themselves from Eido Shimano and follow the Faith Trust's recommendations to the letter.

Doing that would be a wonderful 1st step in the right direction...  
But anything less, no thanks - not interested.

I can only speak for myself.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

by **Jundo Cohen** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 4:39 am

Gregory Wonderwheel said:

There are some people who are shouting that anyone associated with Eido Roshi or ZSS, including Eido Roshi's dharma heirs and ordainees, should be forsaken for not having intervened earlier. But to say that Eido Roshi's dharma heirs or anyone associated with him is to be shunned just because of the association is like saying don't never buy a Volkswagen because it was built under Hitler's orders.

Well, only if many of the managers currently running Volkswagon had associated with Hitler for 40 years, had at least known and tolerated if not participated in covering up the goings on for years, seem to be yet letting him hang around the Bunker for the time being, and were now negotiating to give Hitler a smooth and honorable exit from Germany saying that the past is past.

I appreciate that some people say they were late to this, and are trying their best to repair things. However, Hitler is still walking around the Bunker, denying his guilt.

Until the matter is resolved, the nation/Sangha should be shunned. When they have their act together, they ... like Germany ... can be welcomed back into the community of nations.

(By the way, I am -not- comparing Mr. Shimano to HITLER, for Buddha's sake! I am just following up on Greg's example).

PS ... I also know in my heart that Hitler was too just a victim of greed, anger and ignorance. As were the people he killed. All victims.

Gassho, J

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen



**by partofit22** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 6:23 am

wishing someone experiences remorse is not quite the same as wishing they realize the errors of their ways, and experience the joy of seeing-  
partofit22

**by Carol** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 7:32 am

partofit22 wrote:

wishing someone experiences remorse is not quite the same as wishing they realize the errors of their ways, and experience the joy of seeing-

Nine deep bows.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

**by Shodo** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 4:34 pm

Interesting...

From Joan Halifax Roshi... an excerpt newly added to the archives...

(AN INTERESTING TURN OF EVENTS: GRACE AND I WERE PUBLICLY BULLIED BY ONE OF THE AZTA ZEN TEACHERS FOR OUR COMMUNIQUES, INTERESTING PUSH BACK TO SAY THE LEAST. THIS IS JUST ONE MORE PIECE IN THE PUZZLE OF THE CONFOUNDING BEHAVIOR THAT HAS SURROUNDED THE SITUATION WITH EIDO SHIMANO AND A TYPICAL RESPONSE WHEN WOMEN STAND TOGETHER AGAINST VIOLATIONS OF THIS KIND. HEREIN A REDACTED VERSION OF ONE EXCHANGE, AFTER THE FIRST EMAIL FROM HIM TELLING GRACE AND ME TO (EXCUSE THE LANGUAGE) "BUTT OUT."

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... tserve.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...tserve.pdf)

I wonder who it was... seems like utopia cannot be enforced after all.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

by **Nonin** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 6:03 pm

Shodo wrote:

Interesting...

From Joan Halifax Roshi... an excerpt newly added to the archives...

(AN INTERESTING TURN OF EVENTS: GRACE AND I WERE PUBLICLY BULLIED BY ONE OF THE AZTA ZEN TEACHERS FOR OUR COMMUNIQUEs, INTERESTING PUSH BACK TO SAY THE LEAST. THIS IS JUST ONE MORE PIECE IN THE PUZZLE OF THE CONFOUNDING BEHAVIOR THAT HAS SURROUNDED THE SITUATION WITH EIDO SHIMANO AND A TYPICAL RESPONSE WHEN WOMEN STAND TOGETHER AGAINST VIOLATIONS OF THIS KIND. HEREIN A REDACTED VERSION OF ONE EXCHANGE, AFTER THE FIRST EMAIL FROM HIM TELLING GRACE AND ME TO (EXCUSE THE LANGUAGE) "BUTT OUT."

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... tserve.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...tserve.pdf)

I wonder who it was... seems like utopia cannot be enforced after all.

It was me. Joan Halifax's remarks are self-serving and inaccurate. Here is what I actually said, directed to two people, Joan and Grace:

At this point, I urge you both to butt out of ZSS's business and let those on the ZSS Board do what they know that they need to do. They are also well aware of what needs to be done to heal their sangha, and this is no time to be making demands on the ZSS Board that you have no authority to make. If they want your help or recommendations, they'll ask for them.

Our letters have all been thoughtfully considered, Roko has responded to our concerns here on the listserv, and Joe Soun Dowling will make a statement outlining the course of action that the Board will take when it is finalized. You two are coming across as crusaders who think that they know best for everyone concerned. I, for one, am very tired of your attitudes.

I later responded to a message on the listserv from Joan thusly:

No one is asking you to back down on this issue, and I am not backing down on it either. I am asking that you just butt out of ZSS's business at this time and let them solve their own problems. You don't have a lock on the truth about the situation and what needs to be done, and you are inserting yourself precipitously in their currently very sensitive and difficult business.

Your statement about the issue not touching me in the way it has touched women is nothing but a red herring and a manifestation of 70's feminism, which most people, especially savvy women, have gotten beyond.

To further clear things up, I sent the following to Joan and to Grace:

In case you didn't see it, here's what I just posted on the AZTA website:

"It has come to my attention that some people think that my use of the word "butt" referred to a person's ass. This was not so.

In my dictionary, the word is defined as 1. to strike or push (something) with the head or horns. 2. to strike or push with the head or horns. 3. to project. 4. butt in, Slang. to intrude in the affairs or conversation of others.

My "butt out" was the opposite of "butt in." This slang phrase is so common that I'm amazed that people would not be aware of it and would post my comment elsewhere as a use of foul language. We all have our linguistic challenges and private agendas, but this is over the top."

Joan, your presentation on the Shimano archives included all that you said but not all that I said. You only included one statement of mine to support your skewed view of what I said. This is intellectual dishonesty.

You also tried to present my remarks as an example of men downgrading women. I do not downgrade women and try to keep them "in their place." My remarks to you and Grace were remarks to you and Grace, and they were meant to downgrade your behavior and your "positions." If men had written your remarks, I would have said the same thing.

I've received four messages from female Zen teachers that were sent to me privately. All supported what I wrote to Joan and Grace, but a couple of them said they'd wished I hadn't used such strong language. I'd print those messages here, but they were meant to be private, so I won't.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Nonin** on Mon Jan 10, 2011 9:16 pm

All,

Subsequent to the above, Grace and I have corresponded privately and have mutually apologized. We recognize that we are working for same ends and look forward to more expressions of friendliness (without necessarily agreement on all matters) in the future.

We are co-signing the above statement and sending it to our colleagues on the AZTA listserv.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by genkaku** on Tue Jan 11, 2011 3:08 am

The Buddhist Channel editorial: "Mr. Shimano, Please Stand Down"  
genkaku

**by sweepingzen** on Tue Jan 11, 2011 2:18 pm

I have to say that I think Joan and Grace are doing admirable work. The ZSS had decades to prove THEY have the authority to clean it up. Now, in a time when we are very close

to change, is not time for the community to go limp and silent as usual. With all due respect, Nonin, it was this attitude that allowed such things to occur for all this time.

In gassho

PS: Concerning Genjo Marinello, Osho, I just want to say that I do feel him to be a good teacher. I've had the good fortune to observe him at Kannonji Zen Retreat, the virtual temple we run in Second Life. I'll admit that a virtual environment may not be the best of places to gauge a person's conduct and behavior but he has always been willing to devote his energies and be there to help give guidance to those throughout the country without a local sangha. That sort of commitment says something about his character, if you ask me.

At the same time, I don't think it is unfair to ask the question: Why did this go unchecked for so long? Actually, to not ask that question is a bit abnormal and should be what gives pause to us. If true, Shimano's actions were not simply unethical but criminal.

As Aitken Roshi said in his final interview, albeit in his own grumpy way, "He's (Shimano) a crook!" Strong words coming from the late 'Dean of American Zen.'

I would also like to state that it's getting very old hearing people trying to save Shimano's reputation. "Eido Roshi's uncompromising and penetrating Dharma Eye, which reveals directly the luminous power of the unconditioned mind." If Roko Chayat believes that then perhaps she is too close to the matters at hand to see the situation clearly. It reminds me of the opening to Shoes Outside the Door by Michael Downing:

"I am the wrong person to write this story, and this seems to make sense to everyone. Early in 1998, I met Norman Fischer, then Abbot of Zen Center, and I told him that I did not have a Zen practice, was not even an aspiring Buddhist, had never meditated, ate more than my share of meat, and basically knew nothing."

"Knowing nothing is a great place for you to begin," Norman said. "I hope you end up there."

To my mind, there is far too much hot air being tossed around about the character of some people. At the end of the day, Zen practice is how we manifest all this understanding in our lives. It isn't about how many of my colleagues like me on a personal level.

<http://www.sweepingzen.com/>

<http://kannonji.blogspot.com/>

<http://sweepingzen.blogspot.com/>

<http://twitter.com/SweepingZen>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sweeping-Zen/69486424980>

sweepingzen

by Carol on Tue Jan 11, 2011 4:03 pm

Calling on Grace and Joan to "butt out" when clearly the ZSS board needs all the pressure it can get to get over the hump into truly confronting the consequences of Eido Roshi's remorseless actions, is very strange. A number of American Zen teachers are writing letters -- many are published on Monkey Mind. I'm sure I'm not alone in gratitude to them for (finally) stepping up, speaking out, and not backing down. Failure to do so by so many for so long has been a blot on American Zen.

That's not to say that any one person's views about what must be done can be taken as the final word ... but the range of opinions about that should be fully expressed lest ZSS's history of doing too little, too late be seen as acceptable. Even this past year, while addressing the issue with more seriousness than before, they pulled back from removing Eido Roshi from teaching on the premises, allowed him to do a Jukai ceremony and to teach sesshin, all after the Faith Trust Institute recommendations came out. This certainly gave credence to those who fear the whole thing is a farce without substance.

I have MUCH sympathy for those close to Eido Roshi, for the love they feel for him as their teacher who has been instrumental in their awakening to the Dharma. I also share with many others a deep disquiet about those same people rationalizing or minimalizing or discounting the suffering Eido Roshi has caused over decades of sexual misconduct and other abuses of power that were well-known even before the Simano Archives went public.

The conflict must be resolved in favor of clear ethical standards ... which means at a minimum removal of Eido Roshi from any position at ZSS, admitting and disavowing his conduct, making humble apologies not just for him but for ZSS, and to the extent possible making restitution.

I sometimes wonder what it would be like if one of my children or parents were to commit a murder? (I thought of it again in regard to the suffering parents of the young man who just did the shootings in Arizona.) How could I abandon them in their time of need? I couldn't. But neither could I permit them to evade the consequences of their actions, even if it meant I had to sit with them and bear witness to their execution.

I think this whole thing is a huge challenge to all of us who practice Zen ... to examine our opinions and beliefs and feelings and judgments, our shortcomings, our tendencies to avoid conflict while projecting ill-will onto others who are also working through their opinions, beliefs, feelings, judgments and shortcomings. This situation calls for action, firm action, and we're not used to that. We've cultivated a culture of equivocation rather than equanimity.

It's a very hard koan. How to act when circumstances demand action, while remaining compassionate in our hearts and not giving in to greed, hatred and ignorance. So, when we see someone like Eido Roshi -- delusional -- doing great harm and excusing it by

raising the false flag of "the unconditioned", we'd best wake up. We'd best listen to those sounding the alarm, however unpleasant and jarring the sound. To think that silencing the alarm will eliminate the danger is also delusion.

So, I'm truly grateful to Joan and Grace and all the other Zen teachers who are not letting this go away, who are speaking out to the ZSS board and publicly. It was a long time coming.

Gassho,

Carol  
 It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

**by Kojip** on Tue Jan 11, 2011 6:19 pm

As a marginal person looking in at this situation. The thing that stands out most is not that people are cowed by hierarchy, or silent in deference to a troubled teacher, or even his sexism, which is no surprise. It is that a half-baked notion like someone "dwelling in the absolute" while indulging his impulses and trashing his precepts can have any traction at all, with anybody. That view is the key. Without it this kind of thing would not go on for years. It points to a general sickness in Zen circles.

anyway... said to much , .....time for break.  
<http://www.ontariozen.com/>  
<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by Linda Anderson** on Tue Jan 11, 2011 6:21 pm

Thanks Carol, and everybody. Just a comment, I won't give a comprehensive reply which your thoughtful response merits... and should be taken to heart by all to see the long shadow. It is a koan, no easy answers.

What I notice this morning is your comment about "the false flag of the unconditioned".

YES, this is an extreme case, but it happens in many other situations, as I well know. It is the one thing that disturbs me the most about zen in the hands of beginners. In fact, just last night, we were working on the koan about killing the cat if a saving/turning word is not spoken. It is beautiful in that it can bring one into the unconditioned oneness, on'es nature, but it stopped there... and there were the comments about "just cat, no death, being just ourselves, we can talk all night about right/wrong... but what will save us?" Seems like signs that the ship is leaning too far to the right into emptiness... So I asked "what about the blood" and received ill words about its author and "rigid" views on social activism which were oh so nicely prefaced by "but I love him." The blood was indeed discounted by the false flag and never addressed. For many reasons, this being one, I slowly back away and watch... where is the relationship to life? to human relations with each other?

There are so many signs like this that can be attributed to the blind spots in the Eido case, not to mention how the unconditioned can be appropriated for the abuse of power.

Now that I've heard the cat koan, I'm picking up on bubuyaya's poem in the zazen thread where he mentions the cat killer... part of the wakeup call...

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Carol** on Tue Jan 11, 2011 7:07 pm

Linda Anderson wrote:  
 Now that I've heard the cat koan, I'm picking up on bubuyaya's poem in the zazen thread where he mentions the cat killer... part of the wakeup call...

Linda

As I mentioned before, there are 3 great bodhisattvas in our tradition: Manjushri - Great Wisdom, Avalokiteshvara - Great Compassion, Samantabhadra - Great Action. All are necessary.

That cat killing koan points that out. Here's a good teisho on the case Nansen Kills the Cat by Barry Majid that I just found by googling. The universe provides.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.



~Rumi

Carol

**by Linda Anderson** on Tue Jan 11, 2011 7:15 pm

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Nonin** on Tue Jan 11, 2011 8:26 pm

Carol said:

Calling on Grace and Joan to "butt out" when clearly the ZSS board needs all the pressure it can get to get over the hump into truly confronting the consequences of Eido Roshi's remorseless actions, is very strange.

I said that along with other things that explain the statement. It was said within a long discussion on the AZTA listserv about the best way to promote positive change at ZSS. Without knowing the full context of my statement, it must seem strange to you, Carol, especially since I was one of those who wrote a letter to the ZSS Board advising Eido Shimano's complete withdrawal from ZSS.

The AZTA listserv is a private service that can only be contributed to and read by the 110 AZTA members, all authorized Zen Buddhist teachers, who subscribe to it. The posts to the listserv are only to be shared with other subscribers, so they are to be kept confidential because we want to be able to speak freely on all issues without having to hold back on anything we say. We are all Zen teachers who lead sanghas, yet we are all individuals who hold different views some subjects, and sometimes we have pointed discussions and squabbles. We are also public figures, and we insist on confidentiality in our private affairs so our statements are not misconstrued, half-quoted, or cherry-picked and held against us in public forums.

Unfortunately, someone leaked our confidential statements. A subscriber to the listerv either forwarded the statements by Grace and Joan along with my comments and other comments to the Shimano Archives or forwarded them to someone off the listserv and they passed them on. Then, someone read them on the Archives and linked to them here on ZFI. As yet, we have not been able to determine who is responsible for the leak.

Grace's letter, her second one to the ZSS Board, is a public matter, but the other statements were not, and they should have been kept confidential. Since they were not and a link to them was posted here, I felt that I needed to respond, so I did previously in this thread. I should have said that I agree with most of what Grace said in her letter. My disagreement was with the timing of it.

I've probably said more than I should have said on this topic. I wanted to put it in context with the rules of the AZTA listserv, but I can't get into the meat of the discussion carried on there.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by just** on Wed Jan 12, 2011 1:17 am

sorry to ask something that has been on my mind a while..Could anyone answer?(maybe only opinions?):

Is it possible to sue ES, and people like him, for sexual and financial abuse?

Im no lawyer, so thanks for any clarification!  
just

**by moon face buddha** on Wed Jan 12, 2011 9:02 am

Kojip wrote:

As a marginal person looking in at this situation. The thing that stands out most is not that people are cowed by hierarchy, or silent in deference to a troubled teacher, or even his sexism, which is no surprise. It is that a half-baked notion like someone "dwelling in the absolute" while indulging his impulses and trashing his precepts can have any traction at all, with anybody. That view is the key. Without it this kind of thing would not go on for years. It points to a general sickness in Zen circles.

To what do you ascribe this 'general sickness'? Is it something inherent in Zen itself? Or has it crept in as Zen moved from east to west?

My thinking is that there has been, in some ways, an over emphasis on meditation and gaining enlightenment with a corresponding lack of attention to everyday moral/ethical practice. I am finding this discussion very interesting as it is causing me to reevaluate my practice.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

by **Linda Anderson** on Wed Jan 12, 2011 9:23 am

moon face buddha wrote:

Kojip wrote:

As a marginal person looking in at this situation. The thing that stands out most is not that people are cowed by hierarchy, or silent in deference to a troubled teacher, or even his sexism, which is no surprise. It is that a half-baked notion like someone “dwelling in the absolute” while indulging his impulses and trashing his precepts can have any traction at all, with anybody. That view is the key. Without it this kind of thing would not go on for years. It points to a general sickness in Zen circles.

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Moon Face Buddha,

I appreciate your vulnerability and openness in your reevaluation. If I may offer this... my first teacher (not Buddhist by lineage, yet by heart) often said that we are no longer in this for our own benefit, but for what we can offer each other walking together, or in times of crisis... it doesn't exclude the authentic zen heart mind, yet it doesn't belong to any of us... it has it's own life, walking together. Perhaps the sickness has a more solitary perspective, like the tradition that it came from. I have gratitude for the centuries of tradition, but I don't think imitation is enough in this changing world. I appreciate your question.

That said, our practice may or may not change and evolve. It's our job to follow it.

Linda

Not last night,  
not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Kojip** on Wed Jan 12, 2011 4:44 pm

moon face buddha wrote:

Kojip wrote:

As a marginal person looking in at this situation. The thing that stands out most is not that people are cowed by hierarchy, or silent in deference to a troubled teacher, or even his sexism, which is no surprise. It is that a half-baked notion like someone “dwelling in the absolute” while indulging his impulses and trashing his precepts can have any traction at all, with anybody. That view is the key. Without it this kind of thing would not go on for years. It points to a general sickness in Zen circles.

To what do you ascribe this 'general sickness'? Is it something inherent in Zen itself? Or has it crept in as Zen moved from east to west?

My thinking is that there has been, in some ways, an over emphasis on meditation and gaining enlightenment with a corresponding lack of attention to everyday moral/ethical practice. I am finding this discussion very interesting as it is causing me to reevaluate my practice.

It appears to be an issue in some Zen circles. There are healthy Sanghas as well. The fact that unethical conduct can be included in "Dwelling in the Absolute", points to an aperspectival sickness. The fact that this view has traction points to a wider problem. As someone who has both a Theravadin and Zen background, there are two things I have personally come to know . Ethical problem are more common in Zen, and Zen is a much more difficult path to walk (freewheeling pop Zen aside). Embracing the full spectrum of life is far more challenging than simply retreating to uproot greed, hatred, and delusion. I think ethical wisdom is that much more important in Zen. So no it isn't a slam against Zen. Zen it is the way for me.

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Kojip

**by just** on Wed Jan 12, 2011 8:33 pm

Imo, what ES is relating is a problem pertaining to the self, not the 'dreaded' emptiness sickness, which, in my discriminations, has very different symptoms.

And i dont think that his raising a flag of awakening, of 'abiding in the unconditioned realm', in this case is an evidence that these teachings are somehow, in their true manifestations, tainted.

therefore, ES has a problem of the 'self', not one that is 'inherent' in the teachings. imo.  
just

**by partofit22** on Wed Jan 12, 2011 9:37 pm

don't know if it's wrong, but i definitely see what you're saying, in me, in people, every day- the issues all seem so small until something like this hits- water lapping against the shore is ok- tidal waves ain't- yet they happen -- i imagine rarely without damage-  
partofit22

**by Nonin** on Wed Jan 12, 2011 10:00 pm

Here's the latest statement from the ZSS Board. More will follow but I don't know when.

The Zen Studies Society is pleased to announce that on January 1, 2011, the Ven. Shingeshitsu Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi was installed as the second Abbot of Daibosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji. From January 12th through 17th Shinge Roshi will conduct her first sesshin---Martin Luther King Jr. sesshin---as Abbot at DBZ. The Founding Abbot of Kongo-ji is retired and will not be present. Shinge Roshi will preside over all sesshin activities.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Kojip** on Wed Jan 12, 2011 10:20 pm

just wrote:

Imo, what ES is relating is a problem pertaining to the self, not the 'dreaded' emptiness sickness, which, in my discriminations, has very different symptoms.

And i dont think that his raising a flag of awakening, of 'abiding in the unconditioned realm', in this case is an evidence that these teachings are somehow, in their true manifestations, tainted.

therefore, ES has a problem of the 'self', not one that is 'inherent' in the teachings. imo.

Hi just.

I'm not just chalking things up to a case of "emptiness sickness". It isn't about an inherent flaw in Zen either. Ethical issues come up throughout the spectrum of Buddhism, but they are most challenging in the non-dual traditions (Zen, Vajrayana) . This may be, as you say, about the "self" of this teacher, but that is not the point I'm trying to make. It is, among other things, the fact that the notion of unethical conduct while dwelling in the absolute is acceptable to some in the Zen community, and that it can be put forward, publicly, with a straight face,... this is the thing. Beyond having established that this person behaved inexcusably, there are these larger issues.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by just** on Wed Jan 12, 2011 11:55 pm

Thank you all, Kojip,

"..there are larger issues"

yes, i agree, what else can i do?

personaly, i am sorry, after seeing it this way and turning it that way, all the pertinent and difficult questions we all share, view and ponder in this difficult situation, i imagine two ways, not exclusive of each other:

1 Sangha laws

2 Secular laws

its like a snail thinking of its future, "long way ahead, but why not start now". for the sake of the future.

of course i would opt for 1, but if not efficient, and abuse holds , apply secular, 2.

this is my opinion only. life, lol, has a way with these, so im told.

just

**by christopher:::** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 6:38 am

Hi everyone.

Shonin wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

Shonin wrote:

Genjo Osho seems to regard his teacher as both a genuine zen master as well as very much a flawed human being.

I would be interested in hearing more about this from Genjo Osho (or anyone else with experience here).

Well, this is something that comes up a lot in Genjo's dharma talks these days and has done since this latest controversy broke. There is feed to these talks here.. Talks about Eido Roshi start with this one: Kanchiketsu  
And include the latest one: Meeting a Person of the Tao  
And a number of the talks in between.

Personally I find these as entertaining as they are illuminating.

Shonin,

Thanks so much for these links. I just finished listening to "Meeting a Person of the Tao" and... I'm sorry but what I took away mostly was that whatever Eido Shimano taught his students, it wasn't a "complete" transmission of Zen Buddhism. Somewhat in line with Kojip's points about problems related to an immature understanding of nodual experiences- these ideas of the "True Dharma Eye" and being in tune with the Tao sound "quirky" to say the least.

Genjo talked about Shimano roshi being creative and confident, as proof of his understanding of the Way, being like a Picasso or Einstein. I agree these are excellent qualities (for an artist), i've cultivated this as well, value these qualities (creativity, confidence) and express them thru my art work.

Alan Watts has talked about Zen this way (and i love Alan Watts) but what does that have to do with being a high ranking Zen teacher of Zen teachers, for the Dharma? Genjo said he had to go to psychotherapy to find answers for the human mind as if the answers didn't exist in Buddhism. What of the factors of awakening, the pledge to do no harm, the precepts, the 8 fold path, the 4 NT??! The answers have always existed within Buddhism, if practiced as a complete path.

If these were not being taught (and most importantly modeled) as \*essential\* ingredients of Zen practice, it's understandable that such a tragedy unfolded. I do hope that as the Zen teachers in America continue to discuss this issue that they talk extensively with Shimano's students and explore their possible misunderstandings of the Dharma.

Because as long as teachers and students who were taught by Shimano continue to see him as a Zen Master with some personal failures and foibles there's danger his "quirky" (to use Genjo's words) version of practice and Zen will get passed on.

Sorry in advance if i've misunderstood Genjo's understandings in any way. He sounds like a wise psychotherapist but it might be helpful for him to dig a bit deeper into his education as a dharma teacher and examine some of the assumptions he was taught.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Genjo** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 8:40 am

Christopher,

You say, "Genjo said he had to go to psychotherapy to find answers for the human mind as if the answers didn't exist in Buddhism. What of the factors of awakening, the pledge to do no harm, the precepts, the 8 fold path, the 4 NT??!"

Of course the answers to human psychology are found in Buddhism, but so too is deep spirituality found in psychology. I don't see this as particularly amazing or significant. True insight is true insight. The flaw that has become so self-evident in many Zen adepts (or for that matter spiritual adepts of all stripes) of which Eido Roshi is a prime example, is the ability to see one's own shortcomings or limitations as insignificant or trivial. This can and often does lead to a careless arrogant attitude towards the relative view, which can lead to serious errors of judgement and can cause much harm. Eido Roshi himself likens this to the second case in the Mumonkan where Nansen warns not to ignore the laws of causation.

Because Eido Roshi has made this error repeatedly, even though he is intelligent, insightful and has had a long strong Zen practice, I can only conclude that there must be a seriously unprocessed knot in his early development. I believe he and many, many others have used "awakening" to paper over or hide from these dark knots. Sadly this has proven to be much to the detriment of himself, the Sangha, and of course the female students he directly harmed through his addiction.

I am very appreciative of the many heart-felt letters that have come from Zen teachers associated with the AZTA. In fact, after Eido Roshi released his letter to the editor of the NYT, where, in my mind, he demonstrated that once again he had fallen in to denial, I added my voice to encourage them to write their concerns and advice directly to the ZSS. At this crucial turn in ZSS history, it is important that the wider Sangha is heard. The wider Sangha has spoken clearly.



I now have every confidence that the ZSS will find the strength and unity it needs to move forward without Eido Roshi's direction or guidance. There are many, including myself, who will be forever grateful for the gifts he has given, but I think all of us who still love the man must distance ourselves further from his gross errors in judgment. This is the only way real healing can begin.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by christopher:::** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 9:19 am

Hello Genjo sensei,

Thank you for your very prompt and thoughtful response!

One thing i don't understand is this term "Dharma Eye" which has sometimes been used to refer to Shimano Roshi. I am not sure if you used it in your talk, but other students of him have, and continue to. What does this term refer to? The two aspects of the Great Matter that you talked of- recognizing "What is this?" that we are, experience and "How should we live/act?" are interconnected, in my (limited) view. If a person comes to a deep understanding of one the other should follow, if not, that initial deep realization is questionable, at the very least extremely immature and unstable, imo. "They are not two" as some Soto teachers like to say.

Living, speaking, acting in this world according to the Dharma and resting in the Dharma are actualized by "Dharma Masters" as a complete understanding, recognizable by a person of wisdom, ethics, compassion, mindfulness, patience, lack of clinging, egolessness, calming of desires. The qualities you attributed to Shimano sensei- of creativity and confidence (while potentially positive) - have little to do with deep and balanced realization of the Dharma, imo.

I'm also an artist, inspired by my experiences with Nature, meditation and a sense of connectedness with the Tao. Its a very creative and inspiring path, which sadly can lead to many errors in judgement and ethics. I'm still wrestling with all these issues myself, so i hope i don't sound too judgmental. These questions relating to Shimano roshi should not be to pass judgement on him but are something many of us have to work with, and find answers to, ourselves.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by unsui** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 9:35 am

christopher::: wrote:

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Hi Christopher,

Here you point to something that has been troubling me for quite a while. It is, of course, a bit of an aside, but as I have read the letters that the American Zen teachers have written to ZSS that have been made available through blogs and the archive, I have been overwhelmed by how few have seemed to express an understanding for the situation as a whole. I am sure these letters have been of great value, so I am not disparaging the effort that has gone in to them, but I have not seen many that demonstrate a well-rounded, mature wisdom that would inspire me to have confidence in their abilities to help Eido Shimano's students "explore their possible misunderstandings of the Dharma". Actually, more than any website or on-line teisho, these letters have been for me an indication of who I could or would not choose to study with.

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by Dan74** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 10:31 am

Teachers teach from where they are which of course in most cases falls somewhat short of Supreme Unexcelled Enlightenment.

And to most Westerners, verses like this one:

Maitreya, you should know  
that sentient beings  
cannot attain great liberation  
because of their craving and desire,  
which cause them to fall into  
the cycle of birth and death.

If they can sever like and dislike,  
 along with greed, anger, and delusion,  
 regardless of their difference in nature,  
 they will all accomplish the Buddha Path.  
 The two obstructions will also be permanently severed.  
 After correct awakening is attained  
 by meeting a good teacher,  
 one accords with the bodhisattva vow  
 and abides in the great nirvana.  
 All bodhisattvas in the ten directions,  
 relying on the great compassionate vow,  
 manifest the appearance of entering birth and death.  
 Practitioners now and  
 sentient beings in the Dharma Ending Age,  
 should diligently sever all attached views.  
 Then they will return to great Complete Enlightenment.

(from the Sutra of Complete Enlightenment) are nothing but colourful exaggerations of the ancients. But we can't realistically demand every Zen teacher to be enlightened any more than we expect every Catholic priest to be a saint living in constant communion with the Lord.

Enlightenment is the big calling card of Zen, so it is little wonder that teachers redefine it in their image and a lineage or multiple lineages are formed which believe that enlightenment which is the ending of delusion is impermanent, complete enlightenment is impossible and enlightened people can also be a\$\$holes. Which goes against what the Buddha taught and what Mahayana sutras say but is much more in line with our experience and worldview.

For me it is important for a teacher to be clear about their limitations and not imagine oneself to have attained the True Dharma Eye, Annutara Samyak Sambodhi etc while engaging in unethical conduct etc. I expect my teacher to have some awareness and clarity and of course be a sincere conduit of the Dharma while have some serious insights to share. But I imagine we all eventually find suitable teachers for where we are at.

Dan74

**by unsui** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 11:32 am

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For me it is important for a teacher to be clear about their limitations and not imagine oneself to have attained the True Dharma Eye, Annutara Samyak Sambodhi etc while engaging in unethical conduct etc. I expect my teacher to have some awareness and clarity and of course be a sincere conduit of the Dharma while have some serious insights to share. But I imagine we all eventually find suitable teachers for where we are at.

I have not as yet met a Zen teacher who has claimed that (s)he is completely enlightened. My teacher, for example, is very aware of where/what/who he is and where his students are coming from, very honest and, for me, very inspiring. I am grateful that I have this opportunity to practice here.

I have no expectations regarding what American Zen teachers might have written to ZSS, but there is a spectrum of aggression, judgmental attitudes and condescension to a degree that I guess I wouldn't have expected. I assume that the sheer volume of letters has illustrated to ZSS and the rest of the world the interest and dismay this case has aroused. However, very few of the teachers that wrote to ZSS have an intimate knowledge of the history of ZSS/DBZ and their workings, and in some cases it seems (IMO) disrespectful and uncompassionate to suggest or demand the solutions that can be read of in the various letters. In regard to very specific letters, I do not see a harmony with the 8-fold path --- and as far as that goes, I still do not quite understand the motivation behind the Aitken blog and the Shimano archives. Sometimes these both seem to serve some private interest. But maybe this is because of my own limited insight?

Not to say that I am supportive of Eido Shimano or would feel comfortable meeting him after all of this... And after his letter to the NYT, I can definitely see that he will need some kind of help with or practice in reconciling himself to this new reality he faces. I just hope he gets this chance.

I have not heard/read tha Eido Shimano himself has claimed to have attained the true dharma eye. ???

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

by christopher::: on Thu Jan 13, 2011 1:02 pm

Brilliant post, Dan, though without the placement of smilies i was a bit unsure about which lines were laced with the greatest sense of irony.

unsui wrote:

I have not heard/read tha Eido Shimano himself has claimed to have attained the true dharma eye. ???

Hi unsui. I could be completely mistaken but my understanding was that the phrase "dharma eye" refers to dharma transmission, originally. So to say someone has the true dharma eye means the transmission of dharma wisdom from the Buddha on down thru the Zen/Chan ancestors to this individual was valid, was successful. They "got" and are able to teach others what Buddha understood, the very core wisdom of dharma.

A Roshi and lineage holder wouldn't make that claim, he doesn't have to. The robes, title and inka speak for it.

unsui wrote:

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Hi Christopher,

Here you point to something that has been troubling me for quite a while. It is, of course, a bit of an aside, but as I have read the letters that the American Zen teachers have written to ZSS that have been made available through blogs and the archive, I have been overwhelmed by how few have seemed to express an understanding for the situation as a whole. I am sure these letters have been of great value, so I am not disparaging the effort that has gone in to them, but I have not seen many that demonstrate a well-rounded, mature wisdom that would inspire me to have confidence in their abilities to help Eido Shimano's students "explore their possible misunderstandings of the Dharma". Actually, more than any website or on-line teisho, these letters have been for me an indication of who I could or would not choose to study with.

Seems like it's sometimes really difficult to transmit wisdom to others, whether thru letters or even direct instruction. Lot's to think about here.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Dan74** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 2:38 pm

It was not intended as an irony actually

But let me make this clear - I have a great deal of respect for modern Zen teachers and the work they do. I am sure there are many who are deep practitioners and sincere and committed Dharma teachers. Cases like ES are surely an exception. And no matter what the tradition, there are problems, issues, challenges, etc.

What does trouble me in this case is the talk of a realized sexual predator, a profound practitioner who just happened to have this ethical blind spot, as Kojip put it above:

...the notion of unethical conduct while dwelling in the absolute is acceptable to some in the Zen community, and that it can be put forward, publicly, with a straight face,... this is the thing. Beyond having established that this person behaved inexcusably, there are these larger issues.

People also say that we are all human at the end of the day not golden Buddhas that realization comes and goes - there is no other way, everybody stumbles etc etc. It seems to me these views are the result of Japanese Zen losing touch with its Mahayana foundation that Thomas Cleary speaks about in his introductions to Dream Conversations, the teachings of Muso Kokushi.

But we've already discussed this <http://zenforuminternational.org/viewtopic.php?f=62&t=3676> and it may be off topic, so I will leave it there.

Dan74

by **Kojip** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 3:55 pm

Hi Dan. I am not saying that people who engage in unethical conduct have not realized the absolute/relative, or emptiness/form. The Zen I was taught is that such a realization marks the beginning of the path, and that it is, in and of itself, "no big deal". A diligent practitioner will have that realization, but it doesn't mean greed, hatred, and delusion just up-and-disappear. Practice goes on. So it is perfectly acceptable in my view that someone can be deeply realized in one area, and have, as Genjo said, bypassed knots. It is precisely these kinds of uncooked knots that moved me to enter psychotherapy for five very Dharmically helpful years. My point is that a lapse is a lapse, it is an occasion of not effectively dwelling in the absolute/relative.

I am constantly lapsing, but things are going in the right direction, and I really appreciate more mature people who can guide me, even if they do not measure up to the ideal of perfect Enlightenment.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by just** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 4:39 pm

sorry,

some thoughts :

- 1 Invite a monk from Ryutaku-ji for the new abbot of DBZ.
- 2 Invite a new ZSS
- 3 Reparation to Victims
- 4 Remove ES totally
- 5 Public apology
- 6 Clear laws for Zen Sangha( AZTA could help, Sangha organisations..no zen aerobics or tantra, but keeping the teachings pure.)
- 7 Sangha democracy in government and spiritual authority separate.

Ryutaku-ji Rinzai Zen is a great Zen Lineage. They certainly have the wisdom and courage to settle this for the sake of Buddha! Invite them!

Great attention should be made to the victims and to Rinzai Ryutaku-ji Zen!

In effect, it is about saving DBZ and ZSS, and doing good to all... i think. ?

Thank you all for this thread.

just

**by unsui** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 4:44 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Hi unsui. I could be completely mistaken but my understanding was that the phrase "dharma eye" refers to dharma transmission, originally. So to say someone has the true dharma eye means the transmission of dharma wisdom from the Buddha on down thru the Zen/Chan ancestors to this individual was valid, was successful. They "got" and are able to teach others what Buddha understood, the very core wisdom of dharma.

A Roshi and lineage holder wouldn't make that claim, he doesn't have to. The robes, title and inka speak for it.

Sorry. In Dan's post, I read this as a synonym for "enlightened". Must be me who misunderstood what was posted. But all the same, my point lay with emphasis on the other topic of focus.

christopher::: wrote:

unsui wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

If these were not being taught (and most importantly modeled) as \*essential\* ingredients of Zen practice, it's understandable that such a tragedy unfolded. I do hope that as the Zen teachers in America continue to discuss this issue that they talk extensively with Shimano's students and explore their possible misunderstandings of the Dharma.

Hi Christopher,

Here you point to something that has been troubling me for quite a while. It is, of course, a bit of an aside, but as I have read the letters that the American Zen teachers have written to ZSS that have been made available through blogs and the archive, I have been overwhelmed by how few have seemed to express an understanding for the situation as a whole. I am sure these letters have been of great value, so I am not disparaging the effort that has gone in to them, but I have not seen many that demonstrate a well-rounded, mature wisdom that would inspire me to have confidence in their abilities to help Eido Shimano's students "explore their possible misunderstandings of the Dharma". Actually, more than any website or on-line teisho, these letters have been for me an indication of who I could or would not choose to study with.

Seems like it's sometimes really difficult to transmit wisdom to others, whether thru letters or even direct instruction. Lot's to think about here.

Hope so.

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by moon face buddha** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 5:45 pm

just wrote:

1 Invite a monk from Ryutaku-ji for the new abbot of DBZ.

Is that not, to some extent, what caused all the problems in the first place?

When I was learning Iaido the teacher told us a story of a group that went awry because a Japanese student joint and completely undermined the teacher. Some of the students



assumed that the japanese chap must know more about a japanese martial art than the western teacher.

At some point the western sangha has to stand up on its own two feet, with the dharma as the core of the teaching. Ever since the first turning of the wheel there have been challenging times, abuses by teachers and lay people, and yet the words of the buddha are still here to guide us.

It may be that ZSS fails to resolve this matter to the satisfaction of everyone, in which case people have a choice to either associate with or avoid them.

“As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we walk again and again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives.” Henry David Thoreau

Maybe the lesson here is that enlightenment is not the end of the path, it does not take us beyond the precepts, and the practice continues.  
Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by So-on Mann** on Thu Jan 13, 2011 11:32 pm

just wrote:

sorry,

some thoughts :

- 1 Invite a monk from Ryutaku-ji for the new abbot of DBZ.
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- 7 Sangha democracy in government and spiritual authority separate.

I am with you, especially on #s 6 & 7. There are concrete steps American Zen can take (and are taking, frankly) to ensure these kinds of scenarios either do not arise or are nipped in the bud promptly

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by christopher:::** on Fri Jan 14, 2011 12:45 am

Is there rethinking going on about the dokusan situation? Ven. Huifeng mentioned that in Chan a priest (monk) is expected to meet with students (especially of the opposite sex) in large open spaces where others can see but not hear them. That's similar to the kinds of norms set up for teachers in most situations of schooling and instruction.

Dokusan and then retreats sound like the two most "enabling" contexts for abuse. Genjo san mentioned in his talk what it's like to be away on a retreat, cut off from the outside world. These are wonderful opportunities to go deep into sitting but without strict community norms and guidelines sexual predators can view such situations as like a weekend alone with the hens in the henhouse.

That's what seemed to have happen (according to some of the stories in the Shimano archives), not only with Shimano roshi but with other men around him who looked to him as a role model.

~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by just** on Fri Jan 14, 2011 1:29 am

I Invite a monk from Ryutaku-ji for the new abbot of DBZ.

Is that not, to some extent, what caused all the problems in the first place?

well, yes, partly, among other things, but still it may not be a bad idea to consider, idk. I think it would be in line with the transmission teachings, and the situation. i dont think that a heir of ES or of some other line, or a Vinaya master is a better choice. as long as ZSS is a democratic American institution, the abbot may well be sought from the 'source'. ... idk, just thinking aloud.

Yes, Chris, using sesshin and the dokusan room the way it was used by ES is really unbelievable and hard to digest! .. im trying to say this mildly, hope you understand what i think.

But i think we cannot question these practices, that is Zen practice.

ES is another topic, i think. He would have behaved similarly if he was a Tendai or Shinto priest, or a scholar or a banker or a politician, imo.

just

**by christopher:::** on Fri Jan 14, 2011 1:42 am

just wrote:

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ES is another topic, i think. He would have behaved similarly if he was a Tendai or Shinto priest, or a scholar or a banker or a politician, imo.

We have to question rituals, situations and practices that enable abuse. It was found with Catholic clergy that there were too many situations where a single adult male was alone with young boys. If that hasn't been addressed yet it should be.

I'm a University teacher, this kind of situation comes up all the time. Change is good, making sure people are safe and supported must always be the priority. The norms and changes for teachers protects not only students but faculty as well.

Temptations and opportunities for unwholesome behavior are reduced.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by just** on Fri Jan 14, 2011 2:49 am

Yes, Chris, i totally agree. We should question all of those things.

I would not agree to the logic that if one f.ex. meditated, and then went and committed a crime, we should all avoid meditation.

I dont think we should close all schools because there is unwholesome behavior in most of them. i dont think any one would advise that. i hope problems can be solved within the system. if not, lets change the system.

If a dentist is convicted of sexual abuse, will it stop you from going to the dentists in the future?

so, yes, i agree that questioning is absolutely necessary, only that in this case it should be focused on ES and the situation at hand, and not on the practices so much, imo.

just

**by just** on Fri Jan 14, 2011 3:50 am

this could probably explain my reasoning:

i am a wannabe zen practitioner. no ES, Z. Backer or any other such will change that.

i am a wannabe good human, no Hitler, Stalin or Idi Amin will change that.

I am a wannabe school teacher. no school shootings, drugs or teenage pregnancy will change that.

so, ill have to seek solutions within these systems, or else pack up and call it quits.  
perhaps im viewing it wrongly. still that is how i see it.  
thnx, chris.  
just

by **Genjo** on Fri Jan 14, 2011 3:56 am

christopher::: wrote:  
Hello Genjo sensei,

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Christopher,

In my view, we all have the Dharma Eye and there is no way to tell which is the true one, or there is no such thing; Dharma Eye is merely a name. I believe it is used to indicate that someone has become an open clear vessel of the Dharma. Anyone claiming to have the True Dharma Eye is not one to be trusted. I do believe that on many occasions Eido Shimano Roshi has served as a clear vessel of the Dharma. I admire his long years of dedication to practice which have helped his eye, voice and actions correspond to the actualization of the Great Vow. Through his efforts many have come to encounter their true nature.

I also deplore his lapses into egocentric actions that have directly harmed members of the Sangha and have repeatedly disturbed the harmony of the Sangha. As Eido Roshi has always taught, his performance and that of everyone else, is far from perfect, always "Not Yet." However, given that his tragic flaws are so intransigent and have not been transformed and transcended to a sufficient extent over all these years of training, I can only conclude that he should desist entirely from training others. Many will say this is long overdue, and given recent events I have no argument with them. Nevertheless, many, including myself, will be forever grateful for his pushing and prodding us to face our true nature and fulfill the Great Vow to the best of our abilities, always knowing and reminding ourselves, "Not Yet."

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

by **Jundo Cohen** on Fri Jan 14, 2011 4:02 am

unsui wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

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I have not as yet met a Zen teacher who has claimed that (s)he is completely enlightened. My teacher, for example, is very aware of where/what/who he is and where his students are coming from, very honest and, for me, very inspiring. I am grateful that I have this opportunity to practice here.

I have no expectations regarding what American Zen teachers might have written to ZSS, but there is a spectrum of aggression, judgmental attitudes and condescension to a degree that I guess I wouldn't have expected. I assume that the sheer volume of letters has illustrated to ZSS and the rest of the world the interest and dismay this case has aroused. However, very few of the teachers that wrote to ZSS have an intimate knowledge of the history of ZSS/DBZ and their workings, and in some cases it seems (IMO) disrespectful and uncompassionate to suggest or demand the solutions that can be read of in the various letters. In regard to very specific letters, I do not see a harmony with the 8-fold path --- and as far as that goes, I still do not quite understand the motivation behind the

Aitken blog and the Shimano archives. Sometimes these both seem to serve some private interest. But maybe this is because of my own limited insight?

Not to say that I am supportive of Eido Shimano or would feel comfortable meeting him after all of this... And after his letter to the NYT, I can definitely see that he will need some kind of help with or practice in reconciling himself to this new reality he faces. I just hope he gets this chance.

I have not heard/read tha Eido Shimano himself has claimed to have attained the true dharma eye. ???

I agree with some of this, but also disagree.

Wrongdoing by a member of the clergy of this nature, length of time and apparent lack of reflection (the NYTimes letter being but the last of years of like responses) needs to be publicly condemned in the strongest terms by other members of their same sect or church. There is a breach of trust involved, and a repugnance to the act when a member of the clergy engages in repeated behavior which sexually and psychologically harms others, then seeks over decades to cover up the conduct. This kind of behavior would be bad enough as harassment (if not worse) if anyone did it, but it is a serious moral breach when by a medical doctor or psychologist causing this kind of harm to patients, or clergy to parishioners, and I do not hesitate to call out such an unselfreflective repeat offender who violates a position of trust. As I stated, this is not merely a simple case of a teacher who had affairs with students, but something much darker.

We have certain people who hold a public trust in this life. A high school teacher who is abusive to students is publicly criticized by peers. Even a ball player who gambles or uses drugs will be publicly suspended and condemned, likewise (ideally, but unfortunately rarely even that) a politician who misuses public funds is, at the very least, publicly censored. A religious teacher who engages in this kind of behavior, for so long and so seemingly callously, should not get away without like public rebuke from other teachers.

What is true is that the main concern here should be to see that the students of ZSS receive some help and guidance in recovering from this and, hopefully, few will be so completely disgusted that they lose the will to continue this way. That is, bottom line, the main concern. I can only wish Roko and Genro the best in the work of recovery that is before them.

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

by **sweepingzen** on Fri Jan 14, 2011 8:18 am

Good post Jundo. You said, "...this is not merely a simple case of a teacher who had affairs with students, but something much darker."

Bingo

<http://www.sweepingzen.com/>

<http://kannonji.blogspot.com/>

<http://sweepingzen.blogspot.com/>

<http://twitter.com/SweepingZen>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sweeping-Zen/69486424980>

sweepingzen

by **unsui** on Fri Jan 14, 2011 9:26 am

Jundo Cohen wrote:

I agree with some of this, but also disagree.

Wrongdoing by a member of the clergy of this nature, length of time and apparent lack of reflection (the NYTimes letter being but the last of years of like responses) needs to be publicly condemned in the strongest terms by other members of their same sect or church. There is a breach of trust involved, and a repugnance to the act when a member of the clergy engages in repeated behavior which sexually and psychologically harms others, then seeks over decades to cover up the conduct. This kind of behavior would be bad enough as harassment (if not worse) if anyone did it, but it is a serious moral breach when by a medical doctor or psychologist causing this kind of harm to patients, or clergy to parishioners, and I do not hesitate to call out such an unselfreflective repeat offender who violates a position of trust. As I stated, this is not merely a simple case of a teacher who had affairs with students, but something much darker.

We have certain people who hold a public trust in this life. A high school teacher who is abusive to students is publicly criticized by peers. Even a ball player who gambles or uses drugs will be publicly suspended and condemned, likewise (ideally, but unfortunately rarely even that) a politician who misuses public funds is, at the very least, publicly censored. A religious teacher who engages in this kind of behavior, for so long and so seemingly callously, should not get away without like public rebuke from other teachers.

I, of course, have had a private reaction to this whole affair, just like everyone else who has followed it. I have examined it in my hours of zazen and tried to digest all the aspects that have been made available to us on the outside. What I am trying to point to, however, is 1. some part of the peer responses appear to me to be harshly judgmental rather than supportive for ZSS, as though the expression of "outrage" and the condemnation was

more important than concern and respect for ZSS, the women and men who have been affected and for Eido Shimano himself; and 2. saying or doing in a public forum affects how the "sayer" and "doer" and are construed, and just as Eido Shimano may have created problems for Zen in the West, I can see that the more unbalanced responses from teachers may also give a skewed picture of Zen or Zen teachers. This is my opinion and nothing else and, just for the record, I am in favor of transparency.

The reason I have reflected so much about this case is that I also have firsthand witnessed the pain that both Eido Shimano's behaviour has caused as well as the frustration that some of the peer responses have caused in someone close to this situation.

Some of the questions that are still unanswered for me (either because I haven't seen them addressed or have a poor memory) are: Of these peers - both teachers and masters - how many have been practicing with Eido Shimano or seen any of these situations while they occurred? How many have heard a so-called "other side" of the stories? How often has Eido Shimano sexually abused students? Why has the focus been on the sexual abuse rather than other aspects of his behaviour?

Jundo Cohen wrote:

What is true is that the main concern here should be to see that the students of ZSS receive some help and guidance in recovering from this and, hopefully, few will be so completely disgusted that they lose the will to continue this way. That is, bottom line, the main concern. I can only wish Roko and Genro the best in the work of recovery that is before them.

Gassho, Jundo

Yes, this is the main concern! And I hope that this help and guidance will be openly forthcoming.

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by just** on Sat Jan 15, 2011 11:09 pm

There is nearly 4000 posts on Genkaku,s blog about the case.

Thank you, Genkaku!

<http://genkaku-again.blogspot.com/2010/02/eido-tai-shimano.html?commentPage=1>  
just

**by So-on Mann** on Sun Jan 16, 2011 9:48 pm



just wrote:

If a dentist is convicted of sexual abuse, will it stop you from going to the dentists in the future?

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

**by christopher:::** on Tue Jan 18, 2011 8:55 am

Recent words from Joan Halifax....

Why Buddhism?: Violations of Trust in the Sexual Sphere: Roshi Joan Halifax

excerpt:

"The response to Eido Shimano's unempathic, self-centered and self-serving communique has been building, nationally and internationally, over December and into January. Buddhists are finally getting it. You have to take a stand, a strong and vocal stand, against the predatory behavior of its religious figures. You have to speak truth to power, and speak it loudly. And you have to act.....

I have been waiting for this moment not just for the many months since the discussions have been happening among Zen teachers. I have been waiting for years for a concerted response to such violations against women in our Buddhist world. Many of us women have brought these issues to the attention of the wider community and have been shamed and shunned over the years. But finally, just before New Years, the flood of letters addressing Eido Shimano's behavior has found its way onto the shores of his Buddhist monastery and the internet. Herein, one of first of those letters, my own.....  
[http://www.upaya.org/news/2011/01/02/op ... o-shimano/](http://www.upaya.org/news/2011/01/02/op...o-shimano/)

It will take a while for us to fully understand why we as Buddhists took so long to act. If Eido Shimano had been a doctor, lawyer, or psychotherapist, there would have been rapid social and legal consequences. But there is something about our religions, whether Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islam, or Buddhist, that disallows us facing the shame associated with sexual violations and the gross gender issues that plague most, if not all, religions.

I understand that letters are easy to write. Less easy are the creation of protections so women (and religious communities) will not be harmed like this ever again. And even more difficult is changing the views, values, and behaviors that made it possible for someone like Eido Shimano and others to engage in such harmful acts for so long. Yet, it

is not only a matter of the sexual violation of women and the painful violation of boundaries that are based in trust between teacher and student, it is as well a matter of the violation of the core of human goodness; for his behavior is also a violation of the entire Buddhist community, as well as the teachings of the Buddha which are uncompromising with respect to the unviability of killing, lying, sexual misconduct, wrongful speech, and consuming intoxicants of body, speech and mind. The northstar of goodness has been lost from sight in the long and recent past, and we are all suffering because we cannot see how deep the wound is to the heart of our world and to the coming generations.

Protections, dialogue, education are all necessary at this time. And a commitment to not forgetting..... as well as vowing to not repeat the mistakes of the past, and to practice a compassion that is clear and brave, liberating and just.

I am aware that these words do not address issues related to the sexual violation of children and men by clergy. I am also aware that power dynamics between women and men are inadequately referenced here, nor are issues related to the exploitation of students by female clergy. What I have written, however, is meant to address specifically the violation of boundaries and trust, whether by force or consent, by Buddhist male religious clergy of their female congregants and students, and a particular case in point that is in the foreground of the Zen Buddhist community in the United States at this time.

As author and Buddhist Natalie Goldberg wrote in her book "The Great Failure": "We are often drawn to teachers who unconsciously mirror our own psychology. None of us are clean. We all make mistakes. It's the repetition of those mistakes and the refusal to look at them that compound the suffering and assure their continuation." It seems as though the time has come for us to take a deep look at our individual and collective psychology..... and to strongly request that those teachers who have crossed the boundaries of trust to engage in sexual intercourse with students and congregants step aside, so the healing of individuals and sanghas can begin."

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by christopher:::** on Tue Jan 18, 2011 9:03 am

Open letter to Joan, on her blog, from Perle Besserman...

Dear Roshi Joan,

It is with mixed feelings that I read your letter: relief and sadness that it has taken this long for a leading woman Zen teacher to speak out. My own revelations about the abuse of women by their male Zen teachers were greeted with stunning silence by women in the greater sangha when, in 2007, Palgrave published my "A New Zen for Women", a good part of which detailed the psychological and sexual abuses proliferating throughout the

Zen community. But silence wasn't the worst part of it; Publisher's Weekly's anonymous reviewer lambasted me for "hanging out the dirty laundry", and many women joined the chorus, attacking me for reviling my enlightened male Zen teachers. Worse yet, when Palgrave's lawyers insisted on vetting my manuscript and removing revelations that were all true but could be "legally damaging," and caused my wonderful editor to leave her job, I fought, but, finding myself alone, with not a single woman's voice raised on my behalf, I gave in and allowed the book to be published in what felt, then, to be a continuation of the ravaging I and so many other women had experienced at the hands of our "enlightened" Zen masters.

So, although this outrage—not unlike that which finally came for the victims of sexual predators in the Catholic church—has come far too late, I say, "Better late than never."

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your very moving statement.

Perle Besserman

Founding Teacher, Princeton Area Zen Group

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by christopher:::** on Tue Jan 18, 2011 9:09 am

Another open letter to Halifax Roshi posted here.

Years ago I sat a Dzog Chen retreat at Daibosatsu. At the end of the retreat a few of us who sat this retreat were invited to have tea with Eido Shimano. It was a somewhat formal Japanese tea gathering but Eido was quite relaxed and candid in his conversation with us..... a few Dharma teachers along with a couple of other notable Dharma people. I was somewhat shocked/taken aback by Eido's allusion to his sexual exploits in New York City. I was also kind of sickened by his somewhat slippery and subtly predatory way of relating to one of the women in our small group.

Very soon after this tea time I was informed that Eido regularly carried on sexual misconduct with his students and other women. I have wondered at times how this could continue to go on... and when something would be done about it. Not being part of the 'Zen world' I didn't keep track of Eido, etc... Reading the articles in this month's Upaya newsletter is the first I've heard about what has been going on regarding Eido despicable and sick behavior. Thanks very much for your outspoken and courageous attention to this situation.

It's so sad and painful that there is such deep misunderstanding regarding the incredibly beautiful and clear teachings of the Buddha.....such clear, compassionate wisdom is directly offered in the teachings... the suttas, and of course the precepts and the Vinaya

Pitaka... with all this rooted in and coming from the Buddha's actual practical experience/the 'practice' of life and living in community with others.

Thanks Joan for speaking out as a Zen woman teacher.

With love to you, Marcia

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Linda Anderson** on Tue Jan 18, 2011 5:07 pm

"Let the future tell the truth"

~ Nikola Tesla

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Shodo** on Thu Jan 20, 2011 3:55 pm

So what's the word...?

Surely the ZSS Board has met by now...

Has Eido Roshi been completely removed, or is he still being deified?

Has the Faith Trust's recommendations been fully implemented, or just piecemeal?

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Shonin** on Thu Jan 20, 2011 4:27 pm

Genjo's latest podcast is very honest and quite revealing I think

I also had a bit of a chat with Genjo Osho as I picked him up from the airport, although I'm not sure if he'd be comfortable with the contents being posted online.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by Shodo** on Thu Jan 20, 2011 4:48 pm

Shonin wrote:

Genjo's latest podcast is very honest and quite revealing I think

I also had a bit of a chat with Genjo Osho as I picked him up from the airport, although I'm not sure if he'd be comfortable with the contents being posted online.

Uhhh Why...?

You mean, after all this... the Shimano Archives, the scandal, the hush hush secrets... that the ZSS Board \*STILL\* wishes to do things in the shadows??

Unbelievable...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Shonin** on Thu Jan 20, 2011 6:08 pm

No. I just mean that it was a private conversation and I don't know whether or not Genjo would want it on the Internet. I'll just say that Genjo Osho and Eido Roshi aren't on the best of terms at this point.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by Shodo** on Thu Jan 20, 2011 6:15 pm

Shonin wrote:

No. I just mean that it was a private conversation and I don't know whether or not Genjo would want it on the Internet. I'll just say that Genjo Osho and Eido Roshi aren't on the best of terms at this point.

Ok.

All I want to know is has the ZSS seperated itself from Eido, and are they implementing ALL of the Faith Trust's recommendations?

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

by **Nonin** on Thu Jan 20, 2011 10:22 pm

Shodo wrote:

Shonin wrote:

No. I just mean that it was a private conversation and I don't know whether or not Genjo would want it on the Internet. I'll just say that Genjo Osho and Eido Roshi aren't on the best of terms at this point.

Ok.

All I want to know is has the ZSS seperated itself from Eido, and are they implementing ALL of the Faith Trust's recommendations?

How about contacting them and asking?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Shodo** on Thu Jan 20, 2011 11:03 pm

How about contacting them and asking?

I'D LOVE TO!

How bout some contact info Rev Nonin?

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Nonin** on Thu Jan 20, 2011 11:09 pm

Shodo wrote:

How about contacting them and asking?

I'D LOVE TO!

How bout some contact info Rev Nonin?

Google Zen Studies Society. All their contact info is there.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Shodo** on Thu Jan 20, 2011 11:18 pm

Awesome!

This is what I sent to both the New York Zendo and to DaiBosatsu.

Seems like you all have had enough time to mull things over... INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW:

1. Has the Zen Studies Society been able to separate itself COMPLETELY from Eido Shimano?

(and if it hasn't, why not?)

2. Is the Zen Studies Society implementing ALL of the Faith Trust Institute's suggestions?

(and if it isn't, why not?)

Thanks

Shodo

Anyone care to make a wager on whether or not I get a response? I will post it here in the unlikely event that I do...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Spike** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 12:21 am

I will wager that if your request becomes Genjo's responsibility, you will get an answer. I would be surprised if Chris or Joe would find the time to provide a substantive reply.

Spike

**by Shodo** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 1:19 am

I will wager that if your request becomes Genjo's responsibility, you will get an answer.

Yes, I would also wager this...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Carol** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 4:23 am



Shodo wrote:

I will wager that if your request becomes Genjo's responsibility, you will get an answer.

Yes, I would also wager this...

I believe Genjo is out of the country leading sesshin.

Edit: Here is Genjo's latest dharma talk on the issue ... outlining some of his process through this mess.

<http://genjo.libsyn.com/peace-of-mind-m4a>

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Jundo Cohen** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 8:07 am

I think the Zen world (at least, those paying attention to such topics) is in a period of denial, and fighting to explain away, all these teachers who have seemingly come off the rails.

Alas, such is the human condition, human beings who are fallible, imperfect, sometimes beautiful and sometimes ugly .... merely human for all their decades of "spiritual practice". That applies to my teacher, your teacher .... everyone's teacher, me and you, probably Gautama Buddha too if met in the flesh. The only difference is the degree and mix of beauty and ugliness manifested by someone, and the ability of a true master to plant and nurture the flowers, avoiding the weeds, within his or her human character.

One can see the whole, deep interconnection of the railroad tracks and stations, that there is no place ultimately to derail to, no final destination on the rail line, that causes have effects on the railroad of life, keeping the coal box well stocked and the engine hot ... knowing well that careless driving has effects, that someone could get hurt if we don't pay attention ... and still be a lousy train driver sometimes, taking the next bend too fast, crashing and burning. (Even worse is the engineer who seems to intentionally, again and again, drive the train over somebody with little reflection and regret ... and the conductors who aid him in the denial).

Ultimately, "enlightenment", and \$1, will get you a small cup of coffee at the McDonalds at the next station. All Aboard!

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

by **Linda Anderson** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 8:45 am

Jundo Cohen wrote:

I think the Zen world (at least, those paying attention to such topics) is in a period of denial, and fighting to explain away, all these teachers who have seemingly come off the rails. How are all these supposedly "enlightened beings" such terrible drivers of the train of their own life?

The only way to explain it, ultimately, is that one can spin off the rails, yet see the deep interconnection of the whole thing, knowing that there is no place to derail to. Still, someone can have pierced that fact, yet be a terrible driver of one's own life train.

Alas, such is the human condition, human beings who are fallible, imperfect, sometimes beautiful and sometimes ugly .... merely human for all their decades of "spiritual practice". That applies to my teacher, your teacher .... everyone's teacher, probably Gautama Buddha too if met in the flesh. The only difference is the degree and mix of beauty and ugliness manifested by someone, and the ability of a true master to plant and nurture the flowers, avoiding the weeds, within his or her human character.

Gassho, Jundo

Perhaps another way to explain it, is as a suchness, is-ness, the tatagatha, etc... not spinning off the rails as if it shouldn't be happening. That seems to present a problem for the idealists, as well as a problem for the fatalists who attribute the mess to the human condition.... ah, if only we were enlightened. All seem to be ideas of separation, oh my.... NOT particularly to your comments, but to the whole mess in 44 pages.

My teacher once said, if you can't be good, just tell the truth. Deep compassion...

I would add that the immensity of the transgression might be beyond Buddhism, that deep psychoanalytic might further insight and healing.

And, also add that I don't have such a dim view of the "TRUE" human that we are capable of. I hear this all the time in Buddhism, we're only human, why? As if enlightenment separates us from our humanity. Seems more like a case of not seeing both the agony and ecstasy, clearly? I am discouraged by those who insist on practice and deny the wisdom and feeling that is flowing through us all the time .... just because they might be too possessed by an ego. A fine line to be sure, but the world is suffering too

much to hold our wisdom back.... or be accused of teaching others when the truth is we teach and walk with each other. The wheat is always sifted from the shaft, we needn't worry.

To fear spinning off the rails or its consequences yet to ignore reality because it's been wrung out of our sense of self by authority figures, invites the zombies in, which is how this mess started... so there are no easy answers.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

by **Shonin** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 11:03 am

To me it speaks of the need for 'character work' in Zen, whether that be psychoanalysis, cultivating mindfulness of one's own states, attachments and reactions or practicing metta meditation.

Zen is focussed not on the content of the personal mind but on the wide perspectives of emptiness and equanimity. These qualities may help with the 'character work' but they are not always enough.  
 Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
 My blog

Shonin

by **Jundo Cohen** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 11:27 am

Shonin wrote:  
 To me it speaks of the need for 'character work' in Zen, whether that be psychoanalysis, cultivating mindfulness of one's own states, attachments and reactions or practicing metta meditation.

Zen is focussed not on the content of the personal mind but on the wide perspectives of emptiness and equanimity. These qualities may help with the 'character work' but they are not always enough.

Well, don't forget that the Precepts are there too, and should be honored as guides to avoiding harms to self and others (not two, by the way). The Precepts are at the heart of Zen Practice, as much as Zazen and all else ... they are Zazen! The Precepts, together with mindfulness of own's own mental states, attachments and reactions should be sufficient to keep most folks on a good course (and we also practice Metta in our Sangha too).

Now, the Precepts as they have come to be practiced in Japan and the West ... recognizing that even clergy can engage in sexual relationships, for example, so long as not "misused" ... are not the problem, and are a very healthy and sufficient, solid basis for Buddhist Practice. The solution is not to insist on strict "celibacy" if a priest does not wish to follow that path (more power and all blessing to those who feel a calling to do so!). But if we are going to have Precepts that allow sexuality, we should condemn members of the Buddhist clergy who are supposedly "Teachers of the Precepts" who abuse the situation and egregiously "misuse" sexuality, doing serious harm to students or others. (Again, I am not talking about someone who simply had, perhaps, an affair with a student, although dangerous enough under the wrong conditions. In many cases, that is just a matter for two grown adults. I am speaking about what appears to be a much darker situation here that was tolerated for decades. )

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by zenophile** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 11:39 pm

Shonin wrote:

Zen is focussed not on the content of the personal mind but on the wide perspectives of emptiness and equanimity.

This is news to me. How do you figure?  
zenophile

**by Carol** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 11:46 pm

zenophile wrote:

Shonin wrote:

Zen is focussed not on the content of the personal mind but on the wide perspectives of emptiness and equanimity.

This is news to me. How do you figure?

I have heard others say something similar ... but it has never been so for me. Practice has always come through the personal and returned to it -- in this particular manifestation of mind. The "knots" I have to work out are a huge part of my practice, they are the "wall" of practice for me ... those unbearable things I must bear in order to realize boundlessness.

I'm not saying this with much clarity, will try again later maybe.  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Anders Honore** on Fri Jan 21, 2011 11:56 pm

Carol wrote:

zenophile wrote:

Shonin wrote:

Zen is focussed not on the content of the personal mind but on the wide perspectives of emptiness and equanimity.

This is news to me. How do you figure?

I have heard others say something similar ... but it has never been so for me. Practice has always come through the personal and returned to it -- in this particular manifestation of mind. The "knots" I have to work out are a huge part of my practice, they are the "wall" of practice for me ... those unbearable things I must bear in order to realize boundlessness.

I'm not saying this with much clarity, will try again later maybe.

I think Richard Baker said it quite well in an interview not to long ago:

Sugata: Are you-like many Buddhist teachers-trying to integrate Buddhism and psychology?

Baker Roshi: No. I am trying to relate them, of course, but not to blend them or mix them up. A lot of people are trying to see Buddhism as a form of psychology or trying to make

Buddhism into psychology. What I am always pointing out is that psychology is very different, that there is no psyche in Buddhism. The practice of perfecting your personality comes very late in Buddhism and even then is not concerned with maturing your personal story-something very important and necessary in our Western identity, our Western individuality, growth, and stability. Buddhism is more of a mind-ology than a psychology. So I am not trying to make a synthesis of Buddhism and psychology. I am trying to show that they work well together when they are seen as separate complementary approaches to our life.

Sugata: Will you say more about the difference?

Baker Roshi: Buddhism does not work with identity being organized through your story. It's important to see that. Buddhism is concerned with developing an interior consciousness, developing your own consciousness-and understanding yourself, others, and the world through that. And that's a different process than using Western psychology to deconstruct and reconstruct your story line. I want to emphasize that Buddhism is badly taught in the West when it doesn't account for the fact that we Westerners really do need to recognize and mature our personal story-and from the beginning of practice, not late in the game. We do great damage to ourselves and to others when offhand and unstudied Buddhist phrases like "don't think," "clear the mind," and "no self" are used to repress our identity and deny relevant thinking. Of course, I feel Buddhism is also badly taught when it is inaccurately turned into a form of psychology or reductionistically framed by current dicta and mandates of psychology. Zen Buddhism in the West must be a path of discovery and exploration of the mystery of being and the world.

Personally, I think practise doesn't necessarily exclude processing these things through the practise. OTOH, I don't think it's necessarily terribly well suited to the task either. There are few tools in Zen Buddhism to address this stuff when you actually enter into the concrete details of it all. All it gives you as instruments are clarity and perseverance in the face of a lot of recurring ugliness and 'dark night of the soul' stuff inside. I reckon for a lot of people, it's fairly easy to decide not to bring these things fully into consciousness (though I am not sure the decision happens all that consciously) and still get a lot out of the practise.

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Anders Honore

by **Linda Anderson** on Sat Jan 22, 2011 7:20 am

Carol wrote:

Edit: Here is Genjo's latest dharma talk on the issue ... outlining some of his process through this mess.

<http://genjo.libsyn.com/peace-of-mind-m4a>

Thanks Carol

Listen, it's that and so much more

I was writing about this to a friend .... and kept typing: Genjoy! ...

As much as he is addressing the Eido issue, I find it deeply healing and insightful for my own illusions and attachments.... the mark of a good teacher is that he speaks to all of us, at the same time. It does transcend the details, the materialistic view... "give yourself the chance to grow and mature".

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Enlightenment - a Soto perspective  
**by Jundo Cohen** on Sat Jan 22, 2011 2:16 pm

The following is a comment on Eido Roshi, Enlightenment, and how an "enlightened teacher" can sometimes come off the rails ...

Jundo Cohen wrote:

Ultimately, "enlightenment", and \$1, will get you a small cup of coffee at the McDonalds at the next station. All Aboard!

Somebody wrote to ask me if, by the above, I meant that there was no "enlightenment", or I was saying it was of no import (as Soto teachers sometimes are wrongly accused of teaching and advocating) or that "enlightenment" is not worth a hill of beans (coffee or otherwise).

Of course not!

Enlightenment is as Real as Real is Real ... holding all Time and Space in every drop!  
The Heart of the Zen Venture remains, and has always been, the timeless achievement of

Enlightenment! A Priceless Treasure beyond Measure, like a Picasso Painting we realize was (as the jewel in the Lotus Sutra) up our sleeve all along!

But, like many a priceless treasure, it has its place. It is much like going into McDonalds with nothing but a Picasso painting and trying to buy a coffee and small fries with it. The fellow behind the register will likely have trouble to make change (with the change-less? ).

My point was just that people used to believe (many still do) that being "Enlightened", having a "Kensho" or many, whatever, cured once and for all all psychological defects and horrible human tendencies. I think it helps free us from the worst of the human condition in most cases (and most Zen teachers I know who, after years of this practice, are generally kind, gentle, good folks), but certainly it is possible ... as the instant case demonstrates ... to have had much insight and yet much weakness or a serious defect at once.

In our Soto way (others can have their own) ... life, and enlightenment, is the constant painting of a picture. It is far more than any blank canvas. It is far more than a masterpiece, done once and for all and ready to hang in a museum. Nor is it something one sees, as if one saw the painting hanging on a wall and is thus done. Nor is it simply a matter of seeing that the image on the canvas is a fiction, or as real as real can be.

Rather, one can paint a master stroke, then an ugly stroke, in each here and now instant stroke ... one building on the last. It is an ongoing painting, a total composition, stroke by stroke, continuing so long as we live. The true "master" tends to the masterful strokes and compositions, rather than the hack or low or damaging.

Something like that.

Gassho, Jundo

Last edited by Jundo Cohen on Sun Jan 23, 2011 4:19 am, edited 8 times in total.  
 Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by Shonin** on Sun Jan 23, 2011 7:31 pm

Carol wrote:

zenophile wrote:

Shonin wrote:

Zen is focussed not on the content of the personal mind but on the wide perspectives of emptiness and equanimity.



This is news to me. How do you figure?

I have heard others say something similar ... but it has never been so for me. Practice has always come through the personal and returned to it -- in this particular manifestation of mind. The "knots" I have to work out are a huge part of my practice, they are the "wall" of practice for me ... those unbearable things I must bear in order to realize boundlessness.

I'm not saying this with much clarity, will try again later maybe.

In zazen we're faced with our 'stuff' all the time. As practitioners we do have the opportunity to really see it and face it. And some Zen teachers encourage this, but usually the emphasis is 'don't get into the content, just let it go' which I suspect often means ignoring the content - not even seeing our own personal attachments etc in our keen-ness to transcend them.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

by **Carol** on Sun Jan 23, 2011 10:47 pm

Shonin wrote:

In zazen we're faced with our 'stuff' all the time. As practitioners we do have the opportunity to really see it and face it. And some Zen teachers encourage this, but usually the emphasis is 'don't get into the content, just let it go' which I suspect often means ignoring the content - not even seeing our own personal attachments etc in our keen-ness to transcend them.

Yes, I agree. From what I've heard zen is often approached/taught this way. I think this is a mistake -- one that Lou Nordstrom talked about in the NY Times Article about his training, and filling in the gaps years later. We have a long topic on it here. Interestingly, his teacher was Eido Shimano.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

by **Shonin** on Mon Jan 24, 2011 8:24 am

Carol wrote:

Yes, I agree. From what I've heard zen is often approached/taught this way. I think this is a mistake -- one that Lou Nordstrom talked about in the NY Times Article about his training, and filling in the gaps years later. We have a long topic on it here. Interestingly, his teacher was Eido Shimano.

Yes, Louis Nordstrom's story isn't far from my thoughts either when I talk about this.

Some of the 'Buddhism is not therapy' talk that comes up here and other places also might point in that direction too, attempting to draw as it does an absolute line between the transcendent 'Great Matter' of Buddhism and people's personal issues, attachments, foibles and 'knots'.

I think that the advice to not get *\*involved\** in the content of the mental/emotional phenomena that arise is sound - as it will lead to daydreaming and identification. However, there is a big difference between 'not seeing'/ 'not deeply knowing' and 'not getting involved'.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

by **Shodo** on Tue Jan 25, 2011 4:39 pm

So... Writing to the ZSS board so far has been a huge waste of time.

I wrote the Zen Studies Society and DaiBosatsu (5 days ago on the 20th,) with 2 simple questions:

1. Has the Zen Studies Society been able to separate itself COMPLETELY from Eido Shimano?

(and if it hasn't, why not?)

2. Is the Zen Studies Society implementing ALL of the Faith Trust Institute's suggestions?

(and if it isn't, why not?)

As of yet, there has been no response from DaiBosatsu...

However, I DID get a response from the Zen Studies Society...!

Dear Shodo,

Thank you for your interest in our practice.

You have reached the office of New York Zendo Shobo-ji.

From the sound of your questions, it seems like you might be trying to reach the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors. They can be reached at: zssboard@gmail.com.

Best wishes,  
New York Zendo Shobo-ji

So I quickly replied:

Thanks for the email address...

So I take you to mean that you yourself don't have answers to those two questions - even though you are basically a member of the Zen Studies Society?

You mean to tell me that nobody has told you anything...?

It seems strange that you cant answer these two fairly simple questions...

Now, as of yet, there has been no response again from the Zen Studies Society.  
(Also, I did write the Zen Studies Society's Board... No response)

Still not a very open place it seems to me.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by moon face buddha** on Tue Jan 25, 2011 8:48 pm

Wow, 5 whole days.

I get 14 days to answer correspondence at work, and they are paying me

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by moon face buddha** on Tue Jan 25, 2011 9:23 pm

This thread does raise an issue for me, which is how much responsibility the pupil has.

Now, before I continue, I in no way at all wish to diminish the suffering of those who have been harmed by the actions of this teacher. Nor do I in any way say that they were in any way to blame.

With those caveats, I do wonder if people coming to zen buddhism or buddhism generally have a responsibility to do some basic research.

[viewtopic.php?f=64&t=6011&p=82246#p82246](#)

If you don't know about, or understand, the 5 precepts then how can you make an informed decision about the group/teacher you are sitting with.  
If you don't know about, or understand, the basic teachings of Gotama, how can you know if what you are being served is real or faux buddhism.

For every legitimate zen/buddhist teacher out there we have to contend with the Edo Shonin's and Sangharakshita's. Zen stories seem exotic, riddles within riddles that only Masters can understand, and the ethical element at the core of Gotama's teaching is lost. If you lack this grounding then what do you do when faced with the corpse of Nansens cat?

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by Shodo** on Tue Jan 25, 2011 11:48 pm

moon face buddha wrote:  
Wow, 5 whole days.

I get 14 days to answer correspondence at work, and they are paying me

Not enough time you think?

5 days, 14 days, 30 days... they ain't going to write me back - but if they do, I will let you know.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

by **Genjo** on Wed Jan 26, 2011 10:03 pm

Shodo wrote:

Awesome!

This is what I sent to both the New York Zendo and to DaiBosatsu.

Seems like you all have had enough time to mull things over... INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW:

1. Has the Zen Studies Society been able to separate itself COMPLETELY from Eido Shimano?

(and if it hasn't, why not?)

2. Is the Zen Studies Society implementing ALL of the Faith Trust Institute's suggestions?

(and if it isn't, why not?)

Thanks

Shodo

Anyone care to make a wager on whether or not I get a response? I will post it here in the unlikely event that I do...

Dear All,

I am speaking on behalf of myself and not for the ZSS Board. I have just written the Board again saying that we are long overdue for an update to our Sangha and the public. We have made much progress, but things are far from settled. I'm sorry to say there are many legal complications going back to a 1995 agreement between the ZSS Board and Eido Roshi. I know the Board has been hoping that a more settled resolution would be forthcoming any day and then they could make a major announcement that would be very comprehensive. I believe they should agree to release what has been accomplished so far with or without further agreement from Eido Roshi; however, so far there is not consensus with this view. I expect a Board statement to be released by Monday at the latest, but I fervently hope sooner than this.

I apologize for the delay, I know many want and need to know.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by sweepingzen** on Thu Jan 27, 2011 4:05 am

Thank you for your update, Genjo Osho. I think everyone appreciates your openness throughout this whole ordeal.

Adam

<http://www.sweepingzen.com/>

<http://kannonji.blogspot.com/>

<http://sweepingzen.blogspot.com/>

<http://twitter.com/SweepingZen>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sweeping-Zen/69486424980>

sweepingzen

**by moon face buddha** on Thu Jan 27, 2011 9:46 pm

Genjo wrote:

I'm sorry to say there are many legal complications going back to a 1995 agreement between the ZSS Board and Eido Roshi.

Genjo

Even Monks have Householder problems.

It suits today the weak and base,  
Whose minds are fixed on self and place  
To cringe before the rich man's frown,  
And haul the sacred emblem down.

No easy solutions.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by Anders Honore** on Thu Jan 27, 2011 10:48 pm

Genjo wrote:

Dear All,

I am speaking on behalf of myself and not for the ZSS Board. I have just written the Board again saying that we are long overdue for an update to our Sangha and the public. We have made much progress, but things are far from settled. I'm sorry to say there are many legal complications going back to a 1995 agreement between the ZSS Board and Eido Roshi. I know the Board has been hoping that a more settled resolution would be forthcoming any day and then they could make a major announcement that would be very comprehensive. I believe they should agree to release what has been accomplished so far with or without further agreement from Eido Roshi; however, so far there is not consensus with this view. I expect a Board statement to be released by Monday at the latest, but I fervently hope sooner than this.

I apologize for the delay, I know many want and need to know.

Genjo

Dear Genjo,

Thank you for finding the time to respond. It can not be easy juggling so many balls at the same time whilst having to service the cries for what should be said, with what can be said and what is said.

I wish you all the peace and happiness in the world throughout this and afterwards as well.

rgds

Anders

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

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Anders Honore

by **Nonin** on Sat Jan 29, 2011 11:30 pm

Genjo Marinello recently posted this podcast on his website and also forwarded it to me and a few other Zen teachers. It's about his working with the Eido Shimano conundrum. I thought that it was excellent, so I'm passing in on. If you are interested, have a listen.

It can be found at: <http://genjo.libsyn.com/>

Or in iTunes via:

[http://itunes.apple.com/podcast/chobo-j ... id78149892](http://itunes.apple.com/podcast/chobo-j...id78149892)

If neither of these work for you try:

[http://home.comcast.net/~zenquaker/Mkn41\\_01\\_11.mp3](http://home.comcast.net/~zenquaker/Mkn41_01_11.mp3)

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Shodo** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 5:16 pm

I listened to Genjo's talk (Case 41, Bodhidharma's Piece of Mind)... Here are my thoughts on it.

This situation... this 40+ year long train wreck is not about me.

It is not an opportunity for me to solve some sort of koan, squaring the circle between Eido's supposed deep insight "into the depths" and his sexual predations... I have no "Great Doubt" about him - or what needs to be done in regards to him...

Such calls, to me, for people not to leave because they would have missed some kind of opportunity to have some insight into this whole situation... well... I will leave that to Genjo if that is what he wishes - when he has his answer to this koan he is free to post it here on the forums and save everyone the trouble.

It is Monday, and many people are waiting for the announcement from the ZSS Board...

"He has always gotten away with it..."

"Nobody has ever told him "NO!"

It is Monday, let's hope that you and the ZSS have the strength to tell him NO, and separate Eido from the Zen Studies Society, and implement the Faith Trust's suggestions to the letter.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.



Shodo

by **Jok\_Hae** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 7:37 pm

Shodo wrote:

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Such calls, to me, for people not to leave because they would have missed some kind of opportunity to have some insight into this whole situation... well... I will leave that to Genjo if that is what he wishes - when he has his answer to this koan he is free to post it here on the forums and save everyone the trouble.

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"He has always gotten away with it..."

"Nobody has ever told him "NO!"

It is Monday, let's hope that you and the ZSS have the strength to tell him NO, and separate Eido from the Zen Studies Society, and implement the Faith Trust's suggestions to the letter.

The unfortunate reality is that when a pound of flesh is extracted, it provides no sustenance.

Good luck and thanks for practicing,

Keith

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

by **Shodo** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 8:09 pm

Keith said:

The unfortunate reality is that when a pound of flesh is extracted, it provides no sustenance.

LoL!

That may be so... If I wished to eat said pound of flesh...

To go one further with your analogy - The fortunate reality is that when a pound of gangrenous flesh is extracted, you just might save a life.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

by **Jok\_Hae** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 8:19 pm

Shodo wrote:

Keith said:

The unfortunate reality is that when a pound of flesh is extracted, it provides no sustenance.

LoL!

That may be so... If I wished to eat said pound of flesh...

To go one further with your analogy - The fortunate reality is that when a pound of gangrenous flesh is extracted, you just might save a life.

Perhaps.

This may or may not be pertinent:

One day, Man Gong Sunim was walking into town with Hae Am Sunim, who at that time was also a Zen Master, a junior Zen Master. Along the path they passed by a pond where a boy had set up a little stand, much as when you drive down the street in your neighborhood and there will be a little lemonade stand. Except, this boy had set up a little frog stand. What he had done was catch a number of frogs and put a little string around their legs tethering them to the ground. Then he would sell them to passersby. Hae Am Sunim saw this and right away he went over to the boy, took out some money, and bought all of the frogs. Reaching down he undid all of the strings tying the frogs. Immediately the frogs jumped back -PLUKE! PLUKE! PLUKE! -- into the pond. Then they were all very happy, just sitting there, bulging eyes looking up. Returning to the path where Man Gong Sunim was waiting, he said, "Oh, I just saved those frogs! I bought them all and released them."

Then Man Gong Sunim said, "Yes, those frogs are very happy, but you are a devil."

Hae Am Sunim was quite taken aback, "Master, why do you call me a devil? I just saved those frogs from suffering."

"You said, 'I saved those frogs.' You have 'I,' so you are a devil."

From <http://www.kwanumzen.org/pzc/newsletter/v03n09-1992-may.html>

K

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Shodo** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 8:34 pm

...Then Man Gong Sunim said, "Yes, those frogs are very happy, but you are a devil."

Hae Am Sunim was quite taken aback, "Master, why do you call me a devil? I just saved those frogs from suffering."

"You said, 'I saved those frogs.' You have 'I,' so you are a devil..."

point taken...

But for me... in that situation... I would still have to argue that it is better to be a Devil that does, rather than a Buddha who does not.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Jok\_Hae** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 8:41 pm

Shodo wrote:

...Then Man Gong Sunim said, "Yes, those frogs are very happy, but you are a devil."

Hae Am Sunim was quite taken aback, "Master, why do you call me a devil? I just saved those frogs from suffering."

"You said, 'I saved those frogs.' You have 'I,' so you are a devil..."

point taken...

But for me... in that situation... I would still have to argue that it is better to be a Devil that does, rather than a Buddha who does not.

Fair enough..I don't think inaction is the point of the story. Just being mindful of our motivations, that's all.

I hope you (and everyone connected with this situation) eventually get some kind of satisfactory result. I am afraid that won't really ever happen, though. What then?

K

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Shodo** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 8:52 pm

Fair enough..I don't think inaction is the point of the story. Just being mindful of our motivations, that's all.

Yep yep... All I was meaning was even if your motivations fall short, it is still worth doing the right thing.

I hope you (and everyone connected with this situation) eventually get some kind of satisfactory result. I am afraid that won't really ever happen, though. What then?

I also am pessimistic...

If in the end, no satisfactory result is forthcoming, nothing will change for me... as I will be doing the same thing since the early 90's.

I will continue to shun the place, and warn anyone within earshot that DBZ, the ZSS and Eido are poison.

That's just me though.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by moon face buddha** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 9:05 pm

Shodo wrote:

I listened to Genjo's talk (Case 41, Bodhidharma's Piece of Mind)... Here are my thoughts on it.

This situation... this 40+ year long train wreck is not about me.

I understood Genjo's talk to be a warning to ALL of us not to fall in to the same delusions as Eido, that however good we think our practice is, however full we think our understanding is, we too can be full of delusions if we refuse to acknowledge them and face them.

So in a very real sense it IS about you and me and bob and mary and buddha etc.  
Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

**by Shodo** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 9:27 pm

11 Days Moonfacebuddha... is that long enough yet?

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Jok\_Hae** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 9:39 pm

Shodo wrote:

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I will continue to shun the place, and warn anyone within earshot that DBZ, the ZSS and Eido are poison.

That's just me though.

That's what "I saved the frogs" is about.

K

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Shodo** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 9:40 pm

That's what "I saved the frogs" is about.

LOL

That... was seriously stinky...

Like super-zen stinky.

If only I had found a way to communicate without the use of personal pronouns.... I'd be a buddha

Last edited by Shodo on Mon Jan 31, 2011 9:42 pm, edited 1 time in total.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Jok\_Hae** on Mon Jan 31, 2011 9:41 pm

Shodo wrote:

That's what "I saved the frogs" is about.

LOL

That... was seriously stinky...

Like super-zen stinky.

You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

**by Shodo** on Tue Feb 01, 2011 6:05 am

I expect a Board statement to be released by Monday at the latest, but I fervently hope sooner than this.

12:04... Tuesday.

I would be lying if I said I was not disappointed.

(but i would also be lying if I said that I was surprised...)

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

by **Carol** on Tue Feb 01, 2011 6:20 pm

One thing to bear in mind is the huge legal problem Shimano poses for ZSS. He has a pension contract that provides a substantial retirement income and housing for life for both himself and his wife. This is not an employment contract -- which could be terminated "for cause." A pension contract is different, as he has already "performed" his part of the bargain by serving as Abbot for many years. Breaking such a contract is very difficult, if not impossible. The fact that his sexual misconduct was well-known by the ZSS board in 1995 when the contract was entered into makes it even harder.

So, negotiations are no doubt in progress. Speaking prematurely about those negotiations could seriously damage ZSS's ability to come to terms with Shimano. That is frustrating for everyone who wants him swiftly out of the picture. I'm a lawyer, and I've served on boards of directors under public pressure to "do something" while difficult and serious negotiations were ongoing. So, I know something about the limitations and restrictions on what the board can say until the negotiations are completed.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

by **unsui** on Tue Feb 01, 2011 6:49 pm

Carol wrote:

One thing to bear in mind is the huge legal problem Shimano poses for ZSS. He has a pension contract that provides a substantial retirement income and housing for life for both himself and his wife. This is not an employment contract -- which could be terminated "for cause." A pension contract is different, as he has already "performed" his part of the bargain by serving as Abbot for many years. Breaking such a contract is very difficult, if not impossible. The fact that his sexual misconduct was well-known by the ZSS board in 1995 when the contract was entered into makes it even harder.

So, negotiations are no doubt in progress. Speaking prematurely about those negotiations could seriously damage ZSS's ability to come to terms with Shimano. That is frustrating for everyone who wants him swiftly out of the picture. I'm a lawyer, and I've served on boards of directors under public pressure to "do something" while difficult and serious negotiations were ongoing. So, I know something about the limitations and restrictions on what the board can say until the negotiations are completed.

Thank-you, Carol!

This reality is within a specific framework that can not be ignored.  
 May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together  
 may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

by Nonin on Tue Feb 01, 2011 7:35 pm

What was most important is that Eido Shimano no longer teach, and that has been accomplished. As Carol has pointed out, previous agreements with Eido Shimano have to be resolved, and some things have to be negotiated. Divorces take time, especially messy ones, and this one is particularly messy. Once the preliminary phase of this on-going process is resolved, I'm sure that the ZSS Board will issue a statement.

Further actions by the ZSS Board and Roko Shinge Roshi's further actions will will determine the future of ZSS. What the organization needs needs most is the time and space to heal and a process by which healing can be facilitated.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by genkaku** on Tue Feb 01, 2011 9:29 pm

Perhaps a reprint of Jundo Cohen's letter to AZTA and subsequently Zen Studies Society would be appropriate here:

... A letter from Jundo Cohen, Treeleaf Zendo, Japan:

Dear All,



I will briefly speak as a newer member of this organization, junior to many people here whom I respect whose opinions may differ. For the first time since joining this body, I am ashamed.

This is not a normal case of a teacher who, perchance, had an affair with a student, or a drinking problem, or bought himself a BMW with Sangha funds, or other like personal or minor fault. Nor is it something that happened over the short term or recently.

Instead, this is the story of a teacher who engaged in case upon case of serial sexual abuse for decades, all while his Sangha and students looked the other way and covered it up, all while many here knew yet chose to do nothing. I know that Mr. Shimano is too just a victim of greed and ignorance, the real culprits here.

However, at the same time, a teacher of the Precepts who intentionally acts again and again, over decades, to harm the innocent, showing little if any remorse in case after case, repeating the harm over decades with no self-reflection ... is a kind of monster in our midst. Shame on us for not decrying this in the strongest terms, allowing any kind of "honorable exit".

Thus the calls of "give them more time to work it out" are about 10 years too late. They have had years, and chance upon chance. To "give them more time" and allow a "graceful exit" for Mr. Shimano is not the right answer here. He must be condemned by all of us in the strongest and most unambiguous terms, we must deny him any respect (his years of service do not outweigh the damage done here), the members of this organization must denounce the years of cover up, we should publicly admit our own role in not doing enough. Moreover, we must now publicly turn our backs on Mr. Shimano. Furthermore, we must turn our backs on the ZSS ... treat them as *persona non grata* ... unless and until they exhibit real reforms.

If it were a case in which such events had happened but once or twice, or nobody in the organization knew, or there had not been cover up after cover up for YEARS then my opinion would be different. However, this is our moral equivalent of the child abuse scandals plaguing the Catholic Church. If we allow Mr. Shimano to make a graceful exit, if we allow things to be papered over again ...our own shame is compounded.

Our students are watching. Right now, opinion I am hearing among people observing is that the "teachers of the Precepts" look like a bunch of hypocrites trying to protect their own.

Shame on all of us.

Gassho, Jundo

Shamelessness, no matter how cozy the words, heals nothing.  
genkaku

by **Shonin** on Tue Feb 01, 2011 9:50 pm

Those directly hurt by this matter, have emotional wounds to heal and that will take time. The rest of us onlookers do not. Rather than looking back to what can't be changed and accusing others, why not look forward and take positive steps and make positive contributions, supporting the ZSS in it's efforts?

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

by **Seigen** on Tue Feb 01, 2011 10:24 pm

T R U S T

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

by **Nonin** on Tue Feb 01, 2011 11:07 pm

Shonin wrote:

Those directly hurt by this matter, have emotional wounds to heal and that will take time. The rest of us onlookers do not. Rather than looking back to what can't be changed and accusing others, why not look forward and take positive steps and make positive contributions, supporting the ZSS in it's efforts?

I agree wholeheartedly. Eido Shimano is no longer teaching and is not in residence at either Dai Bosatsu or Shobo-ji. I trust that Roko, Genjo, and the rest of the board is working and will work diligently to get ZSS on the right track and to facilitate a fruitful healing process.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

by **Shodo** on Wed Feb 02, 2011 7:13 pm

Carol said:

One thing to bear in mind is the huge legal problem Shimano poses for ZSS. He has a pension contract that provides a substantial retirement income and housing for life for both himself and his wife. This is not an employment contract -- which could be terminated "for cause." A pension contract is different, as he has already "performed" his part of the bargain by serving as Abbot for many years. Breaking such a contract is very difficult, if not impossible. The fact that his sexual misconduct was well-known by the ZSS board in 1995 when the contract was entered into makes it even harder.

Genjo said:

I'm sorry to say there are many legal complications going back to a 1995 agreement between the ZSS Board and Eido Roshi.

I guess this is what Fran Perririllo was talking about in her letter of resignation to the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors in 1995...

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1995 ... \\_Board.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1995..._Board.pdf)

“I have an issue with the recent decision on Eido Roshi's and Aiho san's pension plans.”

“..the first step should have been to present a detailed financing plan to the Board. No one even knows how the Society is going to pay for the pensions going forward. Raiding the endowment fund, if necessary, hardly constitutes a coherent plan.”

“I am curious how we are able to offer a retirement plan more generous than even a CEO in this country is able to negotiate. Virtually no one receives more than 40-50% of their current salary in retirement benefits. It is my opinion that the Society cannot afford to be this generous since these obligations threaten the long-term financial viability of the organization.”

You guys certainly did shoot yourselves in the collective feet back then...

It's amazing to me... that rather than feel an ounce of concern for all of the chaos he's caused (We have yet to see an explanation from him for his December letter)... Eido Shimano, a "simple Buddhist monk", is nickle and diming... i'll bet he would rather see the Zen Studies Society bleed out before letting go of all that money...

What a fellah.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Carol** on Wed Feb 02, 2011 8:58 pm

Moderator's Note: Yesterday a number of posts disappeared from the forum for no reason known to us. Just now a number of posts disappeared from this topic. Maybe a glitch, maybe hackers. We are investigating to see what we can find out about the cause. Sorry for the inconvenience/puzzlement.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by Shodo** on Wed Feb 02, 2011 9:20 pm

That is disturbing Carol...

Please let us know what you find out.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by JVC108** on Wed Feb 02, 2011 10:11 pm

Someone on a thread on a blog that has also been following this Shimano business from various angles has asked that this particular message be reposted back to this forum.

by simpleton on Tue Feb 01, 2011 11:49 pm

I believe Jundo's post stated the situation very clearly.

Whatever Shimano and ZSS are teaching & practising it isn't Buddhism.

Anyway I'm going to follow Jundo's advice. I'm turning my back on ZSS and all those associated with them.

So I'm done with this thread.

Furthermore I'm done with this forum.

simpleton

Posts: 37

Joined: Sun Feb 21, 2010 6:04 pm

JVC108

**by christopher:::** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 12:43 am

I had left the thread up last night. If it doesn't come back here's the posts from after simpleton...

Postby Genjo on Wed Feb 02, 2011 3:10 pm

Shodo wrote:

I expect a Board statement to be released by Monday at the latest, but I fervently hope sooner than this.

12:04... Tuesday.

I would be lying if I said I was not disappointed.

(but i would also be lying if I said that I was surprised...)

In fact the ZSS board did release their newest statement on Monday, Jan. 31st, 2011. However, unlike blogs, it must go through various channels to be sent first by email to active ZSS sangha. Once this has been accomplished, I am sure it will zip around the internet at lightening speed. I too hoped it would be circulating by now, Tuesday evening, but I haven't received my copy yet.

Genjo

Postby ed blanco on Wed Feb 02, 2011 10:49 pm

Why Buddhism? Violations of Trust in the Sexual Sphere [guest post by Roshi Joan Halifax]

[The original version of this post appeared on The Jizo Chronicles]

January 3, 2011

tags: Eido Shimano scandal, Roshi Joan Halifax

by Maia Duerr

This is a guest post from Roshi Joan Halifax, founding Abbot of Upaya Zen Center

We all know that rape as a weapon of war has been used against women and nations for thousands of years. Rape, forceable seduction, seduction through trickery, power and domination, seduction through loneliness or delusion have also been part of most, if not all, religions. Yes, if you want to demoralize a nation, rape its women, its daughters, its sisters, its wives..... And if you want to deepen the shadow of any religion, turn wisdom and compassion into hypocrisy, and stand by, conflict averse, as its male clergy disrespects women, has sex with female congregants, dominates women, abuses women, degrades or rapes them.

But as a Zen Buddhist priest, as a woman, I have to ask, why my religion? Why Buddhism? This is not what the Buddha taught. I like Buddhism; I love my practice of meditation; Buddha's teachings are practical; they make sense to me. But for too long in the West, and I am sure in the East, gross misogyny has existed in the Buddhist world, a misogyny so deep that it has allowed the disrespect and abuse of women and nuns in our own time, and not only throughout history, and not only in Asia. The misogynistic abuse is not only in terms of the usual gender issues related to who has responsibility and authority (women usually don't have much if any), but it is as well expressed through mistreatment of women, through sexual boundary violations of women, and the psychological abuse of women.

Since 1964, according to the late Robert Aitken Roshi's archive, a Buddhist teacher, Eido Shimano, has been engaged in sexual misconduct with a number of his female students; sometimes the sex was forceable; sometimes crude, tricky, and coercive. And it has been ongoing, for more than forty-five years. Many Buddhist practitioners have known about this for a long time, although the late Aitken's archive was closed until just before his death in the fall of this year. What was this silence about, I have asked? Why did we not act? Why are we, as Buddhists, so conflict averse?

On August 21, 2010, the NYTimes published an article, Sex Scandal has U.S. Buddhists Looking Within. This article publicly surfaced Eido Shimano's long pattern of sexual violation. Sadly, On December 1, the principle figure in this article wrote a rebuttal, basically denying his culpability and blaming the NYTimes for dysinformation. The Times reporter, Mark Oppenheimer, responded to this self-serving letter from Eido Shimano.

I think that this rebuttal by Eido Shimano was the straw that broke the camel's back for many of us Buddhists. We were incredulous on reading Eido Shimano's communique to the Times' reporter. Naively, we had thought that this problem was taken care of; the

teacher was full of remorse and had resigned as abbot and board member of the institution that he founded; and the institution was committed to addressing this issue and redressing the ills suffered by the women involved and the wider community.

But we were wrong..... and I assure you, this is not the first time we have been wrong about similar violations.....

Fortunately, the response to Eido Shimano's unempathic, self-centered and self-serving communique has been building, nationally and internationally, over December and into January. Buddhists are finally getting it. You have to take a stand, a strong and vocal stand, against the predatory behavior of its religious figures. You have to speak truth to power, and speak it loudly. And you have to act.....

I have been waiting for this moment not just for the many months since the discussions have been happening among Zen teachers. I have been waiting for years for a concerted response to such violations against women in our Buddhist world. Many of us women who have brought these issues to the attention of the wider community and have been shamed and shunned over the years. But finally, just before New Years, the flood of letters addressing Eido Shimano's behavior has found its way onto the shores of his Buddhist monastery and the internet. Herein, one of first of those letters, my own.

It will take a while for us to fully understand why we as Buddhists took so long to act. If Eido Shimano had been a doctor, lawyer, or psychotherapist, there would have been rapid social and legal consequences. But there is something about our religions, whether Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islam, or Buddhist, that disallows us facing the shame associated with sexual violations and the gross gender issues that plague most, if not all, religions.

I understand that letters are easy to write. Less easy are the creation of protections so women (and religious communities) will not be harmed like this ever again. And even more difficult is changing the views, values, and behaviors that made it possible for someone like Eido Shimano and others to engage in such harmful acts for so long. Yet, it is not only a matter of the sexual violation of women and the painful violation of boundaries that are based in trust between teacher and student, it is as well a matter of the violation of the core of human goodness; for his behavior is also a violation of the entire Buddhist community, as well as the teachings of the Buddha which are uncompromising with respect to the unviability of killing, lying, sexual misconduct, wrongful speech, and consuming intoxicants of body, speech and mind. The northstar of goodness has been lost sight of in the long and recent past, and we are all suffering because we cannot see how deep the wound is to the heart of our world and to the coming generations.

Protections, dialogue, education are all necessary at this time. And a commitment to not forgetting..... as well as vowing to not repeat the mistakes of the past, and to practice a compassion that is clear and brave, liberating and just.

I am aware that these words do not address issues related to the sexual violation of children and men by clergy. I am also aware that power dynamics between women and men are inadequately referenced here, nor are issues related to the exploitation of students by female clergy. What I have written, however, is meant to address specifically the violation of boundaries and trust, whether by force or consent, by Buddhist male religious clergy of their female congregants and students, and a particular case in point that is in the foreground of the Zen Buddhist community in the United States at this time.

As author and Buddhist Natalie Goldberg wrote in her book *The Great Failure*: “We are often drawn to teachers who unconsciously mirror our own psychology. None of us are clean. We all make mistakes. It’s the repetition of those mistakes and the refusal to look at them that compound the suffering and assure their continuation.”

It seems as though the time has come for us to take a deep look at our individual and collective psychology..... and to strongly request that those teachers who have crossed the boundaries of trust to engage in sexual intercourse with students and congregants step aside, so the healing of individuals and sanghas can begin.

Found this today on Zen Peacekeepers blog. I hope it's appropriate to place it here.

Shonin wrote:

A thoughtful article. There have now been several abuse scandals in American Zen in its fairly short history. I think this may be the most serious. "Why?" is a very good question if we are to prevent this or at least reduce the chances of it happening again. I don't think this is a special problem with this lineage. I suspect it is something that has the potential to happen at almost any sangha in Western Zen under the right (wrong?) conditions.

The factors that come to mind are:

A tendency to see Zen teachers as infallible, necessarily unselfish and morally beyond reproach

A tendency to avoid conflict, to confuse acceptance/nonjudgementalism with passiveness or subservience

Independent temples have no one to answer to ('no one to say 'no'')

Possible confusion about concepts like 'emptiness' misinterpreted to allow ambiguity over inappropriate behaviour

Institutionalised hierarchy - directly stated and implied by behaviour and dress - reinforcing 1. and 2



If the head of the temple has great power and status and no one to answer to. He (or she) had better be benevolent otherwise there will be abuse of that power. But there is simply no guarantee of that - even, as we can see, in someone who has practiced for a very long time.

And i said...

Well stated, Shonin.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Carol** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 12:46 am

Thanks, Christopher:::

That helps. But there are a number of posts missing from other parts of the forum as well that may be gone forever.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

**by christopher:::** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 12:48 am

In situations like this i always think of sand castles...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Jundo Cohen** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 3:01 am

by simpleton on Tue Feb 01, 2011 11:49 pm

I believe Jundo's post stated the situation very clearly.  
Whatever Shimano and ZSS are teaching & practising it isn't Buddhism.

Anyway I'm going to follow Jundo's advice. I'm turning my back on ZSS and all those associated with them

Hi,

Apparently some posts were erased by a technical glitch, so I would like to repost what I wrote yesterday.

I now believe, based on what I am hearing from those around the matter, that now a little time should be given to work out the last stages of this messy "divorce", and also to allow some healing at ZSS. The situation has changed and is different from a few weeks ago in that real and effective steps are being taken. Now, they need a little space at ZSS. Of course, we all expect an honest and open report on these measures to come soon, and details of the appropriate measures having been taken ... but, for now, a little time is merited.

What is more, I never meant, nor could I mean, that anyone should "turn their backs" on the innocent general members of ZSS. That would be wrong and stupid to do. I meant (and still believe) that, if no effective measures were taken, then the community would be right to "turn our backs" on the leaders of ZSS for their inaction based on the weight of this particular scandal. However, as of now, I hear from Nonin and others with information on this, that such measures are being taken. I believe we will hear about them soon.

As I said, I believe that the weight of this particular scandal is not a private affair, but of a degree that impacts the whole community. This scandal is of such a degree that it effects the entire community, and all teachers and students should speak out. It must not be allowed to fall through the cracks. However, from what I am hearing and seeing from Nonin and others, it is not being allowed to fall through the cracks, so best to wait and see.

Gassho, Jundo Cohen

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by ed blanco** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 2:58 pm

Carol wrote:

Moderator's Note: Yesterday a number of posts disappeared from the forum for no reason known to us. Just now a number of posts disappeared from this topic. Maybe a glitch, maybe hackers. We are investigating to see what we can find out about the cause. Sorry for the inconvenience/puzzlement.

Carol, a post I placed quoting Joan Halifax Roshi on Shimano, disappear. It is back but I, however, stand with Nonin and Jundo I am willing to put this to sleep. But the why should be found out.

Thanks,

Ed

Buddham saranam gacchami Dhaman saranam gacchami Sangham saranam gacchami

ed blanco

by **Shonin** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 3:21 pm

This kind of abuse is by no means unique to Zen or to America.

Here in the UK, back in the 90s there was a scandal at the FWBO with many parallels it seems.

We needs to ask 'Why?' but when we do, I think it is a mistake to assume that this has to do with certain 'bad sanghas'. In reality I see it as due to power differences and certain naive cultural tendencies in Western Buddhism, as I described in my previous post (does this occur in Asian Buddhism? I have no idea.)

Beware of when students' independence of thought or behaviour is labelled as 'ego' while teachers' views and actions (even dubious ones) are described in terms of enlightened activity and judged by different criteria.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

by **Nonin** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 3:48 pm

Shonin wrote:

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Beware of when students' independence of thought or behaviour is labelled as 'ego' while teachers' views and actions (even dubious ones) are described in terms of enlightened activity and judged by different criteria.

Shonin,

You mention Asian Buddhism. I practiced in Japan, and I can say that sexual misconduct by Zen Buddhist teachers, monks, or priests is not tolerated there by either the offending person's superiors or by the lay communities that they serve. Negative behavior is regarded as negative behavior, and although teachers and other ordained people are greatly respected, they are not "given a pass" and judged by different criteria.

I agree that there are "certain naive cultural tendencies" in Western Buddhism. The most destructive one is to regard Buddhist masters as "above and beyond" everyone else and can do no wrong. Japanese people know better. If you give someone that kind of power, it can easily be misused.

My personal experience bears on this. When new people come to our temple, they sometimes look at me as if I'm something very special and deserve a special kind of deference, sometimes cloyingly so. This makes me very uncomfortable. I try my best not to put on any airs, to be myself, and to disabuse them of their notions as best I can. Asian people are of course polite, but they don't approach me in the same way.

The same thing happens when I teach at other places around the country. It also happens to other teachers, and we've discussed this at teachers' meetings. It's very easy to manipulate people in a variety of ways if they give you the power to do so by how they regard you, and in these situations, it's up to the teacher not to do so. However, as it's become abundantly clear over the past few years in the West, some teachers, Asian and otherwise, have not done so, to the detriment of their students, the sangha at large, and ultimately, themselves.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Shonin** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 4:07 pm

Nonin wrote:

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Thank you Nonin. It looks then as if Western naivete is a big part of the issue then, combined with sanghas relatively isolated from 'mother temples' and from the community at large.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

**by christopher:::** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 4:09 pm

I don't know if "Western naivete" is so much a factor, though it might contribute to these problems. Have male Buddhist teachers in Asia come into close one-to-one contact, personally instructing as many female students as teachers will come in contact with here?

Interesting article back in 2005 by Rita Gross in Sun Shambala, she talked about these and related issues...

excerpt:

"...[In Asia] the meditative and philosophical disciplines associated with Buddhism have been practiced almost exclusively in the monasteries, which is why they were practiced almost exclusively by men. By and large, lay practitioners, men as well as women, had

neither the time nor the inclination to pursue meditation and philosophy to any great extent. Different disciplines, especially merit-making practices that would accumulate fortunate karma for the next rebirth and various devotional practices, were developed by and for lay practitioners.

To date, the way in which American lay practitioners, who also have jobs and families, have attempted to pursue the time-consuming disciplines of study and practice is their most radical departure from Asian models. For converts, Buddhism is study and practice; they have largely ignored other aspects of Buddhism developed in Asia.

Another striking departure is the way in which women participate in American Buddhism. Some Buddhist commentators claim that providing models of more equitable participation of women is the special karmic task of Western Buddhism.

American Buddhist women and men have taken up this task, and already American Buddhist groups look quite different from their Asian counterparts regarding the visible, active presence of women in meditation centers and other Buddhist forums. Some observers claim that this is the most noticeable difference between Asian and American Buddhist meditation centers. This claim is meant not only to draw attention to the presence of women but also to the faithfulness with which Americans have reproduced most other aspects of a traditional meditation center. The iconography is the same and the meditation practices are the same; often the liturgies are chanted in Asian languages, and, in many cases, people wear Asian robes during meditation. But women practice side by side with men rather than being isolated in an underfunded women's practice center that has no prestige.

Undoubtedly, the strong presence of women in convert Buddhism owes something to the timing of Buddhism's arrival in North America. Though Buddhists had been present in North America before the 1960's and 1970's, these decades saw the influx of many Asian Buddhist teachers and large numbers of Euro-American converts to Buddhism. These years also marked the emergence of the second wave of feminism. The women most likely to be attracted to Buddhism were not about to play a secondary, supportive role to enable men to study and practice while they provided domestic services. These women insisted that if study and practice were good for men, they would also be good for women, and they took up these disciplines enthusiastically. This coincidence, this lucky timing, has forever changed the face of American Buddhism, and may well have an impact on Buddhism worldwide.

The Buddhism that American women initially encountered seemed paradoxical to them. On the one hand, the basic teachings were gender-free and gender-neutral, and many found the practice of meditation not only gender-free but intensely liberating. To many feminist women of the 1960's and 1970's, Buddhism and feminism seemed to be allies, for good reason.

On the other hand, the forms through which these teachings and practices were delivered were as male dominated as those of any other religion. The teachers and other leaders

were, for the most part, men. Male language abounded in the liturgies, at least those that were translated into English. And, though the basic teachings were gender-free and gender-neutral, deeper explorations into the traditional texts revealed misogynistic passages as well as a strong overall tendency to favor men over women in matters of study and practice. Many women encountered criticism and were ostracized for pointing out these facts. They were told that the dharma is beyond gender and that women were being overly sensitive and divisive when they were bothered by misogynistic stories or institutional male dominance.

The issues faced initially by convert women could be divided into two major areas of concern. They faced the problem of finding their way in a tradition that, by and large, had not been especially concerned with women's participation in its most valued institutions—the worlds of study and practice. And convert women faced the problem of trying to integrate their traditional feminine pursuits with their desire to participate fully in the worlds of study and practice.

Most convert women who began to practice Buddhist meditation and to study Buddhist teachings in the 1960's and 1970's probably were not immediately aware either of the historical significance of their activities or of traditional attitudes toward women. Though gender practices were very different in their Asian homelands, the Buddhist teachers who came to teach in North America did not treat women students differently from men.

That these teachers worked with women students largely without prejudice is one of the more remarkable facets of this story. Asked later why they did not apply the more familiar Asian Buddhist norms and expectations regarding gender in North America, they gave two reasons. First, the women students asked for teachings, and that a student ask to be taught is the most important requirement. Second, given that women participated along with men in Buddhist gatherings, they assumed that North American gender norms were different from Asian norms. The lucky coincidence of feminism and the arrival of Buddhist teachers must be noted again, for if these teachers had arrived ten or twenty years earlier, in the 1950's, the situation would have been very different.

Nevertheless, women noticed the prevalence of men as teachers and other Buddhist authorities, and the androcentric (male-centered) language of most liturgies. Those who knew more about Buddhist history and traditional teachings were troubled by teachings concerning the spiritual inferiority of women and their inability to attain liberation until they were reborn in a man's body. However, until they had received sufficient training in the various Buddhist disciplines, women were in a poor position to challenge these views or to suggest alternatives.

Convert women employed many of the same strategies for dealing with Buddhist male dominance as Christian and Jewish women had used in their struggles. The main tasks were to work towards gender-inclusive and gender-neutral liturgies, to advance women into positions of leadership, and, ultimately, for women to become fully qualified Buddhist teachers. The two former tasks were accomplished earlier and more easily in

many communities. The last was more difficult, but now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, many convert women have become Buddhist teachers as well.

Though meditation is the main religious discipline practiced by convert Buddhists, chanted liturgies are an important part of many meditations. This is especially the case for Tibetan Vajrayana practice and, to a lesser extent, for Zen Buddhism. Many convert communities chant their liturgies in an Asian language, which means that gender references are less clear to them, but many other groups use English. The early translations were made before the demise of the generic masculine as acceptable English usage, and often the English translations were more androcentric than the Asian originals. Words that carry no specific gender in an Asian language were translated as “son” rather than “child,” or “man” rather than “human,” and the pronoun “he” was always used to refer to the meditator.

Once in place, these translations took on an almost canonical status among some groups. Those who objected were ridiculed and told that, as Buddhists, they should be “above such silly, worldly, unimportant issues, since everyone knows that these terms refer to and include women.” Gradually, most liturgies have been or are being changed at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

A deeper problem emerged. Chanting the names of the lineage ancestors, from one’s own generation back to the Buddha or some other central teacher, is an important part of many Buddhist services. Such chants verify the authenticity of one’s lineage and one’s own place in the transmission of teachings that go back to the foundations of Buddhism. The lineage ancestors, with very few exceptions, are men.

Many women experienced great sorrow at the lack of female ancestors and role models and searched the Buddhist records for such figures. There have been great women practitioners in the history of Buddhism, but they are rarely as prominent in Buddhist memory as their male counterparts. One of the most popular sources for convert women became the Therigata, (“The Songs of the Female Elders”). These stories and poems record the accomplishments of the first generation of Buddhist women, direct disciples of the Buddha who attained the same level of realization as his male disciples. At least one Zen Buddhist community, the San Francisco Zen Center, began the practice of chanting the names of female elders recorded in the Therigata, ending with an acknowledgment of “all the forgotten women ancestors,” on alternating days. However, some male members of the community objected that these female elders were not in the direct line from the Buddha to the teachers of this community and, though they were considered fully realized disciples of the Buddha, a crucial transmission had been given only to one male disciple, who became the direct ancestor of all Zen teachers. Most members of the community, nevertheless, continue to regard the lack of known and named female ancestors as a problem. As research continues, previously unknown, highly accomplished women emerge from historical records.

More central still is what some feminist convert Buddhists began to call “the problem of the male teacher.” This “problem” has two aspects, one of them limited to a specific time



and set of circumstances, the other more fundamental. The first concerned a series of sexual scandals that devastated many convert communities in the 1980's. A number of Asian teachers participated freely in the sexual license that characterized the 1960's and 1970's, conducting frequent sexual affairs with their students. In some cases, this behavior was open and known by everyone in the community, but in other cases, these affairs were secret. Although teachers who conducted secret affairs usually had many fewer partners, the secrecy proved extremely problematic in the long run. By the 1980's, mores had changed considerably and many women expressed outrage at male teachers they felt had taken advantage of them. There was also considerable discussion about the ethical propriety of sexual intimacy between partners so unequal in power. The eventual result of this turmoil is that almost all convert communities now have explicit guidelines discouraging sexual activity between teachers and students, and the sexual safety of female (and male) students is a high priority.

The more basic "problem of the male teacher" concerns Buddhism's long-standing practice of limiting the teaching role almost exclusively to men. Some commentators have identified the lack of female teachers, historically and in the present, as the most important issue for women in Buddhism. Historically, this lack results in the problems that occur with the absence of women in the lineage chants, as well as the lack of role models and the wisdom of women practitioners that is missing from the tradition's teachings. The practice of having only male teachers sends a strongly discouraging message to women students. To take seriously Buddhist claims that the dharma is beyond gender is difficult if almost all those who embody and teach it have male bodies.

Fortunately, women teachers are becoming more common among convert Buddhists. It takes many years for a student of Buddhist meditation and philosophy to become qualified to teach, and the first students to be authorized by their Asian teachers to teach the dharma were men. But, especially among practitioners of Zen Buddhism and vipassana meditation, women were authorized to teach relatively soon after men. Only among practitioners of Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism are almost no women teachers found, but almost no convert men have been fully authorized as teachers either. Many observers comment that convert practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism are about a generation behind practitioners of Zen and vipassana in becoming fully trained as teachers. In recent gatherings of Western Buddhist teachers, nearly half the teachers present were women, ample indication that American Buddhism may indeed be fulfilling its potential to address some of Buddhism's long-standing difficulties."

source: How American Women Are Changing Buddhism

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

by **Shonin** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 4:12 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Have male Buddhist teachers in Asia come into close one-to-one contact, personally instructing as many female students as teachers will come in contact with here?

Well the FWBO scandal was about male on male sexual abuse, so I don't see that this can be the main factor, although it might be A factor.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

**by christopher:::** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 4:18 pm

Huifeng posted some time back about how in his Chan tradition a monk is never to be alone with a woman. If they talk its to be in an open area where people can see but not hear them. I know with school teachers there are often similar protocols, its why teachers teach in a large open room, often with windows. In the case of the Catholic priests scandals there were a number of situations which seemed to "enable" abuse. The clothing worn, the rituals where a priest might be alone with an alter boy, etc. There are all sorts of "enabling" contexts and factors that have to be recognized and changed, to ensure greater safety, some of which I think you have mentioned earlier.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by Nonin** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 4:42 pm

Shonin,

I decided to add a little more to my previous post, and I'll also post it here in case you miss it:

As you say, I agree that there are "certain naive cultural tendencies" in Western Buddhism. The most destructive one is to regard Buddhist masters as "above and beyond" everyone else and can do no wrong. Japanese people know better. If you give someone that kind of power, it can easily be misused.

My personal experience bears on this. When new people come to our temple, they sometimes look at me as if I'm something very special and deserve a special kind of deference, sometimes cloyingly so. This makes me very uncomfortable. I try my best not

to put on any airs, to be myself, and to disabuse them of their notions as best I can. Asian people are of course polite, but they don't approach me in the same way.

The same thing happens when I teach at other places around the country. It also happens to other teachers, and we've discussed this at teachers' meetings. It's very easy to manipulate people in a variety of ways if they give you the power to do so by how they regard you, and in these situations, it's up to the teacher not to do so. However, as it's become abundantly clear over the past few years in the West, some teachers, Asian and otherwise, have not done so, to the detriment of their students, the sangha at large, and ultimately, themselves.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

**by Shodo** on Thu Feb 03, 2011 5:29 pm

the author of this is genkaku, from his blog... I am posting it here with his permission - because it is awesome.

Jundo Cohen wrote

However, from what I am hearing and seeing from Nonin and others, it is not being allowed to fall through the cracks, so best to wait and see.

What Jundo writes may well turn out to be true. But what is true in fact is that every past opportunity to "wait and see what happens" or "give them some room" or "things are being worked out behind the scenes" or "if we wait long enough, people will forget about it" or "kiss it better" or "credit their good intentions" or "wave the 'compassion' flag" ... have resulted in (at best) wildly-flawed outcomes and at worst (most palpably obvious) in disgraceful, face-saving, self-preserving failure.

I think people may well hope Jundo's observations are correct. But I also think people may be forgiven for a well-founded skepticism and perhaps disgust.

My own view is pretty simple: 1. Implement the Faith-Trust Institute's suggestions to the letter and 2. Create a mechanism that will acknowledge and repent of the specific and

sometimes enduring harm done to others. Pussy-footing has simply not worked in the past and it is unlikely to find a better result in the future.

I may hope that Jundo is right, but there is a heap of evidence that suggests he is likely to be headed, with plenty of company, in the wrong direction.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by christopher:::** on Fri Feb 04, 2011 3:33 am

Nonin wrote:

Shonin,

I decided to add a little more to my previous post, and I'll also post it here in case you miss it:

As you say, I agree that there are "certain naive cultural tendencies" in Western Buddhism. The most destructive one is to regard Buddhist masters as "above and beyond" everyone else and can do no wrong. Japanese people know better. If you give someone that kind of power, it can easily be misused.

My personal experience bears on this. When new people come to our temple, they sometimes look at me as if I'm something very special and deserve a special kind of deference, sometimes cloyingly so. This makes me very uncomfortable. I try my best not to put on any airs, to be myself, and to disabuse them of their notions as best I can. Asian people are of course polite, but they don't approach me in the same way.

The same thing happens when I teach at other places around the country. It also happens to other teachers, and we've discussed this at teachers' meetings. It's very easy to manipulate people in a variety of ways if they give you the power to do so by how they regard you, and in these situations, it's up to the teacher not to do so. However, as it's become abundantly clear over the past few years in the West, some teachers, Asian and otherwise, have not done so, to the detriment of their students, the sangha at large, and ultimately, themselves.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Very important and insightful observations, Nonin sensei.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

**by partofit22** on Fri Feb 04, 2011 3:41 am

it isn't uncommon for people try to protect loved ones even when loved ones are guilty of doing something wrong-  
partofit22

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Fri Feb 04, 2011 5:05 pm

Genjo said:

In fact the ZSS board did release their newest statement on Monday, Jan. 31st, 2011. However, unlike blogs, it must go through various channels to be sent first by email to active ZSS sangha. Once this has been accomplished, I am sure it will zip around the internet at lightening speed. I too hoped it would be circulating by now, Tuesday evening, but I haven't received my copy yet.

Far be it from me to pull the tiger's whiskers... but you can hardly call it a "release" if nobody has seen it - including yourself.

I assume you STILL have not revived your copy yet...? I mean, I assume that you would post something since so many folks here are waiting... and you were the one who said there would be word on Monday.

So when you get your copy, as a board member yourself, I would hope you would post it in this thread when you get it.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Fri Feb 04, 2011 6:48 pm

Shonin said:

Those directly hurt by this matter, have emotional wounds to heal and that will take time...

Maybe less time than you think...

A Letter from Christopher Hamacher to; The Faith Trust Institute, Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests, JBFCS Cult Hotline & Clinic, Rick A. Ross Institute and Info-Secte.

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... r\\_ICSA.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...r_ICSA.pdf)

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Fri Feb 04, 2011 7:59 pm

Shodo,

At the end of the first paragraph of the letter you linked to dated February 4, 2001, the author states that ZSS

". . . stands steadfastly behind their beloved teacher." Well, the ZSS Board has followed most of the Faith/Trust Institutes recommendations and is proceeding to fulfill them all. It has replaced Eido Shimano as abbot and has forced him into an early retirement. Also, he is no longer in residence at either Dai Bosatsu monastery or Shobo-ji. This is hardly standing "steadfastly behind their beloved teacher."

The letter is full of inaccuracies, misinformation, mis-quotations, hearsay, cherry-picked statements taken out of context, and statements used to back up the writer's views that bear no relationship to the point he's trying to make.

There are so many of these that it's not possible for me to list them all. I listed one above, and here's another: The writer insists that Eido Shimano was not given formal dharma transmission, but eye-witnesses and certificates given by Soen-roshi testify to the the fact that he was. Here's another: the writer attributes words to Shinge-roshi that others present at the meeting in question say that she never uttered. And yet another: the writer has also taken statements of mine and Genjo Marinello's completely out of context so they seem as if they back up his contentions, when in fact, they don't.

People are free to criticize the actions and words of others, but it's unconscionable if it's done dishonestly and without integrity, as it is in this letter.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by moon face buddha** on Fri Feb 04, 2011 8:18 pm

Shonin wrote:

This kind of abuse is by no means unique to Zen or to America.

Here in the UK, back in the 90s there was a scandal at the FWBO with many parallels it seems.

Shimano is just the tip of the iceberg. The FWBO resolved the matter recently...they changed their name. And the FWBO has successfully convinced the BBC that they are a legitimate buddhist lineage and as such get a frequent slot on 'thought for the day' Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Sat Feb 05, 2011 1:01 am

The reason I posted that letter was because of the last few paragraphs... where they said that the Zen Studies Society has at least two lawsuits against them in the works...

Nonin said

The letter is full of inaccuracies, misinformation, mis-quotations, hearsay, cherry-picked statements taken out of context, and statements used to back up the writer's views that bear no relationship to the point he's trying to make.

We don't see eye to eye a lot Nonin, but I think we can both agree... that folks in their haste to get things moving, make their positions look bad if they engage in what you said. There is plenty of evidence out there that stands on its own - folks don't need to contort the evidence to make it say things it doesn't.

Nonin said

There are so many of these that it's not possible for me to list them all. I listed one above, and here's another: The writer insists that Eido Shimano was not given formal dharma transmission, but eye-witnesses and certificates given by Soen-roshi testify to the fact that he was.

I know you hold the view that dharma transmission, once given, cannot be revoked... I do not agree with your "No Takesees Backsee's principle" - and that is ok, we don't have to agree.

In fact, transmission has been revoked before in Ryutaku-ji's history. Aitken Roshi talks about it here:

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/AitkenODP.pdf>

And like it or not... he is not on the lineage charts at either his home temple in Ryutaku-ji OR Daitoku-ji... I don't think Kobutsu Malone has gotten a response yet from the abbot at Ryutaku-ji.... but when he does and it goes into the archive, I am sure we will ALL get the skinny.

EDIT: Here is some quick maths... because it relates to this. Genjo in a talk I heard said something to the effect: "Eido Shimano has been training for 60 years..." A quick look at his Wikipedia page shows this is a little off.

\*\*Eido was born in 1932, and entered Ryutaku-ji in 1954 at the age of 22.

\*\*Eido was only "in training" for 5 1/2 years there before he left for Maui (age 28) to live with Aitken for the next 4 years (Also important to keep in mind, was that he was supposed to go to America in 1957 to become Nyogen Senzaki attendant, if that had happened he would have only been in training for 3 whole years.) After his abuses were uncovered he left for NY (age 32) only to become Abbott of the Zen Studies Society 1 year later.

\*\*SO... time spent in actual training with his teacher present and close by was 5 1/2 years... And the time spent over here in the US before his "transmission" was 12 years - 12 years of occasional visits by his teacher Soen.

Is it plausible that Eido finished the bulk of his tradition's koan curriculum in just 5 1/2 years in his early 20's?

Is it plausible that Soen "gave transmission" to Eido as a authentic heir...? Even though Soen was well aware of Eido's "problems"...? Is it plausible that Soen gave transmission less as a mark of "authenticity" and more of a tentative, informal badge... to be formalized much later at head temples once he had matured?

The fact that Soen didn't ever formalize Eido's transmission speaks volumes here...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi



by **Shodo** on Sat Feb 05, 2011 6:36 pm

From the Zen Studies Society

February 5, 2011

Dear Sangha and Friends,

We hope you are enjoying a healthy and happy New Year. We would like to update you regarding ongoing developments at The Zen Studies Society, its monastery Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji, and city temple New York Zendo Shobo-ji.

On December 8th 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi retired from his position as Abbot of The Zen Studies Society, and on December 11th 2010, Aiho-san Yasuko Shimano retired from her position as Director of New York Zendo Shobo-ji. They retired openly and without reservation from all administrative authority. Eido Roshi is not teaching under the auspices of The Zen Studies Society.

On January 1st 2011, Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi was installed as Abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo in a ceremony attended by some 125 dharma friends, including sangha members from New York Zendo Shobo-ji and the Zen Center of Syracuse. Since then, she has been guiding all aspects of practice at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Shoteki Chris Phelan has been appointed Director of Shobo-ji, and is supported by Rev. Zuiho Matthew Perez. We board members have begun evaluating the Society's by-laws, with a focus on the development of membership involvement and establishing a more democratic process. We are also arranging for a professional audit of its resources.

We are committed to continuing the Rinzai Zen tradition and to upholding the Buddhist precepts. We vow to provide an ethical environment devoted to the well-being and encouragement of those who come for Zen practice and study.

The mission of The Zen Studies Society is threefold: to support lay practitioners of Rinzai Zen, to sustain a rigorous monastery for Zen training, and to cultivate Buddhist studies, with an emphasis on the development of Zen in Asia and its continuing evolution in the West.

We look forward to practicing with you. Please join us for an all-day sit at New York Zendo Shobo-ji on February 13th, and for March-On Sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, held from March 10th–13th.

With palms together,

Zen Studies Society Board of Directors: Soun Joe Dowling, President; Shoteki Chris Phelan, Vice President; Shinkon Peter Glynn, Treasurer; Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz, Secretary; Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi; Genjo Marinello Osho, and Zenshin Richard Rudin.

How is it \*I\*, of all people... could possibly post this first.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Genjo** on Sat Feb 05, 2011 8:31 pm

Shodo wrote:

Far be it from me to pull the tiger's whiskers... but you can hardly call it a "release" if nobody has seen it - including yourself.

I assume you STILL have not revived your copy yet...? I mean, I assume that you would post something since so many folks here are waiting... and you were the one who said there would be word on Monday.

So when you get your copy, as a board member yourself, I would hope you would post it in this thread when you get it.

The ZSS Board letter was indeed released for distribution on 1/31; however, because of complications that are still being worked through, it only ended up getting released and dated to the sangha today.

Only about an hour ago! Bravo Shodo for posting before I could.

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Sat Feb 05, 2011 9:18 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Sat Feb 05, 2011 8:52 pm

The Dude is on task, but not giving much comfort to all us sinners.

lok91

Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Pemako** on Sat Feb 05, 2011 9:39 pm

Thank you, Nonin for your contribution to this. I do hope people understand what a severe test some teachers face:

Nonin wrote

"My personal experience bears on this. When new people come to our temple, they sometimes look at me as if I'm something very special and deserve a special kind of deference, sometimes cloyingly so. This makes me very uncomfortable. I try my best not to put on any airs, to be myself, and to disabuse them of their notions as best I can. Asian people are of course polite, but they don't approach me in the same way."

The first time I went to my Sangha I did not even ask, or find out who the "teacher" was. (I already had a teacher so I had no need of a new one anyway.) All I saw was some nice people, all dressed in a casual way. Someone facilitated the meeting and meditation but I did not take it for granted that that person was the teacher. All I felt was love and acceptance and I tried to give the same back.

Treat your teacher with respect, the same as you treat anyone else but never forget that he/she is also a human being.

Like a flash of lightning in a summer cloud

Pemako

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Gregory Wonderwheel** on Sat Feb 05, 2011 11:55 pm

Nonin wrote:

My personal experience bears on this. When new people come to our temple, they sometimes look at me as if I'm something very special and deserve a special kind of deference, sometimes cloyingly so. This makes me very uncomfortable. I try my best not to put on any airs, to be myself, and to disabuse them of their notions as best I can. Asian people are of course polite, but they don't approach me in the same way.

Every Western Zen teacher that I have seen has had to make an accommodation with the problem of projection onto the Zen master. The Japanese Zen teachers seem to take the role and the pedestal that goes with it as a given and use it by making the pedestal as high as can be and then seeing who climbs it, that is see how people deal with the illusion of the all-wise Zen master.

Many, if not the vast majority, of the Western zen teachers I've observed seem to be uncomfortable with being on the pedestal of "Zen master" and all the projections that go with the label and the role. I have seen this cause problems with the sangha when the zen teacher wants to act like a "friend" or "equal" until something happens and the teacher then wants to assert authority, but without the projection the student wants a reason for the authority, not just "because I say so." It becomes an issue when the teacher doesn't want to give a reason or hides the real reason. When the teacher is wrapped in the projection, the students just don't ask "why?" which is very convenient for the "master."

Ultimately no one can completely remove the deepest and most profound projections by simply willing them away, so I prefer the teacher who doesn't wrap themselves up in the projection as a means of avoiding questions to their authority, but still is aware that the student will naturally have the more subtle projections and knows how to deal with them without being condescending.

\_/ \\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Gregory Wonderwheel** on Sun Feb 06, 2011 12:31 am

Shodo wrote:

Far be it from me to pull the tiger's whiskers... but you can hardly call it a "release" if nobody has seen it - including yourself.

This seems to be gratuitously harsh. A release commonly goes through phases and channels, such as an initial release to a primary group before being released to the wider public, and it does none of us any benefit to pretend otherwise.

Let us do our best to check our own position before insuating the worst about others.

\_/ \\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Sun Feb 06, 2011 3:18 am

Gregory Wonderwheel said:

This seems to be gratuitously harsh. A release commonly goes through phases and channels, such as an initial release to a primary group before being released to the wider public, and it does none of us any benefit to pretend otherwise.

Let us do our best to check our own position before insinuating the worst about others.

We all have little things that get under our skins... Mine is not meaning what you say. So if somebody says "Monday at the latest", but what they mean is "maybe Friday"... that annoys me. Now maybe that is just Board-speak... and if that is the way things are generally done, then I wasn't aware of it... and if that getting under my skin, gets under your skin - then I am sorry to all offended.

I shouldn't have snapped, just was frustrated.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Gregory Wonderwheel** on Sun Feb 06, 2011 5:10 am

Shodo wrote:

We all have little things that get under our skins... Mine is not meaning what you say.

LOL! I hope you don't mean what I say, or we might forget who is whom.

Thanks,

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Sun Feb 06, 2011 6:10 am

Oh crap you are right!

I should have said "Not saying what you mean" - as an example of something that got under my skin.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Pemako** on Sun Feb 06, 2011 7:41 am

Some people might want to consider the following story when approaching and interacting with teachers.

"Marpa was told his teacher lived on an island surrounded by a lake of poison. He managed to get through the poison, only to find the teacher living in filth, with hundreds of dogs who continually attacked him. When he asked for teachings, everything his teacher spoke was gibberish. Finally, Marpa gave up. He could no longer bear the vicious dogs, the filth, and the crazed speech of his teacher. He stopped taking notes, he stopped asking questions. He despaired of ever learning anything that would lead to his awakening. It was at that moment (of course) that everything became accessible and easy -- the dogs left him alone, the teacher spoke in clear and intelligible language, and Marpa received the teachings."

Like a flash of lightning in a summer cloud

Pemako

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 5:04 am

And now for something...  
... Completely different.

<http://bigmind.org/Home.html>

"Owning My Responsibility

A Personal Statement from Genpo Merzel

I have chosen to disrobe as a Buddhist Priest, and will stop giving Buddhist Precepts or Ordinations, but I will continue teaching Big Mind. I will spend the rest of my life truly integrating the Soto Zen Buddhist Ethics into my life and practice so I can once again regain dignity and respect. My actions have caused a tremendous amount of pain, confusion, and controversy for my wife, family, and Sangha, and for this I am truly sorry and greatly regret. My behavior was not in alignment with the Buddhist Precepts. I feel disrobing is just a small part of an appropriate response.

I am also resigning as an elder of the White Plum Asangha. My actions should not be viewed as a reflection on the moral fabric of any of the White Plum members.

With great humility I will continue to work on my own shadows and deeply rooted patterns that have led me to miss the mark of being a moral and ethical person and a decent human being. I appreciate all the love and support as well as the criticism that has been shared with me. Experiencing all the pain and suffering that I have caused has truly touched my heart and been the greatest teacher. It has helped open my eyes and given me

greater clarity around my own dishonest, hurtful behavior as well as my sexual misconduct. I recently entered therapy and plan to continue indefinitely with it. I am in deep pain over the suffering I have caused my wife, children, students, successors and Sangha.

With sadness and love,

D. Genpo Merzel

Over and over... the same mistake is compounded...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **partofit22** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 6:14 am

Shodo wrote:

Over and over... the same mistake is compounded...

not so sad ... it's a beautiful example ...

partofit22

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 6:38 am

Ten Thousand.... ..... Genpo

Lucky Lucky life...

It's a bit ironic that one who has been discounted by this very forum turns out to be the one who lives in truth. So who is the true adapt.

Live long and prosper Genpo.

If you only realized, what a person has to go through, to reach the point of disobedience.

Lindama

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 6:59 am

Linda Anderson wrote:  
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Lindama

The views of some members of this forum are not the views of "this very forum." Each forum member here speaks for him- or herself.  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 7:01 am

Carol wrote:  
Linda Anderson wrote:  
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Lindama

The views of some members of this forum are not the views of "this very forum." Each forum member here speaks for him- or herself.

That is certainly true, however, go back and look at the lengthy discourse which, in my view at least, indeed discounted his teaching.... in some cases without due process.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Jundo Cohen** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 7:23 am

Shodo wrote:

And now for something...  
 ... Completely different.

What's different?

Same but very different, rather different yet just same.  
 Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by AlasdairGF** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 7:28 am

From Gerry Shishin Wick, President of the White Plum Asanga, at  
[www.whiteplum.org](http://www.whiteplum.org):

Shishin Wick Roshi wrote:

The White Plum Asanga Board of Directors has accepted the resignation of Genpo Merzel from White Plum Asanga membership as well as an Elder of the White Plum. This resignation is a result of his recent disclosures regarding sexual misconduct with several of his students. Please see the Big Mind website for their statement. On behalf of

the White Plum organization, I extend our support for Genpo's efforts in recovery and treatment and to the teachers and members of the Kanzeon Sangha in their efforts in healing and realigning their communities.

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **clyde** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 7:59 am

Among the lessons learned: Buddhist practice is not a vaccine against misconduct.

clyde

“Enlightenment means to see what harm you are involved in and to renounce it.” David Brazier, The New Buddhism

DO NO HARM

clyde

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 10:08 am

clyde wrote:

Among the lessons learned: Buddhist practice is not a vaccine against misconduct.

clyde

Or maybe that balanced and complete Buddhist practice is far from easy, that realization of no self- of the absolute- doesn't mean the challenges and rules (precepts) of "mundane" Dharma practice no longer apply.

Here's an interview from Genpo Roshi, back in 1988...

The Myth of Enlightenment

And Rev. Nonin's discussion:

Unethical Practices by Zen Adepts

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by moon face buddha** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 10:38 am

Interesting that he decides to drop the Buddhist teaching but continues with the (much more financially lucrative) Big Mind stuff  
 Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Dan74** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 10:55 am

Time and time again I see the Buddha's teachings reinterpreted in the light of our limitations. We try to shrink the world to make us feel like giants. Genpo did it in this interview (may he find true repentance and peace beyond craving).

But this is not the truth, this is clinging to delusion. There is a big difference between facing and acknowledging what we are and planting the flag there and glorifying it. I appreciate our Theravada cousins more and more since they are steeped in texts and would not fall into noxious views like I see here.

Sad for Zen in the West, sad for people cheated by faux teachers. Sad of course for the teachers themselves. May we all find the true Dharma.

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by partofit22** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 1:38 pm

Dan74 wrote:

Time and time again I see the Buddha's teachings reinterpreted in the light of our limitations. We try to shrink the world to make us feel like giants. Genpo did it in this interview (may he find true repentance and peace beyond craving).

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Sad for Zen in the West, sad for people cheated by faux teachers. Sad of course for the teachers themselves. May we all find the true Dharma.

dan, Genpo did not face and acknowledge who he is and glorify it at the same time- therefore, his public statement and resignation need to be met with merit even if he glorified his actions before and after his acknowledgment-  
partofit22

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Kojip** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 3:17 pm

Carol wrote:

Linda Anderson wrote:

Ten Thousand.... ..... Genpo

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Lindama

The views of some members of this forum are not the views of "this very forum." Each forum member here speaks for him- or herself.

This is a good point. Having seen this forum from a posting member perspective, and from a moderator perspective, there is no "in" view, apart from a commitment to practice.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Kojip** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 3:27 pm

Dan74 wrote:

There is a big difference between facing and acknowledging what we are and planting the flag there and glorifying it..

Agreed, but it can be a fine line . What is good enough? At what point do we just leave ourselves to be in all our color? A real turning point for me was at a Theravadin retreat, where I dropped a confused pretense of Anatta and forgave myself for existing as an ordinary screwed-up human being.

Dan74 wrote:

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"Zen" can fall into a licentious view, but there are equally extreme views practitioners of other streams can fall into.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Seigen** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 3:41 pm

This has been posted on ZFI before, and is worth thinking of in light of these events, but also in relation to what Gregory Wonderwheel writes here:

Every Western Zen teacher that I have seen has had to make an accomodation with the problem of projection onto the Zen master. The Japanese Zen teachers seem to take the role and the pedastal that goes with it as a given and use it by making the pedastal as high as can be and then seeing who climbs it, that is see how people deal with the illusion of the all-wise Zen master.

Many, if not the vast majority, of the Western zen teachers I've observed seem to be uncomfortable with being on the pedastal of "Zen master" and all the projections that go with the label and the role. I have seen this cause problems with the sangha when the zen teacher wants to act like a "friend" or "equal" until something happens and the teacher then wants to assert authority, but without the projection the student wants a reason for the authority, not just "because I say so." It becomes an issue when the teacher doesn't want to give a reason or hides the real reason. When the teacher is wrapped in the projection, the students just don't ask "why?" which is very convenient for the "master."

Ultimately no one can completely remove the deepest and most profound projections by simply willing them away, so I prefer the teacher who doesn't wrap themselves up in the projection as a means of avoiding questions to their authority, but still is aware that the student will naturally have the more subtle projections and knows how to deal with them without being condescending.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi

by **Kojip** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 3:53 pm

Seigen wrote:

This has been posted on ZFI before, and is worth thinking of in light of these events, but also in relation to what Gregory Wonderwheel writes here:

Every Western Zen teacher that I have seen has had to make an accomodation with the problem of projection onto the Zen master. The Japanese Zen teachers seem to take the role and the pedastal that goes with it as a given and use it by making the pedastal as high as can be and then seeing who climbs it, that is see how people deal with the illusion of the all-wise Zen master.

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Huh? "spirit", "higher self", "vessel for spirit" ?

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **partofit22** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 4:13 pm

the video was uploaded june, 29th 2009- it's obvious he's since had a glimpse at his tendency to glorify- if he didn't, he wouldn't have released a public statement acknowledging this behavior or resigned-  
partofit22

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 4:37 pm

This was uploaded quite recently and may provide some insight into Genpo Roshi's decision-making on this issue...

~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by Carol on Mon Feb 07, 2011 7:36 pm

Daniel has a thoughtful response over at Dangerous Harvests "Genpo Roshi Falls Again"

His conclusion:

Given the commonplace quality of teacher scandals in "Western" Zen communities over the past 50 years, perhaps the following larger issues need to be examined, along with things like community ethics policies:

1. the ways people are trained to think about major ethical breeches and criminal activities, and how our teachings either support that, or ride against it
2. the hardened narratives around those who have committed such acts in the past (i.e. things like "Once an abuser, always an abuser.)
3. how to protect groups and individuals from predatory behaviors, while also maintaining an attitude of "don't know" openness about the future of the person whose behaviors caused major harm
4. the role of teacher/student relationships in a more horizontal, democratic social context

Some of these things do come up in discussions of teacher scandals, but they tend to play a back role to commentaries about ethical violations, development of ethics policies, methods to heal communities harmed by scandals, and ways to train and "police" teachers on a larger scale (regional, national, etc.)

May all those harmed by Genpo's behavior be healed and be able to move on. And may Genpo wake up in the face of his big mistakes, and step more fully into his life as it is.  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 8:51 pm

Linda Anderson wrote:  
Ten Thousand.... ..... Genpo

Lucky Lucky life...

It's a bit ironic that one who has been discounted by this very forum turns out to be the one who lives in truth. So who is the true adapt.

Live long and prosper Genpo.

If you only realized, what a person has to go through, to reach the point of disobedience.

Lindama

Ten thousand bows to a Zen teacher for merely being honest. There's a long road ahead of us...

lok91  
Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 10:03 pm

Thanks, agree there is a long road ahead. But, taking responsibility and honesty are a start. I just have to wonder why this issue keeps appearing over and over. It may turn out to be the best thing that Genpo ever did both for himself and as an example for others. That is why I said lucky life, although it does seem a little strange.

Apologies if I generalized on what this forum says, there are many voices here too. Also, have to admit that I have not read Genpo's statement, so I may be assuming too much...

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi



by **hungryghost** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 10:16 pm

I wonder how much of this is honesty and contrition, and how much of it is 'get honest before i'm outed by someone else. This isnt the first time Genpo has been involved in this kinda stuff. There was the 1990 incident at the original Kanzeon Zen Center in Bar Harbour Maine. He was asked to leave and the center closed.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis\\_Gen ...](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Gen) troversies

Members of the AZTA from that time could probably tell more about this.

I do think it's commendable that he is disrobing and all, as under the circumstances I dont think he is fit to be a Buddhist teacher.

Of course now he is free to as he wishes without the moral teachings of Buddhism or the expectations people have of a priest to uphold the Dharma. I hope he behaves.

Also, this thread just crossed the 1000 post mark....what do we win??

hungryghost

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **moon face buddha** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 10:33 pm

hungryghost wrote:

I wonder how much of this is honesty and contrition, and how much of it is 'get honest before i'm outed by someone else.

I would be somewhat more impressed by his 'act of contrition' if he had chosen to withdraw from ALL forms of teaching. As it is, he continues to be in a teacher-pupil environment with regards to Big Mind (tm) and is therefore still in a position to abuse that position of trust.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Seigen** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 10:51 pm

AND to fly a "Zen" banner as well.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Mon Feb 07, 2011 11:18 pm

I was one of those who has been openly critical of Genpo Roshi's Big Mind™ in this forum... sorry Linda, i just always sensed something not quite right there. I've had similar experiences and realizations on my own and while a deep experience of no self does change your life i didn't feel comfortable with how he's "sold" and presented such experiences. This kind of Awakening is not a complete answer, does not solve life's problems, i've come to feel...

About Big Mind™ and Genpo Merzel

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Dan74** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 12:42 am

Kojip wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

There is a big difference between facing and acknowledging what we are and planting the flag there and glorifying it..

Agreed, but it can be a fine line . What is good enough? At what point do we just leave ourselves to be in all our color? A real turning point for me was at a Theravadin retreat, where I dropped a confused pretense of Anatta and forgave myself for existing as an ordinary screwed-up human being.

Forgiving ourselves for being as we are is essential in order to face who we truly are, is it not?

To me, it is not about "what is good enough?" It is about facing who we are and being honest about it with others. Genpo has never been a Zen master which was obvious to anyone who has ever truly met a Zen master. That said, he is a human being with many talents and I hope he finds a way to face who he truly is.

Kojip wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

I appreciate our Theravada cousins more and more since they are steeped in texts and would not fall into noxious views like I see here.

"Zen" can fall into a licentious view, but there are equally extreme views practitioners of other streams can fall into.

Of course! No path is without pitfalls. But it is a worry when teachers actually pitch their tents in them and drag their sanghas along.

I guess to me the point is that there are teachers of all sorts of calibre out there. From total quacks and charlatans, through to the many who mean well but are still quite deluded and

deluding and finally those who are pure of conduct and intention, who live to share the Dharma and are devoted to practice and helping others.

If we haven't met teachers like this yet, then we haven't looked hard enough, I say.

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 2:27 am

Dan74 wrote:

Genpo has never been a Zen master which was obvious to anyone who has ever truly met a Zen master.

Have you ever met Genpo, Dan? This is a pretty broad-reaching comment, even if you have met him. Genpo was a recognized Zen master for a decade or more before he began his "Big Mind" approach. And he continued teaching "orthodox" zen using koans up until this recent announcement of his disrobing.

His teacher obviously thought him a Zen master or would not have given him authority to teach.

He obviously went off track along the way. But that has happened before and will happen again in the long lineage of zen masters.

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by **Dan74** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 2:35 am

Carol wrote:

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He obviously went off track along the way. But that has happened before and will happen again in the long lineage of zen masters.

I haven't met him, Carol. I've heard him speak.

I am not sure that authority to teach makes a master, it makes a teacher. But teacher don't always have mastery of what they teach. This is where we differ, I guess.  
Last edited by Dan74 on Tue Feb 08, 2011 2:52 am, edited 1 time in total.

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Kojip** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 2:38 am

Dan74 wrote:

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Well, there can be struggle, at least I've struggled with it. It is not required to be a Saint, just a basically decent person.

You can't be whole if your have conflict with your conscience. Nope.

"Big Mind", with talk of Ego vs. Higher Self and so forth, sounds more like Ken Wilber's version of Buddhism, where he lines-up "Emptiness" with Godhead, Brahman, Self, and every metaphysical system under the sun. This is typical of what is called Buddhism for alot of people, and if you say, "Hold on , it ain't like that" you get called closed minded, or stuffy.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by AlasdairGF** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 2:58 am

Mod note...

Let's leave discussion of Big Mind Big Heart for other threads...

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 3:14 am

Dan74 wrote:

Carol wrote:

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I don't believe in the "perfect" Zen Master. I believe all humans are fallible and subject to falling off their pedestal -- and picking themselves up with help and becoming better for it.

I think the "perfect" Zen Master is a myth, and a pernicious myth at that, that gets in the way of reality and makes both students and teachers a little bit crazy sometimes.

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~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 3:21 am

Carol wrote:

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I think the "perfect" Zen Master is a myth, and a pernicious myth at that, that gets in the way of reality and makes both students and teachers a little bit crazy sometimes.

I agree, Carol. Nice post.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Dan74** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 3:50 am

Carol wrote:

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Perhaps Buddhism is a "pernicious myth"?

The Buddha (Dhammapada) wrote:

Oh house-builder! You are seen, you shall build no house (for me) again. All your rafters are broken, your roof-tree is destroyed. My mind has reached the unconditioned (i.e., Nibbana); the end of craving (Arahatta Phala) has been attained.

Shantideva (Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life) wrote:

Remaining in cyclic existence for the benefit of those suffering through

delusion is achieved through freedom from the two extremes, attachment and fear. This is the fruit of emptiness. . . .

Hongzhi (author of the Book of Serenity, Dogen's grand-teacher and one of his favourites) wrote:

Patch-robed monks should wither away and freeze the [deluded] thoughts of the mind, and rest from remnant conditioning. Single-mindedly restore and cultivate this field. Directly cut down all the overgrown grass throughout the boundary of the four directions. Do not allow a single speck of dust to defile [this field]. Spiritually potent, it is bright; vast and removed, it is transparent. Thoroughly illumine that which comes before the [principle] essence, until you reach a state where the light becomes naked and pure—where not a single speck of dust can be attached to. When you tug and pull back this ox[-mind] by the nose, it will naturally come alive and be imposing. Being quite unusual and outstanding, it mingles with others along the pathway without damaging people's sprout and grain. Thriving and dynamic, [the ox] effortlessly responds to circumstances; responding to circumstances without artificiality, it thrives and is free flowing. Not fixed to any set place, it is free from fetters—this is the place where the ox plows through the field of the empty kalpa. Proceeding in such a way, all things appear vividly without obscurity; everywhere, all things manifest as they are, [maintaining] one thought for ten thousand years. Fundamentally, this is non-abiding in appearances.

But I wasn't even thinking of this level of mastery (there are heaps of other that can be cited down to more recent times) in my posts above, only of mastery of the fundamentals.

As for teachers, I never used the word "perfect" and I don't believe a teacher needs to be "perfect." Here time and again we see teachers who act in a dishonest and harmful way. This doesn't make them less human, unworthy of respect and compassion. This, in my view, disqualifies them from continuing as a teacher. That's all.

Whether they can repent, change etc - of course! Even Angulimala changed his ways.

I experience desire and craving and find myself led by these quite often. This is where my practice is now. During the times of more intense practice, there was a letting go of these which didn't last long, but also it didn't go to where it was before. And from that tiny glimpse my faith in the teachings was strengthened. I don't believe those old guys are fooling with us and when one really practices, I am sure the housebuilder can be seen and seen through. Once and for all, just like the Dhammapada says.

But this may be far off, as for the teacher, I expect honesty and some serious insight. Is this too much to ask for?

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Jundo Cohen** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 4:02 am

Carol wrote:

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I think the "perfect" Zen Master is a myth, and a pernicious myth at that, that gets in the way of reality and makes both students and teachers a little bit crazy sometimes.

Thank you. Carol.

All human beings have the tendency to fall down from time to time. A Zen Teacher, guided by the Precepts, Wisdom and Compassion, should be expected to have more skill and experience in avoiding life's temptations and pitfalls ... they should be expected not to fall down easily, not to yield to life's temptations too easily. But Buddhist "Masters" are yet flesh and blood, and only perfect in their human imperfection. (Beware of any "guru" who claims to be so far beyond humanity that they are now beyond all possible falling).

In my view, any human being can fall down, and it is just a matter of what the person does then ... picking themselves up, recovering balance, getting back on the trail, apologizing and learning from any damage caused. The real "Master" should much more --rarely-- fall down but, even more impressively, should show true "mastery" in getting back up if she does. Like any great athlete or dancer, the point is not that we never get knocked around, never trip or stumble ... but how we handle the fall (as in the martial arts ... there is no training offered on how to never fall, but endless training on how to fall well). Show me the man or woman who falls down sometimes ... but who demonstrates how to fall well and recover one's footing ... and I will show you a great Zen "Master".

On the other hand, beware of any purported "master" who falls down again and again ... or harms his students again and again ... or who tries to recover from falling down mostly



concerned about covering his own ass. This, in my mind, is what makes the difference between, for example, a "master" who may have fallen at some time in life into an affair, or a drinking and gambling problem that he or she recovers from ... and those that repeat the behavior again and again over many years. (That, in my mind, appears to be the difference between such cases and Genpo "Roshi" and Eido "Roshi" who seem to have repeated their very harmful behavior over decades).

If I may add my own "test" for finding a teacher, I would say find a man or woman who sometimes (though rarely) falls down, makes mistakes, makes a donkey's ass of him or herself... and observe closely what happens, watch how he or she does it. Oh, don't get me wrong... probably you do not want as a teacher someone who falls down each and every day, nor someone who falls down too BIG (robbing banks, lying profusely and intentionally starting fires, for example). No, I mean someone who... every so often, now and then, like everyone... makes a fool of him/herself, loses his Zen Master cool, over-indulges, does a real face-flop, says something she regrets, breaks some (hopefully not too big) Precepts in some very human way.

How does this person recover their balance? With what grace do they fall or, at least, get back up on their feet? Do they profoundly reflect on their mistakes, learn from them, apologize sincerely to anyone hurt (hopefully not too badly) ... and move on? As a matter of fact, since this crazy practice is greatly about living with some grace in this imperfect, often disappointing, trap and temptation filled world, a teacher with a couple of serious imperfections may be a good guide on how to avoid, lessen or escape the worst of it!

Oh, I am not trying to excuse any truly heinous abuses or scandals which have been seen among clergy of all traditions, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist no less (not these "Zen teachers" who keep on with their harmful behavior year in and year out). NOT AT ALL! I have little tolerance for members of the clergy who abuse their positions of trust and hurt others, sometimes children. But also we must be cautious of anyone who wants to be our teacher by telling us that they are beyond all failings, never ever break a Precept (not even the small ones), are "Perfectly Enlightened Beings" who never trip and fall down. I'll believe it when I see it!

Certainly, it is true that within Enlightenment, there is no place to fall, nothing which can be a mistake. Yet, in this world of Samsara where we live, I do not think there is anyone who gets away always without cuts and bruises and difficult days. (Anyone who thinks that Zen practice is going to ensure that they never have another "bad day" is in for a bad surprise. Whether we fully "drop good and bad" or not, we must live in a world sometimes real good and real bad.) Sure, this "self" is but an illusion... and so are all the other "selves" in this world, but we are going to bump and bang into each other sometimes nonetheless. The hole you stumble in may be like a dream, and ultimately there is no place to fall. But fall into that hole and break your imaginary leg, you may!

Zen Practice shows us how to move through life leaving no traces.

Yet is is darn hard to get through this daily life without stirring up some waves, catching some mud, making some sparks. Falling off our bicycle into a ditch.

(if anyone wants to hear a perfectly imperfect talk by me on the subject) ...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOCcuOx64Ck>

Gassho, Jundo

Last edited by Jundo Cohen on Tue Feb 08, 2011 8:53 am, edited 7 times in total.  
 Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Dan74** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 4:05 am

PS Carol, I understand and agree if you mean "the myth of the perfect Zen master" as used by Stephen Lachs. But this is not about the supposed impossibility of enlightenment. It is about the tacit dishonesty of implying that a teacher who is imperfect is in fact a Buddha (in which students are sometimes complicit). This of course, is both wrong and dangerous.

Luckily I have never met such a teacher.

PPS For people who want a religion which happily embraces desire and craving and a guilt-free mind, try Le Vey's Satanism. Or even better invent Satanic Zen where Roshis brag about the number of students they seduce and the costs of their seminars. It's all perfect!

Last edited by Dan74 on Tue Feb 08, 2011 4:14 am, edited 1 time in total.

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by hungryghost** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 4:12 am

Dan74 wrote:

Carol wrote:

I don't believe in the "perfect" Zen Master. I believe all humans are fallible and subject to falling off their pedestal -- and picking themselves up with help and becoming better for it.

I think the "perfect" Zen Master is a myth, and a pernicious myth at that, that gets in the way of reality and makes both students and teachers a little bit crazy sometimes.

Perhaps Buddhism is a "pernicious myth"?

The Buddha (Dhammapada) wrote:

Oh house-builder! You are seen, you shall build no house (for me) again. All your rafters are broken, your roof-tree is destroyed. My mind has reached the unconditioned (i.e., Nibbana); the end of craving (Arahatta Phala) has been attained.

Shantideva (Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life) wrote:

Remaining in cyclic existence for the benefit of those suffering through delusion is achieved through freedom from the two extremes, attachment and fear. This is the fruit of emptiness. . . .

Hongzhi (author of the Book of Serenity, Dogen's grand-teacher and one of his favourites) wrote:

Patch-robed monks should wither away and freeze the [deluded] thoughts of the mind, and rest from remnant conditioning. Single-mindedly restore and cultivate this field. Directly cut down all the overgrown grass throughout the boundary of the four directions. Do not allow a single speck of dust to defile [this field]. Spiritually potent, it is bright; vast and removed, it is transparent. Thoroughly illumine that which comes before the [principle] essence, until you reach a state where the light becomes naked and pure—where not a single speck of dust can be attached to. When you tug and pull back this ox[-mind] by the nose, it will naturally come alive and be imposing. Being quite unusual and outstanding, it mingles with others along the pathway without damaging people's sprout and grain. Thriving and dynamic, [the ox] effortlessly responds to circumstances; responding to circumstances without artificiality, it thrives and is free flowing. Not fixed to any set place, it is free from fetters—this is the place where the ox plows through the field of the empty kalpa. Proceeding in such a way, all things appear vividly without obscurity; everywhere, all things manifest as they are, [maintaining] one thought for ten thousand years. Fundamentally, this is non-abiding in appearances.

But I wasn't even thinking of this level of mastery (there are heaps of other that can be cited down to more recent times) in my posts above, only of mastery of the fundamentals.

As for teachers, I never used the word "perfect" and I don't believe a teacher needs to be "perfect." Here time and again we see teachers who act in a dishonest and harmful way. This doesn't make them less human, unworthy of respect and compassion. This, in my view, disqualifies them from continuing as a teacher. That's all.

Whether they can repent, change etc - of course! Even Angulimala changed his ways.

I experience desire and craving and find myself led by these quite often. This is where my practice is now. During the times of more intense practice, there was a letting go of these which didn't last long, but also it didn't go to where it was before. And from that tiny glimpse my faith in the teachings was strengthened. I don't believe those old guys are fooling with us and when one really practices, I am sure the housebuilder can be seen and seen through. Once and for all, just like the Dhammapada says.

But this may be far off, as for the teacher, I expect honesty and some serious insight. Is this too much to ask for?

I am wary of anyone who refers to themselves as a "zen master"..they only exception being the Kwan um school where it seems to be used as a kind of title. I don't think honesty and insight are too much to ask for at all. I don't think expecting a zen teacher to uphold the 5 precepts pretty well isnt too much to ask for either. Or at least expecting them not to be abusing their power and sleeping with students. I definitely have a zero tolerance level for that kinda thing. I would prefer to study with one of the vast majority of Buddhist teachers who fit all of the above requirements. Zen practice is the freakin meaning of my life, why the hell would I settle for less? I think there is a difference between putting someone on a pedastal (expecting magical perfection), and expecting a teacher to behave ethically and not abuse his students sexually. I am also in the "if you have sex with your students and continue the teacher student relationship, you are abusing them" camp.

hungryghost

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Kojip** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 4:40 am

Carol wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

Carol wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

Genpo has never been a Zen master which was obvious to anyone who has ever truly met a Zen master.

Have you ever met Genpo, Dan? This is a pretty broad-reaching comment, even if you have met him. Genpo was a recognized Zen master for a decade or more before he began his "Big Mind" approach. And he continued teaching "orthodox" zen using koans up until this recent announcement of his disrobing.

His teacher obviously thought him a Zen master or would not have given him authority to teach.

He obviously went off track along the way. But that has happened before and will happen again in the long lineage of zen masters.

I haven't met him, Carol. I've heard him speak.

I am not sure that authority to teach makes a master, it makes a teacher. But teacher don't always have mastery of what they teach. This is where we differ, I guess.

I don't believe in the "perfect" Zen Master. I believe all humans are fallible and subject to falling off their pedestal -- and picking themselves up with help and becoming better for it.

I think the "perfect" Zen Master is a myth, and a pernicious myth at that, that gets in the way of reality and makes both students and teachers a little bit crazy sometimes.

Imperfect Zen master..... If we take non-dual ideology to its logical conclusion then there is a claim to perfection in that ..right? ...a primordial "perfectly so". When you do something unethical your conscience may stir, but it can be neutered, because you practice being the ill feeling of a stirred conscience. It's perfectly so in your original Enlightenment.

This is maybe a kooky post, but maybe not. How else to explain people doing things that most people would hate themselves for doing, but carrying on representing the Dharma just the same.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher**::: on Tue Feb 08, 2011 5:39 am

In line with everyone's observations, if the wikipedia explanation of Zen Master is accurate it might be worth dropping the term all together here in the West. In Japan a Zen teacher is simply called "sensei" ... It's a term of respect that doesn't carry the same mythic expectations as Zen "master" - which i think many incorrectly view as the Zen equivalent to the Theravadin Arahant.

A teacher is expected to always try to live by certain agreed upon codes of behavior, the norms of profession. The title signifies wisdom and knowledge, a high level of skill, but not "perfection." Doing away with terminology that creates unrealistic expectations (and a burdensome mythology of spiritual attainment) might help Zen teachers in the West untangle some of these misconduct issues that keep arising.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 7:06 am

christopher::: wrote:

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A teacher is expected to always try to live by certain agreed upon codes of behavior, the norms of profession. The title signifies wisdom and knowledge, a high level of skill, but not "perfection." Doing away with terminology that creates unrealistic expectations (and a burdensome mythology of spiritual attainment) might help Zen teachers in the West untangle some of these misconduct issues that keep arising.

I was thinking along the same line after reading Carol's "perfect Zen Master" notion. No one expects a master to be perfect, they just expect them to be a master of whatever it is that they practice. If a sexual predator can be a master of Zen that can only mean one of two things, that Zen mastery doesn't exclude sexual abuse or that a sexual predator is not uncommonly erroneously classed as a master. Either way it's bad.

lok91

Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shonin** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 8:32 am

Kojip wrote:

Imperfect Zen master..... If we take non-dual ideology to its logical conclusion then there is a claim to perfection in that ..right? ...a primordial "perfectly so". When you do something unethical your conscience may stir, but it can be neutered, because you practice being the ill feeling of a stirred conscience. It's perfectly so in your original Enlightenment.

This is maybe a kooky post, but maybe not. How else to explain people doing things that most people would hate themselves for doing, but carrying on representing the Dharma just the same.

I don't think it's as complicated as that. It's just that no gets to stop being human.

I see Zen practice as an opportunity rather than a guarantee.  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Kojip** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 3:02 pm

Shonin wrote:

Kojip wrote:

Imperfect Zen master..... If we take non-dual ideology to its logical conclusion then there is a claim to perfection in that ..right? ...a primordial "perfectly so". When you do something unethical your conscience may stir, but it can be neutered, because you practice being the ill feeling of a stirred conscience. It's perfectly so in your original Enlightenment.

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I see Zen practice as an opportunity rather than a guarantee.

Being a human is one thing, being a corrupt human is another. If someone is a teacher, not just of anything, but The teachings on the heart of reality, and the highest wisdom,...then "oops I'm only human" doesn't cut it. If someone has absorbed the highest wisdom, and makes that claim, that absorbed and lived wisdom is going to be transformative. If, for instance, someone is secretly have sex with someone, then going home to his wife, looking her in the eye, and lying about where he has been, this person is manifestly not wise, not at all. Someone earlier compared a Zen teacher to a dentist, but a dentist only makes the claim to fix teeth, not transmit highest wisdom.

Why are ethical issues more common in the non-dual traditions?.. apart from the worldiness. Could there be a danger in the "Primordial Enlightenment" approach as it is commonly understood? Not a flaw in Zen, but a flaw in how it has been passed down? I remember coming on this site a couple of years ago struggling with the difference

between licence and radical letting be, so this could just be my trip. but it is worth looking at. Whats the alternative to this avenue of investigation? Maybe I'm just off here...

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **partofit22** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 4:17 pm

kojip, i think what you're aiming at is that a wise person wouldn't offer excuses as an example of taking responsibility for mistakes- and maybe that's where there is transformation- however, that transformation isn't guaranteed, no matter how wise a human being might be- for me, believing in the idea of a fixed transformation has lent itself to the opportunity for me to be disappointed ...

partofit22

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 4:32 pm

Kojip wrote:

Shonin wrote:

Kojip wrote:

Imperfect Zen master..... If we take non-dual ideology to its logical conclusion then there is a claim to perfection in that ..right? ...a primordial "perfectly so". When you do something unethical your conscience may stir, but it can be neutered, because you practice being the ill feeling of a stirred conscience. It's perfectly so in your original Enlightenment.

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The issue here is the precepts, right? It might be helpful to think about why Buddha suggested that Dharma teachers and practitioners limit their enjoyments and sensual pleasures. Is ethical behavior harder to maintain when we feed our senses? Is Dharma practice easier when we refrain from sensual pleasures?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **AlasdairGF** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 5:06 pm

Jundo Cohen wrote:

That, in my mind, appears to be the difference between such cases and Genpo "Roshi" and Eido "Roshi" who seem to have repeated their very harmful behavior over decades

I feel uncomfortable posting in this thread, as my teacher used to be a student of Genpo Roshi's for many years (though I've never meet him). But I do want to say that I think it's neither accurate nor useful to conflate the two cases. Genpo is accused of infidelity, not abuse, and while it's still certainly "sexual misconduct" and therefore entirely appropriate in this thread, from the day the whole affair blew up it's been handled differently.

The news broke while Genpo was on sesshin in Europe with almost all of his senior students and successors (my teacher was there too), and after some days of discussion, they were instructed to handle this openly and honestly, and to each return to their own groups etc and tell them what happened. Now, Genpo is stepping down from his roles as priest and teacher (though I have heard - only hearsay mind, not sure if accurate - that the people most intimately involved in this have asked him not to). This seems to be very different from the Shimano case.

I hope I don't sound like I approve of Genpo's actions in the past... but I am impressed by, and have already learned a lot from, his actions since it all came to light.

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shonin** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 5:07 pm

Kojip wrote:

Being a human is one thing, being a corrupt human is another. If someone is a teacher, not just of anything, but The teachings on the heart of reality, and the highest wisdom,...then "oops I'm only human" doesn't cut it. If someone has absorbed the highest wisdom, and makes that claim, that absorbed and lived wisdom is going to be transformative. If, for instance, someone is secretly have sex with someone, then going home to his wife, looking her in the eye, and lying about where he has been, this person is manifestly not wise, not at all. Someone earlier compared a Zen teacher to a dentist, but a dentist only makes the claim to fix teeth, not transmit highest wisdom.

I didn't offer 'no one gets to stop being human' as an excuse for anyone's bad behaviour. It is no excuse. But I think it's important that we have realistic expectations. Yes someone who is proclaimed a 'Zen teacher' should live by high ethical standards. But, clearly there are no guarantees here.

Kojip wrote:

Why are ethical issues more common in the non-dual traditions?.. apart from the worldiness. Could there be a danger in the "Primordial Enlightenment" approach as it is commonly understood? Not a flaw in Zen, but a flaw in how it has been passed down? I remember coming on this site a couple of years ago struggling with the difference between licence and radical letting be, so this could just be my trip. but it is worth looking at. Whats the alternative to this avenue of investigation? Maybe I'm just off here...

It's possible. Did Eido Shimano make excuses for his behaviour along those lines? I wouldn't necessarily know of course but I've not heard of similar scandals in Theravada. Even if there are none, surely the fact that Theravadan monks are disallowed from contact or one-to-one time with females has to be a factor? In which case, it's a case of more rigorous enforcement rather than necessarily stronger moral fibre in Theravadans or misunderstandings of 'primordial enlightenment' for example.  
Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group  
My blog

Shonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Ted Biringer** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 5:45 pm

Kojip wrote:

[Snip]

Being a human is one thing, being a corrupt human is another. If someone is a teacher, not just of anything, but The teachings on the heart of reality, and the highest wisdom,...then "oops I'm only human" doesn't cut it. If someone has absorbed the highest wisdom, and makes that claim, that absorbed and lived wisdom is going to be transformative. If, for instance, someone is secretly have sex with someone, then going home to his wife, looking her in the eye, and lying about where he has been, this person is manifestly not wise, not at all. Someone earlier compared a Zen teacher to a dentist, but a dentist only makes the claim to fix teeth, not transmit highest wisdom.

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Hello Kojip,

It seems to me that it is exactly "common understanding" not just of "Primordial Enlightenment" but of Buddhism itself that leads to degenerate views and behavior. Sadly, anti-intellectualism seems to have become a "traditional value" in America, especially when it comes to religion.

It is no wonder that "Roshi" and "scandal" have come to be nearly synonymous in the West. It easy for people to be mistaken as Buddha ancestors just by "dressing up" like ancient Chinese masters, unless we inform ourselves of what Buddhism actually teaches...

But there is no shortage of those that are willing to "just sit and drink the kool-aid."

I have met scores of "Buddhists" that claim to have been practicing for years, yet have only read 5 or 6 sutras a few times. Many that call themselves adherents of "Zen" even seem to pride themselves on their lack of knowledge and their dismissal of "words and letters." I have been told that Dogen (and by extension all the classic Buddhas and ancestors" is just an "old dead guy," as if that proved his teachings were irrelevant.

Yet, what Dogen, as well as the "dead" Buddhas and ancestors have said to me has not yet steered me wrong. Of course the posers don't want anyone to trust the written teachings, those that do are much less likely to make large donations to thieving phonies. As Dogen says:

Many are those who do not even know what it means to explore the True Teaching of the Buddhas and Ancestors, for they fancy that just living in a monastery is what practice is. How pitiful that the words and ways of the Ancestral Masters are now dying out! It is what the venerable monks of long-standing who hold to the true words and ways of the Buddha greatly lament. Do not give ear to the words and phrases that emerge from the likes of that bunch spoken of earlier. Rather, we should pity them.  
Shobogenzo, Shoho-Jisso, Hubert Nearman

One does not have to search many “Zen centers” to find what Dogen found on his trip to China; “smelly skin bags” that spout off about the “non-essential” role of the sayings (koans) and scriptures.

Even so, over the last couple of centuries or so in Great Sung China, certain mistaken, smelly skin bags have said, “There’s no need for you to keep the sayings of the Ancestral Masters in mind, much less is there any need for long study of Scriptural Teachings or for your trying to make use of Them. Simply, make your body and mind like a dead tree or cold ashes, like a broken wooden ladle or a bottomless tub.” Folks like these have become a type of non-Buddhist or celestial demon, and to no good purpose. They seek to make use of things that are useless, and accordingly, they twist the Teachings of the Buddhas and Ancestors into wild and perverted teaching. What a pity! How terribly sad!  
Shobogenzo, Bukkyo, Hubert Nearman

As in Dogen’s day, “Abbots” preside over meals and spend their whole lives without ever even talking about Buddha nature. Saying there is no need to study – just sit – which they imagine is “Zen meditation.”

In many places, there have been Abbots presiding at meals of gruel and rice who have died without once in their whole life even mentioning the term ‘Buddha Nature’. And some among them have said that those who pay heed to Scriptural Teachings may discuss Buddha Nature, but those who practice Zen meditation should not speak of It. Folks who talk like this are truly beasts! What a bunch of demons they are to mingle with and defile the Way of our Buddha Tathagata! Is what they call ‘paying heed to the Scriptural Teachings’ the Way of the Buddha? Or is what they call ‘practicing Zen meditation’ the Way of the Buddha? Recognize that what they are calling ‘paying heed to the Scriptural Teachings’ and ‘practicing Zen meditation’ are still not the Way of the Buddha.  
Shobogenzo, Bussho, Hubert Nearman

From what I have personally read and witnessed, I am inclined to agree with Dogen and his teacher; the degeneration of the Buddha Dharma is largely due to the rise of “sectarianism,” always pernicious, when ignorance of the sutras and Zen koans is added to the mix it is downright distressing!

My late Master once addressed his assembly, saying, “In recent years, the Way of our Ancestral Masters has degenerated. Bands of demons and beasts are many. They often go on about ‘the traditions and practices of the five sects’. How distressing! How truly distressing!” Hence, we know all too well that none of the twenty-eight generations in

India or the twenty-two Ancestors in China ever taught about any traditions or customs of five Zen sects. Our Ancestral Masters, who were all worthy of the title of Ancestral Master, have all been the same in this. Those who go about proclaiming that there are five Zen sects, each with its own unique tenets, are folks who are deceiving the public. They are a bunch who have heard little and whose understanding is shallow. If everyone in the Buddha's Way set up his own unique way, how could the Buddha's Way possibly have come down to us today? Makakashō would have set up his own way and Ananda would have set up his. If the principle of setting up one's own way was the authentic Way, the Buddha Dharma would have disappeared in India long ago. Who would honor principles that individual people had set up on their own? If each person sets up his own principles, who could determine which were true and which were false? What was true and what was false could never be determined. If the true and the false cannot be determined, who could recognize what was actually the Buddha Dharma? If its principles cannot be clarified, it would be difficult to call anything 'the Way of the Buddha'. The names of the so-called 'five Zen sects' did not arise during the lifetime of any of the five Ancestral Masters. After those who were called 'the Ancestral Masters of the five Zen sects' had entered nirvana, mediocre trainees within their families, those whose Eye had not yet become clear and whose feet did not know how to step forth, established these names without asking their Master's permission and contrary to the Teaching of the Ancestors. This is so evident that anyone can recognize it.  
Shobogenzo, Butsudo, Hubert Nearman

But "Big-Ego" (trademark) and "Mountain Staff Envy" seem to continue to find donors among the timid who would rather see Dogen or Linchi or Bodhidharma or Hakuin as a "Loving Father" (who art in Nirvana) than as a "Sibling" – much less "no other than their self." So, the crave for fame and gain will continue to find support.

There are some people who say that it is for the benefit of sentient beings that they desire fame and crave gain, but this is a monstrously false assertion. These people are non-Buddhists who have connected themselves with the Buddha Dharma; they are a bunch of demons who malign the True Teaching. If you were to claim something like this, would it mean that the Buddhas and Ancestors, who do not crave fame and gain, are therefore unable to benefit sentient beings? How laughable, how truly laughable that would be!  
Shobogenzo, Gyoji, Hubert Nearman

And the "Roshi's" and "Swamis" and "Rinpoches" and Gurus, etc. etc. will continue to sully themselves by failing to study the sutras, much less keep them in mind – that could interfere with the "crazy wisdom" of sexual and financial exploitation they feed on...

Caught in the thickets of sensory defilements, they sully themselves, yet they fail to keep the name of Buddha in mind or to read the Scriptures. These are folks who have not only ruined their spiritual potential, which all humans of any sort have, but they have also dismissed out-of-hand the Buddha Nature of the Tathagata. Truly, how pitiful that at a time when they have encountered Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, they have become sworn enemies of these Three Treasures. Though they have climbed on the mountain of the Three Treasures, they have returned empty-handed; though they have entered the

ocean of the Three Treasures, they have returned empty-handed. Even were they to encounter a thousand Buddhas and ten thousand Ancestors coming into the world, there would be no hope of their realizing enlightenment, for they have lost the means for giving rise to that intention. Their situation is like this because they have not followed what is written in the Scriptures or followed a reliable spiritual guide. The situation of many people is like this because they are following non-Buddhist ways and false teachers. You should quickly discard views and opinions such as “Fashioning such things as stupas has nothing to do with attaining spiritual wisdom.” Wash your mind clean, wash your body clean, wash your ears clean, wash your eyes clean, and you will neither look at nor pay attention to such views and opinions. Just follow the teachings of the Buddha, follow good spiritual guides, keep coming back to the True Teaching, and explore through your training with your Master what the Buddha Dharma is.  
Shobogenzo, Hotsu Mujō Shin, Hubert Nearman

Of course, Dogen and all the Buddhas and ancestors could be wrong – perhaps the Buddha Dharma is truly above “ordinary” human decency as some contemporaries suggest. Perhaps the sutras and Zen records really are too dangerous to study and practice without the help of one of the living Buddhas of our own day...

I seriously doubt it. For the last 25 years or so, they have proven reliable to me. Also, I have met 4 reliable living Buddha ancestors, which is a good sign – despite the fact that I have met at least 20 “Zen teachers” and corresponded with many others.

Finally, someone may benefit from one experience I had in this regard. This occurred during dokusan, about 8 or 9 years into the 13 years I spent in koan training with a teacher who is associated with a specific Zen lineage. I presented my response to the koan I was working with at the time, the teacher liked the response quite a bit and offered some quite wonderful words of praise. A little uncomfortable, I made a polite protest about how I did not deserve such praise. The teacher stated that the praise was not directed to me – holy shit! What I had thought was my humility was actually an unhealthy dose of pride. I could have crawled under the incense burner! But then it burst upon me that now I was imagining that “my” arrogance was “greater” than the arrogance of others – I burst into laughter as I felt all that stench fall off. The teacher asked why I laughed, I said “There is no Rinzai sect or Soto sect.” The teacher said, “There are no Zen masters.” And while this is also what Obaku had revealed in koan I had worked with some years earlier (case 11 of the Blue Cliff Record), this teacher’s words were not Obaku’s words. Yes!

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Shobogenzo, Hotsu Mujō Shin, Hubert Nearman

But not until they stop being “Dogen’s words” can they be expressions of truth.

Peace,  
 Ted  
 Ted Biringer - Zen student and practitioner  
 Author of The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing

Ted Biringer

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
 by **Linda Anderson** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 5:47 pm

The non-dual traditions do not make a claim to “Perfection”, meaning that all things are pure and ethical, etc. The non-dual is sometimes translated as Perfection, and often as “Completion” which is thought to be a more accurate description. The “Great Completion” or “Great Perfection” is meant to include everything, seen and unseen, as I understand it. This language is used in Dzogchen/Tibetan traditions, where I heard it, however, it seems quite visible in zen also.

There have been a few good articles that have passed through this forum lately that provide a good perspective on what the western mind has done with Buddhism and the influence of the 60's... and much to consider why the forbidden is so tempting and what a healthy sexuality really is beyond precepts and commandments. The precepts, for me, seem to be guidelines yes... but also point to how we would naturally live in a state of Buddha nature, naturally. There is a lot to tease apart, lest we turn to our own version of fundamentalism. I don't see it as easy, if it's even possible.

This struggle exists in almost all religion, as far as I can tell as has caused many a fall from the lofty place. From a certain perspective, this is fortunate for those who confuse themselves with the role they are playing. If the assertions are too strong, the opposite will be found if we scratch beneath the surface.

For example, I don't hear “let it be as it is” to be a license for bad behavior or inaction, although to some it may sound like that... that is a whole exploration. I also don't think it is accurate to label everyone who does something unethical as a sexual predator. It occurs to me that ethics are also a way of helping us keep our priorities straight, recognizing what is most important.... one can't focus on dharma when there is a sexual/power dynamic going on simultaneously. I've often thought that to engage in that would be to sacrifice spiritual development in the context of teacher/student. That sacrifice is most disturbing. I don't know... and I don't know if any tradition can integrate the flesh into a healthy path... not that it can't be done individually.

Now, 52 pages and still unresolved. Almost anything said can also have an opposite thing said, and both will be true. I think there is value in the title, Master Teacher, it does evoke

a standard to live up to as well as a deep responsibility and commitment to the dharma. The point is that it is our responsibility to respect that deeply, eyes wide open, to detect untruth if there is any and act accordingly. It is our responsibility to find the so-called predator on the inner... this is the duality that needs to be seen thru. Meanwhile, we have to rely on rules and sanctions which have their own confusion, as we have seen. As somebody said in this thread, months ago, "we can say no".

All that, no progress....

Linda

Last edited by Linda Anderson on Tue Feb 08, 2011 5:49 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Kojip** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 5:48 pm

I do not know Gempo, have no issue or business with him, and was speaking of infidelity in general, because that is the most common issue. Transformation is hard work, not following well worn paths of desire or anger or... is hard work.

Shonin. Just to be clear , I am not saying that primordial Enlightenment is an excuse for misconduct. Primordial Enlightenment includes misconduct on an "Absolute Level". On an "Absolute level" there is no problem. This goes back to the idea of "dwelling in the Absolute" Theravadins do not have a stronger moral fibre, and non-monastic Theravadins do not have any more safeguards than people in other traditions. It's not that, but there is no point banging this drum.

The evolution of this thread has been interesting, and helpful, though it seemed so toxic at one point.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shonin** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 5:56 pm



I suspect that the main 'culprit' as I said before is a high power/status difference and institutionalised unquestioning deference to that power. Combining that with gender-mixed practice seems like a recipe for trouble - at least for some.

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Kojip** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 6:16 pm

Ted Biringer wrote:

Kojip wrote:

[Snip]

Being a human is one thing, being a corrupt human is another. If someone is a teacher, not just of anything, but The teachings on the heart of reality, and the highest wisdom,...then "oops I'm only human" doesn't cut it. If someone has absorbed the highest wisdom, and makes that claim, that absorbed and lived wisdom is going to be transformative. If, for instance, someone is secretly have sex with someone, then going home to his wife, looking her in the eye, and lying about where he has been, this person is manifestly not wise, not at all. Someone earlier compared a Zen teacher to a dentist, but a dentist only makes the claim to fix teeth, not transmit highest wisdom.

Why are ethical issues more common in the non-dual traditions?.. apart from the worldiness. Could there be a danger in the "Primordial Enlightenment" approach as it is commonly understood? Not a flaw in Zen, but a flaw in how it has been passed down? I remember coming on this site a couple of years ago struggling with the difference between licence and radical letting be, so this could just be my trip. but it is worth looking at. Whats the alternative to this avenue of investigation? Maybe I'm just off here...

Hello Kojip,

It seems to me that it is exactly "common understanding" not just of "Primordial Enlightenment" but of Buddhism itself that leads to degenerate views and behavior. Sadly, anti-intellectualism seems to have become a "traditional value" in America, especially when it comes to religion.

It is no wonder that "Roshi" and "scandal" have come to be nearly synonymous in the West. It easy for people to be mistaken as Buddha ancestors just by "dressing up" like ancient Chinese masters, unless we inform ourselves of what Buddhism actually teaches...

But there is no shortage of those that are willing to “just sit and drink the kool-aid.”

I have met scores of “Buddhists” that claim to have been practicing for years, yet have only read 5 or 6 sutras a few times. Many that call themselves adherents of “Zen” even seem to pride themselves on their lack of knowledge and their dismissal of “words and letters.” I have been told that Dogen (and by extension all the classic Buddhas and ancestors) is just an “old dead guy,” as if that proved his teachings were irrelevant.

Yet, what Dogen, as well as the “dead” Buddhas and ancestors have said to me has not yet steered me wrong. Of course the posers don’t want anyone to trust the written teachings, those that do are much less likely to make large donations to thieving phonies. As Dogen says:

Many are those who do not even know what it means to explore the True Teaching of the Buddhas and Ancestors, for they fancy that just living in a monastery is what practice is. How pitiful that the words and ways of the Ancestral Masters are now dying out! It is what the venerable monks of long-standing who hold to the true words and ways of the Buddha greatly lament. Do not give ear to the words and phrases that emerge from the likes of that bunch spoken of earlier. Rather, we should pity them.  
Shobogenzo, Shoho-Jisso, Hubert Nearman

One does not have to search many “Zen centers” to find what Dogen found on his trip to China; “smelly skin bags” that spout off about the “non-essential” role of the sayings (koans) and scriptures.

Even so, over the last couple of centuries or so in Great Sung China, certain mistaken, smelly skin bags have said, “There’s no need for you to keep the sayings of the Ancestral Masters in mind, much less is there any need for long study of Scriptural Teachings or for your trying to make use of Them. Simply, make your body and mind like a dead tree or cold ashes, like a broken wooden ladle or a bottomless tub.” Folks like these have become a type of non-Buddhist or celestial demon, and to no good purpose. They seek to make use of things that are useless, and accordingly, they twist the Teachings of the Buddhas and Ancestors into wild and perverted teaching. What a pity! How terribly sad!  
Shobogenzo, Bukkyo, Hubert Nearman

As in Dogen’s day, “Abbots” preside over meals and spend their whole lives without ever even talking about Buddha nature. Saying there is no need to study – just sit – which they imagine is “Zen meditation.”

In many places, there have been Abbots presiding at meals of gruel and rice who have died without once in their whole life even mentioning the term ‘Buddha Nature’. And some among them have said that those who pay heed to Scriptural Teachings may discuss Buddha Nature, but those who practice Zen meditation should not speak of It. Folks who talk like this are truly beasts! What a bunch of demons they are to mingle with and defile the Way of our Buddha Tathagata! Is what they call ‘paying heed to the Scriptural Teachings’ the Way of the Buddha? Or is what they call ‘practicing Zen meditation’ the

Way of the Buddha? Recognize that what they are calling ‘paying heed to the Scriptural Teachings’ and ‘practicing Zen meditation’ are still not the Way of the Buddha.  
Shobogenzo, Bussho, Hubert Nearman

From what I have personally read and witnessed, I am inclined to agree with Dogen and his teacher; the degeneration of the Buddha Dharma is largely due to the rise of “sectarianism,” always pernicious, when ignorance of the sutras and Zen koans is added to the mix it is downright distressing!

My late Master once addressed his assembly, saying, “In recent years, the Way of our Ancestral Masters has degenerated. Bands of demons and beasts are many. They often go on about ‘the traditions and practices of the five sects’. How distressing! How truly distressing!” Hence, we know all too well that none of the twenty-eight generations in India or the twenty-two Ancestors in China ever taught about any traditions or customs of five Zen sects. Our Ancestral Masters, who were all worthy of the title of Ancestral Master, have all been the same in this. Those who go about proclaiming that there are five Zen sects, each with its own unique tenets, are folks who are deceiving the public. They are a bunch who have heard little and whose understanding is shallow. If everyone in the Buddha’s Way set up his own unique way, how could the Buddha’s Way possibly have come down to us today? Makakashō would have set up his own way and Ananda would have set up his. If the principle of setting up one’s own way was the authentic Way, the Buddha Dharma would have disappeared in India long ago. Who would honor principles that individual people had set up on their own? If each person sets up his own principles, who could determine which were true and which were false? What was true and what was false could never be determined. If the true and the false cannot be determined, who could recognize what was actually the Buddha Dharma? If its principles cannot be clarified, it would be difficult to call anything ‘the Way of the Buddha’. The names of the so-called ‘five Zen sects’ did not arise during the lifetime of any of the five Ancestral Masters. After those who were called ‘the Ancestral Masters of the five Zen sects’ had entered nirvana, mediocre trainees within their families, those whose Eye had not yet become clear and whose feet did not know how to step forth, established these names without asking their Master’s permission and contrary to the Teaching of the Ancestors. This is so evident that anyone can recognize it.  
Shobogenzo, Butsudo, Hubert Nearman

But “Big-Ego” (trademark) and “Mountain Staff Envy” seem to continue to find donors among the timid who would rather see Dogen or Linchi or Bodhidharma or Hakuin as a “Loving Father” (who art in Nirvana) than as a “Sibling” – much less “no other than their self.” So, the crave for fame and gain will continue to find support.

There are some people who say that it is for the benefit of sentient beings that they desire fame and crave gain, but this is a monstrously false assertion. These people are non-Buddhists who have connected themselves with the Buddha Dharma; they are a bunch of demons who malign the True Teaching. If you were to claim something like this, would it mean that the Buddhas and Ancestors, who do not crave fame and gain, are therefore unable to benefit sentient beings? How laughable, how truly laughable that would be!

Shobogenzo, Gyoji, Hubert Nearman

And the “Roshi’s” and “Swamis” and “Rinpoches” and Gurus, etc. etc. will continue to sully themselves by failing to study the sutras, much less keep them in mind – that could interfere with the “crazy wisdom” of sexual and financial exploitation they feed on...

Caught in the thickets of sensory defilements, they sully themselves, yet they fail to keep the name of Buddha in mind or to read the Scriptures. These are folks who have not only ruined their spiritual potential, which all humans of any sort have, but they have also dismissed out-of-hand the Buddha Nature of the Tathagata. Truly, how pitiful that at a time when they have encountered Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, they have become sworn enemies of these Three Treasures. Though they have climbed on the mountain of the Three Treasures, they have returned empty-handed; though they have entered the ocean of the Three Treasures, they have returned empty-handed. Even were they to encounter a thousand Buddhas and ten thousand Ancestors coming into the world, there would be no hope of their realizing enlightenment, for they have lost the means for giving rise to that intention. Their situation is like this because they have not followed what is written in the Scriptures or followed a reliable spiritual guide. The situation of many people is like this because they are following non-Buddhist ways and false teachers. You should quickly discard views and opinions such as “Fashioning such things as stupas has nothing to do with attaining spiritual wisdom.” Wash your mind clean, wash your body clean, wash your ears clean, wash your eyes clean, and you will neither look at nor pay attention to such views and opinions. Just follow the teachings of the Buddha, follow good spiritual guides, keep coming back to the True Teaching, and explore through your training with your Master what the Buddha Dharma is.

Shobogenzo, Hotsu Mujō Shin, Hubert Nearman

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Shobogenzo, Hotsu Mujō Shin, Hubert Nearman

But not until they stop being “Dogen’s words” can they be expressions of truth.

Peace,  
Ted

Ted, Thankyou very much for this response.  
<http://www.ontariozen.com/>  
<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Seigen** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 6:22 pm

Ted, that was quite beautiful, thank you!

Kojip wrote:

I remember coming on this site a couple of years ago struggling with the difference between licence and radical letting be, so this could just be my trip. but it is worth looking at.

Me too. For me this was very personal, I lost everything, and could not understand the degree to which compassionate tolerance could tolerate such harm. From now on I carry a sword with me wherever I go.

I have since learned that Zen Centers can be as though feudal walled cities with moats around and mazes beneath. It takes the skillfulness of many.

With palms together, Seigen  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by Carol on Tue Feb 08, 2011 6:25 pm

I see that I need to clarify ...

I believe the "perfect" Zen Master is a myth ... an idealization, a goal, and a projection of our desire to be perfect. I doubt there has ever been such a perfect human being, including Shakyamuni Buddha, who has never succumbed to the three poisons -- greed, ill-will, ignorance -- in body, speech or mind; who has never lost his/her temper, never spoken harshly, never wished for what s/he could not have, never acted rashly or inconsiderately or hurtfully, or thought unkindly about anyone.

I believe this myth is pernicious when students project it on our human teachers for two reasons:

(1) It's not real. The teacher is human and will sometimes be off the mark. This sets up a "cognitive dissonance" in the student that can cause all kinds of problems, including denial that the teacher's conduct is off the mark, when in fact it is. I think the situation with Eido Shimano illustrates this quite well in its most extreme form. Many of his students, apparently for decades, denied that his conduct was wrong and/or excused it as some sort of expression of his "being at home in the unconditioned." In other words, the projection got in the way of the students' clear seeing and their own good judgment as to what constitutes ethical conduct.

(2) This unreality also sets up a "cognitive dissonance" in the teacher. The projection of perfection on oneself is a hard burden to bear. The teacher is not getting honest feedback from his/her sangha. Even in the best of us, this can foster delusion or at least failure to adequately inquire into our conduct and to allow our bad habits to grow unexamined. Again, Shimano is an example of the extreme end of the spectrum, someone whose denial is apparently so deeply ingrained that he has become a menace.

This doesn't mean that we cannot reasonably expect our teachers to act ethically. I think we can and should expect ethical conduct. And when they fail to act ethically, I think we should tell them so and there should be consequences ... depending on the severity of the misconduct ... up to and including censure or dismissal from some kind of oversight body -- the board of directors of their sangha, or some kind of external authority that doesn't currently exist but is under discussion, I believe, at the AZTA.

I also think we can reasonably expect our teachers to model the kind of humility that comes from deep inquiry into their own conduct. That would include acknowledging their faults, and teaching by sharing their own struggles with them. This may be a novel "Western" idea, or not, I really don't know. But I think this is the most healthy way for all

of us to learn together. Some may be further along than others, but we're all on this path together, and we can help one another through this kind of openness.

I think the "perfectly imperfect" notion is often misused to excuse what is inexcusable. We need to be careful in Zen not to be confuse seeing the nature of "things as they are" -- which gives rise to wisdom and compassion -- with irresponsibility for our actions in body, speech and mind. This is a trap. It is delusion.

Finally, I do think some kind of projection on the teacher is inevitable and necessary and potentially good ... our desire for perfection carries inside it our longing to fully realize our true nature. To the extent that we project this full realization on our teachers, we begin to imagine that it is possible. That imagination is the antidote to despair and cynicism. But teachers must be wary of it, handle it with great sensitivity and with humility, and work with their students to help them realize that "perfection" is an ongoing process of waking up, rather than an end-product or place out there somewhere else.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by moon face buddha** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 7:24 pm

So the problem might be too much Zen and not enough Buddhism in the mix.

Keeping the precepts, day in and day out, is the difficult path to follow.  
Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Nonin** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 7:27 pm

Carol wrote:  
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humility, and work with their students to help them realize that "perfection" is an ongoing process of waking up, rather than an end-product or place out there somewhere else.

Carol, this is excellent. I wholeheartedly agree. Thank you for posting it.

With bows,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 8:12 pm

moon face buddha wrote:

So the problem might be too much Zen and not enough Buddhism in the mix.

Keeping the precepts, day in and day out, is the difficult path to follow.

Three foundations of Zen Buddhist practice are Sila, Samadhi, and Prajna.

See "How does Sila, Samadhi and Prajna Connect?" for a simple, straightforward explanation of this.

I also like Gregory's take on it ... from his blog:

The Parable of the Lamp

In the Zen lineage of the Mahayana, the Three Trainings (or Threefold Learning, i.e., sila, samadhi, and prajna) are presented in the Parable of the Lamp using the ancient form of a lamp made up of a dish of oil with a lighted wick resting at the edge. The resting place of the table (or floor) is the body, the dish is the conscious mind, the oil is sila (moral conduct), the wick is samadhi (unperturbed contemplation), and the flame is prajna (intuitive wisdom). That which is called a "lamp" does not exist without all of the parts present and functioning. If there is no oil, then the wick is dry and the flame won't stay lit. If there is no wick, then there is nothing for the flame to be centered upon and anchored to. If there is no flame, then it is not actually a lamp but just a bowl of oil with a piece of string in it. The wick of samadhi does not become a true wick until it is lit with

the flame of prajna, and the flame has no ability to combust until it has a wick through which to draw oil.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Gregory Wonderwheel** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 10:44 pm

moon face buddha wrote:

So the problem might be too much Zen and not enough Buddhism in the mix.

Keeping the precepts, day in and day out, is the difficult path to follow.

That difficulty is why I call my rakusu my "bodhisattva bib." Receiving the precepts shows us how difficult the path is and makes us aware of all the slobbering and drool that falls from our lips, nose, eyes, and ears when we must confront the fact of our less than enviable behavior and that living up to the precepts in every moment is a quixotic adventure.

\_/ \\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Gregory Wonderwheel** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 10:50 pm

Linda Anderson wrote:

The non-dual traditions do not make a claim to "Perfection", meaning that all things are pure and ethical, etc. The non-dual is sometimes translated as Perfection, and often as "Completion" which is thought to be a more accurate description. The "Great Completion" or "Great Perfection" is meant to include everything, seen and unseen, as I understand it. This language is used in Dzogchen/Tibetan traditions, where I heard it, however, it seems quite visible in zen also.

In Zen, the non-dual comes out like Yunmen's "Every day is a good day." Exactly how every day can be a good day while every day there is suffering is the call of doubt in this great koan. The great completion has no option but to say "Every day is a good day" or

remain silent. But simply or only remaining silent does not speak to those who are suffering.

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, “The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness.” ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Gregory Wonderwheel** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 11:13 pm

Dan74 wrote:

I appreciate our Theravada cousins more and more since they are steeped in texts and would not fall into noxious views like I see here.

Does that appreciation extend to all the sexual activity of the so called celibate and chaste monks, sometimes with each other? I think it is a mistake to project some kind of higher level of ethical behavior for our "Theravada cousins." Or was that comment a complete sarcasm that I missed when reading it the first time?

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, “The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness.” ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 11:20 pm

Gregory Wonderwheel wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

I appreciate our Theravada cousins more and more since they are steeped in texts and would not fall into noxious views like I see here.

Does that appreciation extend to all the sexual activity of the so called celibate and chaste monks, sometimes with each other? I think it is a mistake to project some kind of higher level of ethical behavior for our "Theravada cousins." Or was that comment a complete sarcasm that I missed when reading it the first time?

\_/\\_  
Gregory

Not to mention the deeply ingrained misogyny.

No moksha in Thai samsara of monastic scandals  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Dan74** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 11:23 pm

Posted this at the Big Mind thread but I guess it belongs here more than there.

I've never been a big fan of Big Mind or Genpo himself but at the same time I don't feel like gloating. To me it looks like we all come to this practice with different karmic baggage - different strengths and weaknesses. Some of these get transformed by practice, some don't. Genpo may well have had some deep insights and appears to be an intelligent capable person in many ways (and in other ways he is obviously not). What comes easily to one, is a huge challenge to another an often vice versa.

Yesterday I saw a bit of his Oprah audition and it reeks of a big ego and self-promotion but this is easy to justify by spreading the dharma to as many people as possible. It can sneak up on us in so many different (and often subtle) ways until we are smack in the middle of a big poo-poo and we don't even know how we got there.

Yes, I believe that a master has gone beyond this, but as a human being I feel for Genpo and appreciate his apparent openness and contrition. I also would not worry too much if I was his student or a student of his student. He may well have been able to teach some aspects of the path well. But I would say that there comes a time when one needs to seek a wiser teacher. One who's mastered the way of doing no harm.

Gregory Wonderwheel wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

I appreciate our Theravada cousins more and more since they are steeped in texts and would not fall into noxious views like I see here.

Does that appreciation extend to all the sexual activity of the so called celibate and chaste monks, sometimes with each other? I think it is a mistake to project some kind of higher level of ethical behavior for our "Theravada cousins." Or was that comment a complete sarcasm that I missed when reading it the first time?

\_/\\_  
Gregory

Hi Gregory, no, no sarcasm intended!

I didn't mean that Theravadins are more ethical (they may well be - but that's not my concern). I just mean that they would not make the kind of lame excuses for unethical behaviour that are sometimes heard around here (they also have more respect for their texts that we see around here). Some find the classical approach fundamentalist or superficial, I find it essential, with the layers spoken of in Mahayana and Zen only making sense once the fundamentals of ethics are truly respected and internalized.

(for our Theravada cousins who may be reading, I'm not implying that Mahayana ethics are deeper - there are different accounts in Theravada and anyway it is made clear in all traditions that intention is what truly counts rather than the seeming actions. What I am saying is that the deep takes on the ethics often found in Mahayana are sometimes twisted to mean that the basics can be disregarded, that they are anyway unattainable and we can just have our Big Minds stuck up our Big Bottoms because it's all empty anyway and it's all perfect, and freedom from affliction is a fiction for fools and hypocrites, etc etc).

As for mysogyny, this is no doubt an issue that is pertinent to many traditions including Thai and Japanese Buddhism.

Last edited by Dan74 on Tue Feb 08, 2011 11:33 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 11:32 pm

Dan74 wrote:

I just mean that they would not make the kind of lame excuses for unethical behaviour that are sometimes heard around here.

No moksha in Thai samsara of monastic scandals  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Gregory Wonderwheel** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 11:37 pm

Grace Schireson posted the ZSS letter on her facebook page on Saturday. Roshi Joan Halifax posted the following comment:

i still have questions: where is eido shimano living? where is his wife living? what is his pension? what are the remedies for the students he has abused? is he still seeing students privately? who is financially responsible should eido shimano and ZSS be sued for sexual harassment? will eido shimano retract his letter to the nytimes dates december 1?

To which I posted this reply:

Roshi Joan's questions are good ones and ZSS should have the answers, but as an attorney I would advise ZSS not to address those questions publicly. But while not addressing those questions in public, ZSS does need to do everything in its power to address the people concerned personally regarding those questions and others. I have seen people who only wanted an apology but because they did not get the apology chose to sue. Personally, I found the ZSS response to be weak tea, and had I been advising them, I would have said to avoid the specifics in Roshi Joan's questions or other such factual admissions, but also to amp up the tone of regret in the statement and at least make the emotional concession of regret for all the emotional impact on any individuals and the mahasangha that these events and ZSS's conduct in response may have caused. This letter is a very factual PR statement about the changes in the organizations teaching leadership. I hope that ZSS is working on another letter to address the concerns (emotional and otherwise) of the affected individuals and the Buddha Dharma concerns of the Mahasangha, a letter that can be written in consultation with the people who have claims that they were wronged.

\_/^\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 11:45 pm

Shonin wrote:

I suspect that the main 'culprit' as I said before is a high power/status difference and institutionalized unquestioning deference to that power. Combining that with gender-mixed practice seems like a recipe for trouble - at least for some.

Yup. Fortunately it's not hard to spot someone who's into their status, because they're always trying to promoting it.

lok91  
Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Dan74** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 11:53 pm

Carol wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

I just mean that they would not make the kind of lame excuses for unethical behaviour that are sometimes heard around here.

No moksha in Thai samsara of monastic scandals

Yes, I've read this article before (as well as the more detailed and scathing Broken Buddha by Ven Dhammika) but that doesn't relate to the point I am making here. These are to do with the structural problems with Thai Buddhism.

What I see here is a claim that Zen teachers are as enlightened as can be, that this doesn't mean that they stop being human which may mean a bit of hanky-panky on the side and a bit of deception to cover it up. None of which squares with the tradition the way it's been handed down, but that's OK - ours is a transmission beyond words and letters and the stories of those dead guys are just hagiographies written in repressed and prudish times anyway. We, in the 21st Century are more realistic and down-to-earth about these things and it's time to rewrite the Corpus.

This is what I was referring to. And it is this view that I find pernicious.

I don't have a problem with having an imperfect teacher who is sincere and genuine in imparting the Dharma. What I do have a problem with is a culture of subterfuge where we twist the teachings to suit our selves. Yes, whether a student or a teacher, chances are there are still plenty of things to work on. Honesty in facing and working on these to me precludes making excuses and glib platitudes like "we are all human, no one's perfect." This is what you can say to someone who is ashamed and deeply hurting, not to oneself.

At least so it seems to me...

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Kojip** on Tue Feb 08, 2011 11:54 pm

Carol wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

I just mean that they would not make the kind of lame excuses for unethical behaviour that are sometimes heard around here.

No moksha in Thai samsara of monastic scandals

Sure there is corruption in Theravada, just look at the beastly collusion with nationalist politics in Sri Lanka. But...the "I'm screwing my students while dwelling in the absolute" style of corruption is a "non-dual" specialty. Teachers that are known for it are still honored after being revealed. My big sister was trying to square the behaviour of Kalu Rinpoche before I knew what Buddhism was. So this situation with this teacher shows progress, greater awareness and sensitivity, and maybe also the presence of the internet mob.

Maybe good students are slim pickens? Maybe some teachers have a big blind spot when picking an heir? Maybe some of us are just naive....?

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Gregory Wonderwheel** on Wed Feb 09, 2011 12:11 am

Dan74 wrote:

What I see here is a claim that Zen teachers are as enlightened as can be, [ . . . ]

I guess that by "here" you mean "in this case at ZSS" and not "here at ZFI". I haven't seen anyone on this topic or elsewhere at ZFI make "a claim that Zen teachers are as enlightened as can be."

How could a person not go wrong from such a starting place? Any Zen teacher who encouraged that idea would be responsible for encouraging delusion, and any Zen student who encouraged that idea would be responsible for the same.

I could agree with the claim that Zen teachers are just as enlightened as they can be, as it also applies to the students who also are as enlightened as we can be.

\_/\\_  
Gregory .

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel



Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by Carol on Wed Feb 09, 2011 12:17 am

Kojip wrote:

Carol wrote:

No moksha in Thai samsara of monastic scandals

Sure there is corruption in Theravada, just look at the beastly collusion with nationalist politics in Sri Lanka. But....the "I'm screwing my students while dwelling in the absolute" style of corruption is a "non-dual" specialty. Teachers that are known for it are still honored after being being revealed. My big sister was trying to square the behaviour of Kalu Rinpoche before I knew what Buddhism was. So this situation with this teacher shows progress , greater awareness and sensitivity, and maybe also the presence of the internet mob.

Maybe good students are slim pickens? Maybe some teachers have a big blind spot when picking an heir? Maybe some of us are just naive....?

I don't know which is worse corruption, really, "screwing your students while dwelling in the absolute" or demanding financial support in exchange for merit in some future life -- "the logic behind Buddhist donations is not for the purpose of purity of the mind, but to have the highest yield from their donation." There is a whole lot of screwing going on, IMO.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by Carol on Wed Feb 09, 2011 12:24 am

Dan74 wrote:

What I see here is a claim that Zen teachers are as enlightened as can be, that this doesn't mean that they stop being human which may mean a bit of hanky-panky on the side and a bit of deception to cover it up.

That's a serious misreading of what I and others are saying here, Dan. I do think you owe me an argument against what I am actually saying, not some figment of your imagination you make out of twisting peoples' words and meaning.

What I am actually saying is that perfection is an unreasonable expectation of a teacher, but that ethical conduct is a reasonable expectation. Expecting the former causes all kinds of problems in practice. Please go back and read what I actually said.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Dan74** on Wed Feb 09, 2011 12:43 am

Carol wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

What I see here is a claim that Zen teachers are as enlightened as can be, that this doesn't mean that they stop being human which may mean a bit of hanky-panky on the side and a bit of deception to cover it up.

That's a serious misreading of what I and others are saying here, Dan. I do think you owe me an argument against what I am actually saying, not some figment of your imagination you make out of twisting peoples' words and meaning.

What I am actually saying is that perfection is an unreasonable expectation of a teacher, but that ethical conduct is a reasonable expectation. Expecting the former causes all kinds of problems in practice. Please go back and read what I actually said.

As has often been the case, we are talking past each other, Carol. I am sorry for my part in this.

As for the first paragraph, I didn't imply that this is your position but it is a position I have seen here that I feel needs to be challenged. The one thing I disagreed with in your posts was that implication that moral purity is unattainable. Maybe I have misread this part too, but I feel that this belief can serve to justify and excuse what we do rather than help us face up and accept where we are now.

As for the second paragraph, I agree wholeheartedly. In fact expectations of all sorts cause trouble and obstruct us from seeing things as they are.

\_/\\_

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi

by Carol on Wed Feb 09, 2011 12:50 am

Dan74 wrote:

Yes, I've read this article before (as well as the more detailed and scathing Broken Buddha by Ven Dhammika)

I'd forgotten that article ... here's a link: The Broken Buddha written by a Theravadan monk who after 25 years. He begins his paper with this introduction:

Introduction

There is no law in history which guarantees that Buddhism will grow roots in the West or advance beyond its present infantile stage. But one would expect that it will grow more conscious of its own difficulties and Buddhists will awaken to the problems which Buddhism itself thrusts upon man as an essential part of its treasure. One would also hope that doubt should appear as the sign of a deeper conviction.

~Luis O. Gomez

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by Dan74 on Wed Feb 09, 2011 2:27 am

Gregory Wonderwheel wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

What I see here is a claim that Zen teachers are as enlightened as can be, [ . . . ]

I guess that by "here" you mean "in this case at ZSS" and not "here at ZFI". I haven't seen anyone on this topic or elsewhere at ZFI make "a claim that Zen teachers are as enlightened as can be."

How could a person not go wrong from such a starting place? Any Zen teacher who encouraged that idea would be responsible for encouraging delusion, and any Zen student who encouraged that idea would be responsible for the same.

I could agree with the claim that Zen teachers are just as enlightened as they can be, as it also applies to the students who also are as enlightened as we can be.

  
Gregory .

Thank you, Gregory!

This is a simple point but it really bears repeating.

I've often felt that people have an expectation that a Zen teacher is a superior human being, enlightened and beyond their worries and problems. We don't enter a church expecting to find a saint with a direct line to God, so why do we have such high expectations of a Buddhist monk or teacher?

On the other hand, I believe there have been true saints and true masters and some even walk this earth today. Doesn't make the other teachers phonies as long as they are aware of their limitations and are sincere in what they do.

(ps - thanks for the Monty Python clip in the anarchy thread! )

pps

Kojip wrote:

Carol wrote:

Dan74 wrote:

I just mean that they would not make the kind of lame excuses for unethical behaviour that are sometimes heard around here.

No moksha in Thai samsara of monastic scandals

Sure there is corruption in Theravada, just look at the beastly collusion with nationalist politics in Sri Lanka. But....the "I'm screwing my students while dwelling in the absolute" style of corruption is a "non-dual" specialty. Teachers that are known for it are still honored after being being revealed. My big sister was trying to square the behaviour of Kalu Rinpoche before I knew what Buddhism was. So this situation with this teacher shows progress , greater awareness and sensitivity, and maybe also the presence of the internet mob.

Maybe good students are slim pickens? Maybe some teachers have a big blind spot when picking an heir? Maybe some of us are just naive....?

Regarding the problem with "non-dual" approaches and their pitfalls and specifically misusing the teachings on Emptiness, the material I posted here <http://zenforuminternational.org/viewtopic.php?f=64&t=5677> may be of interest to people.

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Wed Feb 09, 2011 4:26 am

Dan74 wrote:

I've often felt that people have an expectation that a Zen teacher is a superior human being, enlightened and beyond their worries and problems. We don't enter a church expecting to find a saint with a direct line to God, so why do we have such high expectations of a Buddhist monk or teacher?

As Chris pointed out part of the expectation or problem may lie in how Zen teachers are often referred to as Zen masters. Physicians, for example, don't claim to have "mastered" their profession. They're given license to practice medicine.

lok91

Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Jundo Cohen** on Wed Feb 09, 2011 6:11 am

No comment intended by me on anyone in particular, of course ... but, in the "Tiger Woods School of Buddhism" and with a good "Public Relations" Guru, one might even manage to keep one's lucrative business/career after the scandal passes from the headlines

...

In such cases, heading for therapy (like those celebrities who head for a couple of weeks to some Palm Springs "Rehab" for their sex or other addiction) is a good move ... It's all right here:

How to Make a Public Apology

<http://www.howcast.com/videos/404253-How-to-Make-a-Public-Apology>

Also this ...

<http://www.perfectapology.com/apologies-media.html>

... this too ...

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/tiger-woods-a-scandal-9879963>

Of course, a Zen Master would be beyond all such PR considerations.

In any event, I sincerely apologize for bringing the above scenario up (as probably what's going on in the present case), and I take responsibility for those I hurt in mentioning it, and will be taking some time away from my public role to reflect on my faults in doing so, surrounded by my loved ones.

Gassho, J

PS - Nobody faults anyone for having an affair or three. That is a matter between consenting grown-ups, even Buddhist grown-ups. On the other hand, a 'Teacher of the Precepts' who de facto destroys a couple of his Sangha (there was another 'Kanzeon Zen Center' in Bar Harbour Maine before this one ... now defunct), and a couple of marriages, within a period of a few years of each other in a series of affairs with students and Dharma Heirs ... perhaps a different story and open to criticism. In any event, Thank Buddha that the poor fellow will not be deprived of his main source of income.

PPS - If 'Ol Jundo here seems a little bit 'up in arms' and harsh in tone on this thread, it is because few things disgust me more than a 'fellow cop' gone bad ... damaging students, making a disaster of these beautiful teachings, and being hypocritical about it to boot. Last edited by Jundo Cohen on Wed Feb 09, 2011 5:21 pm, edited 20 times in total. Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shonin** on Wed Feb 09, 2011 6:58 am

Dan74 wrote:

What I see here is a claim that Zen teachers are as enlightened as can be, that this doesn't mean that they stop being human which may mean a bit of hanky-panky on the side and a bit of deception to cover it up. None of which squares with the tradition the way it's been handed down, but that's OK - ours is a transmission beyond words and letters and the stories of those dead guys are just hagiographies written in repressed and prudish times anyway. We, in the 21st Century are more realistic and down-to-earth about these things and it's time to rewrite the Corpus.

This is what I was referring to. And it is this view that I find pernicious.

But who is promoting this view? Is it possible you are misinterpreting people? I don't recall anyone on this board promoting that view. There seems to be a consensus that Eido Shimano's behaviour is completely inappropriate and that he has 'plenty to work on'. As for 'as enlightened as can be', it implies that we reach a point where we don't have any more work to do. Having more work to do means imperfection, or being human, imperfection might include some moral transgression. Being human and imperfect is a reality we have to face up to. It's the reason why we have work to do, not a reason why we don't. And I've not seen anyone here appear remotely persuaded by 'dwelling in the unconditioned' as a justification for Eido's inappropriate actions.

Dan74 wrote:

it is a position I have seen here that I feel needs to be challenged.

I didn't notice it, do you have any examples? You may be misinterpreting people. For example, I pointed out yesterday that Eido Shimano was human, as a reality to be faced (rather than idealising or having unrealistic expectations of Zen teachers). You seemed to misinterpret as some kind of justification for his inappropriate behaviour.

Dan74 wrote:

I believe that a master has gone beyond this,

Cool. Which one?

Zen practitioner and mindfulness teacher

North Oxfordshire Zen Group

My blog

Shonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher**::: on Wed Feb 09, 2011 8:34 am

Jundo Cohen wrote:

No comment intended by me, of course ... but, in the Tiger Woods School of Buddhism and with a good "Public Relations" Guru, one might even manage to keep one's lucrative business/career ...

Heading for therapy or a couple of weeks to some Palm Springs "Rehab" for one's sex or other addiction is an option too ...

How to Make a Public Apology

Also this ...

[http://www.perfectapology.com/apologies ... media.html](http://www.perfectapology.com/apologies...media.html)

... this too ...

[http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/tiger-woods-a ... id=9879963](http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/tiger-woods-a...id=9879963)

Of course, a Zen Master would be beyond all such PR considerations.

I sincerely apologize for bringing the above up, and will be taking some time away from my public role to reflect on my faults surrounded by my loved ones.

Gassho, J

Yeah, sad/funny but true. Thanks Jundo.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **moon face buddha** on Wed Feb 09, 2011 8:55 am

Gregory Wonderwheel wrote:

How could a person not go wrong from such a starting place? Any Zen teacher who encouraged that idea would be responsible for encouraging delusion, and any Zen student who encouraged that idea would be responsible for the same.

I could agree with the claim that Zen teachers are just as enlightened as they can be, as it also applies to the students who also are as enlightened as we can be.

\_/\\_  
Gregory .

Do you think that a lot of Zen literature does tend to create and perpetuate the myth of the Enlightened Master. This may be at least part of the reason why Zen students are not quite as discerning as Gotama suggested they should be. Is meditation and koan practice being used too much whilst the ethical teachings are side-lined? I know I fell in to this trap.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Wed Feb 09, 2011 5:00 pm

Unethical practices by Zen Buddhist practitioners was discussed in detail here:

[viewtopic.php?f=64&t=5876](http://viewtopic.php?f=64&t=5876)

For those interested in this topic, there's lot of good info and discussion there.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA



<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Wed Feb 09, 2011 5:23 pm

moon face buddha wrote:

Is meditation and koan practice being used too much whilst the ethical teachings are side-lined? I know I fell in to this trap.

Some practitioners do fall into this trap.

However, at our temple, we have a Precept Ceremony once a month during which we affirm or re-affirm our intention to live according to the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts, which are our ethical guidelines. I also frequently refer to the Precepts during dharma talks, and we sometimes discuss ethical behavior during our monthly Group Discussions.

Years ago, we formulated an Ethics Statement that is in print and available for anyone to pick up, take with them, and peruse at their leisure. It outlines the Precepts and sets forth what is proper conduct, goes over improper conduct, and sets forth a grievance procedure to follow if either I or other sangha members act unethically.

It's not possible to practice at our temple without being aware of ethical teachings and being encouraged to follow them in all aspects of life, and at this point in time, most temples, monasteries, and other practice places have Ethics Statements. All practitioners, whether teachers or students, are expected to follow Zen Buddhist ethical guidelines. However, because people are people and sometimes transgress, these Ethics Statements include grievance procedures by which transgressions may be addressed and rectified.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi

by **Genjo** on Thu Feb 10, 2011 3:20 am

Gregory Wonderwheel wrote:

... I have seen people who only wanted an apology but because they did not get the apology chose to sue. Personally, I found the ZSS response to be weak tea, and had I been advising them, I would have said to avoid the specifics in Roshi Joan's questions or other such factual admissions, but also to amp up the tone of regret in the statement and at least make the emotional concession of regret for all the emotional impact on any individuals and the mahasangha that these events and ZSS's conduct in response may have caused. This letter is a very factual PR statement about the changes in the organizations teaching leadership. I hope that ZSS is working on another letter to address the concerns (emotional and otherwise) of the affected individuals and the Buddha Dharma concerns of the Mahasangha, a letter that can be written in consultation with the people who have claims that they were wronged.

\_/\\_

Gregory

Dear Gregory,

I appreciate your comments and suggestions and have passed them on to the full ZSS Board.

Again speaking for myself alone and not the ZSS Board, there is something I want to say:

Perhaps if I had lived at DBZ as an unsui I would have become aware of what was going on. I would like to think so. It was really a wake up call for me when I learned that in addition to the one recent ethical breach we were aware of that Eido Roshi was using sexualized language with vulnerable female students under his care. I also realized that because he had not made the progress that I hoped he had made since the last public exposure 15 years ago, he had no moral ground from which to moderate the impulses of the male unsui [monks] under his care.

Some might say, "None of it was your fault, " I disagree. I see several faults of mine in all this. For one thing, there should have been more visible and updated ethical guidelines with teeth posted and regularly discussed by the Sangha. Knowing some of Eido Roshi's history, I should have seen to this. Also, I am sorry I didn't listen more closely to senior ZSS board members who had been through this all before and were advocating for more immediate change. These are just two of my mistakes.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **moon face buddha** on Thu Feb 10, 2011 8:44 am

Genjo wrote:

I also realized that because he had not made the progress that I hoped he had made since the last public exposure 15 years ago, he had no moral ground from which to moderate the impulses of the male unsui [monks] under his care.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 1:50 am

An interesting article...

Lineage Delusions: Eido Shimano Roshi, Dharma Transmission, and American Zen

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... usions.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...usions.pdf)

"Stated simply, the doctrine of dharma transmission is just one more among the many attractive delusions held by human beings. Unfortunately, adherence to it gives the dharma heir a very powerful – and potentially dangerous – authority within the community of Zen practitioners, much as does the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession in the Roman Catholic Church, where the recent child abuse scandals illustrate the dangers of priesthoods that claim an authority beyond the ordinary and human. Those in such positions are sorely tempted to protect each other, ignoring or covering up the harm done by their colleagues."

"So long as American Zen relies on dharma transmission as a credential, there will be one Shimano after another – and dharma heirs who will go to great lengths to protect the master that conferred authority upon them. For if the master who has declared me awakened has erred, if he does not, indeed, 'dwell in the Absolute,' then my own credential is called into question – along with my prestige and authority in the community and my ability to confer this power upon others."

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Kojip** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 3:08 am

Shodo wrote:

"Stated simply, the doctrine of dharma transmission is just one more among the many attractive delusions held by human beings. Unfortunately, adherence to it gives the dharma heir a very powerful – and potentially dangerous – authority within the community of Zen practitioners, much as does the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession in the Roman Catholic Church, where the recent child abuse scandals illustrate the dangers of priesthoods that claim an authority beyond the ordinary and human. Those in such positions are sorely tempted to protect each other, ignoring or covering up the harm done by their colleagues."

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Why is it a "delusion"? I can't speak well to this topic, not having recieved transmission, but the basic idea that certain experiential insights are confirmed by a teacher sounds safer to me than a free-for-all of self-appointed Buddha's. Just look at the internet. Blaming transmission for a breakdown seems extreme to me, a case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. I have had some ups and downs with teachers, but I also have an F-you streak that doesn't like the idea of any teacher who might (gasp) be wiser than ME. Grounding in lineage is often the difference between the company of very sane people, and the ungrounded quakery of the Spiritual Marketplace.  
<http://www.ontariozen.com/>  
<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 3:31 am

Kojip wrote:

"Why is it a "delusion"? I can't speak well to this topic, not having recieved transmission, but the basic idea that certain experiential insights are confirmed by a teacher sounds safer to me than a free-for-all of self-appointed Buddha's. Just look at the internet. Blaming transmission for a breakdown seems extreme to me, a case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. I have had some ups and downs with teachers, but I also have an F-you streak that doesn't like the idea of any teacher who might (gasp) be wiser than ME.

Grounding in lineage is often the difference between the company of very sane people, and the ungrounded quackery of the Spiritual Marketplace."

Well... I didn't say it. I was quoting a part of the article I linked.

That guys teacher was Katagiri Roshi... and he wanted to transmit the dharma to him, and he rejected it.

Grounding in lineage is often the difference between the company of very sane people, and the ungrounded quackery of the Spiritual Marketplace....

Well, a good example is Eido.

What is the use of having been proclaimed a teacher by such a poor soul? He is the very definition of "ungrounded quackery" in my opinion...

Or the Soto school in general?

I mean, here in the US, Dharma Transmission is a big deal... means you're an "authority". In Japan, it probably means that your dad was a priest, and you have a temple to inherit - and honestly very little else.

Or the Rinzai School...?

Inka is no booster-shot for ass-hattery.

Looks to me like the norm is a person can pass 10 million koans, and still be an insufferable douche'-bag.

I would however, tend to agree with you - but the article brings up very good points.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Kojip** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 4:00 am

Shodo wrote:

Well, a good example is Eido.

What is the use of having been proclaimed a teacher by such a poor soul? He is the very definition of "ungrounded quackery" in my opinion...

Or the Soto school in general?

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Or the Rinzai School...?

Inka is no booster-shot for ass-hattery.

Looks to me like the norm is a person can pass 10 million koans, and still be an insufferable douche'-bag.

This is trash talk, Shodo. It is also impugning the integrity of a forum member. Do you have anything to say beyond these expressions of contemp? What are you after?

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 4:06 am

Sorry you took it that way... Why in the world do you think that it is trash talk?

Its a fact... the Soto school in Japan gives out transmission in the majority of cases, from father to son... it doesn't have anything to do with spiritual anything. It's about handing over a family temple.

Same with Rinzai... what does it mean to pass 1 koan, or 1 million koans, when their personal behavior is so off the charts people turn away from Zen and run as fast as they can?

...and I am not going to pretend that Eido is a pure vessel of the dharma...

What are you after?

Was just trying to respond to your previous statement... sorry.

Read the article if you like, or not... I find it brings up useful questions.

Even if the magical claims of dharma transmission are discarded and it is recognized as an ordinary human institution, it still should not be retained as a method of training Zen meditation teachers. No truly meaningful credential can be conferred simply at the pleasure of one person. Indeed, as a method, it creates toxic interpersonal dynamics in communities, for the future recognition or preferment of a student is entirely dependent upon pleasing a dharma heir, or a presumptive dharma heir. If I wish to rise in this hierarchical system, I must pay court to the dharma heir and his or her favorites, and as a courtier in such a system, I can never openly acknowledge my self-interested pursuit of attention, for my goal is always, theoretically, "spiritual" development. Yet, of course, my ability to please a dharma heir and receive, in my turn, recognition and/or authorization will give me status and even employment opportunities. The dynamics of court, courtier, and courtship create endless distortions of human behavior even in ordinary institutions – a business, political party, or college. These run wild when the king, queen, pope, or dharma heir has imputed "special" powers. Anyone connected for a length of time to a Zen Center can cite examples.

Of course, many Zen teachers will refuse to discard this false credential. Those with the courage to act can take comfort from the Buddha's words in The Mahaparinibbana Suttanta, words that E.A. Burtt suggests bring out "one major and authentic note" among the various presumed "final" teachings attributed to the Buddha.

As the Buddha prepares for death, Ananda begs him to leave "instructions as touching the order." The Buddha responds that he has nothing more to offer. He has taught freely to everyone, his teaching is complete, and the community must now find its own way forward.

"What, then, Ananda, does the order expect that of me? I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truth, Ananda, the Tathagata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher, who keeps some things back."

Then the Buddha hints at the possibility of a coming power struggle, suggesting wryly that if any person now thinks he should run things, he should just go ahead and try. "Surely, Ananda, should there be anyone who harbors the thought, 'It is I who will lead the brotherhood,' or, 'The order is dependent on me,' he should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the order."

To illustrate the absurdity of such thinking, the Buddha even goes so far as to insist that he, himself, does not "lead" the order. "Now the Tathagata, Ananda, thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood, or that the order is dependent upon him. Why, then, should the Tathagata leave instructions in any matter concerning the order?"

The Buddha is said to have said many things. But these words ring true. Monks seeking to establish governing hierarchies modeled upon patterns of royal or imperial lineages must have lamented their inclusion in the canon. These words were, to the hearers, most probably unforgettable – told and retold in the community too many times to be expunged. If they are indeed authoritative, the Buddha himself never had any notion of the creation of a lineage of dharma heirs.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher**::: on Fri Feb 11, 2011 6:55 am

Just found this- a blog post at Ken Wilber's Integral site written just last week by Jun Po Kelly, one of Eido Shimano's dharma heirs. His attitude about what happened at ZSS seems a bit different from that of Genjo and others...

In Defense of Promiscuity: Posted February 7th, 2011 by Jun Po Kelly Roshi

excerpt:

### Should Teachers Sleep with Their Students: A Case Study

Once upon a time, during my bachelor monastic training years, I completed a period of celibacy. Three years before I took on the mantle of lineage holder, 83rd patriarch in my ethnocentric patriarchal sexist tradition (when I became a Rinzai Zen Roshi), I had the opportunity to be instructed and subsequently enlightened and liberated to a deeper truth about sexual union.

This was kindly, rudely, and playfully demanded by the Sacred feminine I encountered. The year was 1989 and I was serving as head monk and vice abbot at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in the beautiful Catskill Mountains of New York State. I was at Syracuse University giving a dharma talk to perhaps 150 interested Green and Orange altitude seekers and state junkies. I wasn't always a Zen priest and abbot, and in a former reincarnation had been a rather infamous name in the underground world of the counterculture. So I was wearing one of my leftover Armani suits over a silk shirt and exquisite tie, all wrapped somewhat ironically in my Buddhist rakusu.

At the end of my talk on the integration of Rinzai Zen into American culture, I opened the floor for questions. A delicate hand came up from an absolute beauty in the front row, a young Swedish coed whose blond hair, blue eyes, and fair skin had already caught my eye, more than once.

"May I ask a personal question," she said.

"Of course," I replied from the lectern.

"Well," she said, crossing her legs, "Considering your position, can you be with a woman?"

I smiled. "That depends," I said, baiting her (or so I thought)...

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 1:08 pm

christopher::: wrote:



Just found this- a blog post at Ken Wilber's Integral site written just last week by Jun Po Kelly, one of Eido Shimano's dharma heirs. His attitude about what happened at ZSS seems a bit different from that of Genjo and others...

In Defense of Promiscuity: Posted February 7th, 2011 by Jun Po Kelly Roshi

Gag me with a spoon!  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 3:18 pm

Carol said:  
Gag me with a spoon!

You thought THAT was stomach turning... keep reading a little - we find out that she was only 19, and yeah, he most certainly had sex with her.

Here is another stomach turner... Junpo Kelly talking about his totally radical life changing method Mondo Zen!

<http://www.kenwilber.com/blog/show/554>

If your spirituality is Christianity, Mondo Zen will enrich and deepen your Love. If you're a Hindu, Mondo Zen™ will stabilize Samadhi. If a Taoist, Mondo Zen™ will open you to The Way. If a Buddhist, Mondo Zen™ will impart an experience of Shunyata (Radical Emptiness/Fullness). If you're Zen Buddhist, it will give an experience and clear understanding of Dhyana or Zen, the marriage of wisdom and compassion. Whether you're a warrior in men's work, a woman of power creating a new world, a contemplative individual, a social or environmental activist, an executive, or an Integral scholar, Mondo Zen™ will enhance your clarity, energy and humor — with more penetrating insight and effectiveness in all circumstances.

This is TRUE FREEDOM. This is Mondo Zen™.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xghquBkKXL4>

What is Zen?

\*long, hard stare... snap fingers... point at you... point at me... fist.... and poof it out!\*

But the best is the last 10 seconds.... OH YES - it's worth it

Last edited by Shodo on Fri Feb 11, 2011 5:01 pm, edited 2 times in total.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 4:56 pm

Perhaps the best thing Shimano ever did was disavow Jun Po as a dharma heir ... not that it makes any difference, since Jun Po continues to claim it -- and once it's done, it's done in Rinzai Zen.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Genjo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 4:58 pm

Shodo wrote:

Carol said:

Gag me with a spoon!

You thought THAT was stomach turning... keep reading a little - we find out that she was only 19, and yeah, he most certainly had sex with her.

I hope any one reading this reads the whole article: [http://integrallife.com/member/jun-po-k ... omiscuity#](http://integrallife.com/member/jun-po-k...omiscuity#)

Junpo also says, "if you want to learn from me. It wouldn't be appropriate" and "Now that I have your attention, know that I do not in any way support unconscious, lust-driven sexual relationships."

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **moon face buddha** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 5:13 pm

Genjo wrote:

Junpo also says, "if you want to learn from me. It wouldn't be appropriate" and "Now that I have your attention, know that I do not in any way support unconscious, lust-driven sexual relationships."

Which does raise the question...is the product so weak that it needs such a gaudy wrapper to attract customers?

Do some western zen 'masters' think we are all so jaded by the modern information/media age that they have to keep shouting FIRE! in a crowded theater? If SEX SELLS is it really the only way to SELL the Dharma?

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 5:26 pm

Shodo referred to an article he linked to by Eric Storlie and said:

That guys teacher was Katagiri Roshi... and he wanted to transmit the dharma to him, and he rejected it.

No, no, hell no. "That guy" left Katagiri-roshi as a disgruntled lay student (not priest-ordained) many years ago, before I came to study with Katagiri-roshi, who only went through dharma transmission with priest disciples, and not even all of them. He never offered to go through dharma transmission with Eric Storlie.

Shodo, please get your facts straight before you make these claims.

Who Eric Storlie claims offered him dharma transmission is not named in the article you linked to. He also doesn't name who he practiced and studied with after he left Katagiri-roshi. When I practiced at Minnesota Zen Center with Katagiri-roshi, Eric Storlie was not practicing under the guidance of anyone.

If you want to take Eric Storlie's article as an accurate assessment of what dharma transmission is about, go ahead. I don't

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 5:30 pm

Genjo wrote:

Shodo wrote:

Carol said:

Gag me with a spoon!

You thought THAT was stomach turning... keep reading a little - we find out that she was only 19, and yeah, he most certainly had sex with her.

I hope any one reading this reads the whole article: [http://integrallife.com/member/junpo-k ... omiscuity#](http://integrallife.com/member/junpo-k...omiscuity#)

Junpo also says, "if you want to learn from me. It wouldn't be appropriate" and "Now that I have your attention, know that I do not in any way support unconscious, lust-driven sexual relationships."

I did read the whole article before posting ... I found it revolting whether or not he had sex with her.

Lord! I'm really pissed at these guys -- Genpo, Junpo, Stuart Davis -- the "integral Zen" crew ... What a crock! Red, Amber, Orange, and Green -- my Zen fanny!

I guess I need to go crawl back in my hole and recover my temper before posting again.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi

by **Genjo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 5:31 pm

moon face buddha wrote:

Genjo wrote:

Junpo also says, "if you want to learn from me. It wouldn't be appropriate" and "Now that I have your attention, know that I do not in any way support unconscious, lust-driven sexual relationships."

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This is one talk, do you really think that Junpo refers to sex in every discourse to sell his message? I don't think so. Are we never to speak of sexual attraction? Without discourse on this very subject there is more likelihood not less likelihood that there will be sexual misconduct.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 5:34 pm

Nonin wrote:

No, no, hell no. "That guy" left Katagiri-roshi as a disgruntled lay student (not priest-ordained) many years ago, before I came to study with Katagiri-roshi, who only went through dharma transmission with priest disciples, and not even all of them. He never offered to go through dharma transmission with Eric Storlie.

Shodo, please get your facts straight before you make these claims.

My bad... I assumed that since he referenced Suzuki and Katagiri as his teachers... and Katagiri came after Suzuki soooooo...

Genjo said:

This is one talk, do you really think that Junpo refers to sex in every discourse to sell his message? I don't think so. Are we never to speak of sexual attraction? Without discourse on this very subject there is more likelihood not less likelihood that there will be sexual misconduct.

One talk, given days ago, around the same time Genpo had his confession... and a month after Eido's letter to the NY Times...

Timing is everything.

[edited by moderator ~ Carol]

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by christopher:::** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 6:03 pm

Shodo wrote:

One talk, given days ago, around the same time Genpo had his confession... and a month after Eido's letter to the NY Times...

Timing is everything.

[edited by moderator ~ Carol]

I agree, the timing of this blog essay is strange, given Junpo's association with DBZ and Eido Shimano, as well as Ken Wilber and Integral Zen. Unlike Genjo who has been apologizing Junpo hadn't said anything publicly, until now.

[edited by moderator ~ Carol]

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Genjo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 6:32 pm

Shodo wrote:

Genjo said:

This is one talk, do you really think that Junpo refers to sex in every discourse to sell his message? I don't think so. Are we never to speak of sexual attraction? Without discourse on this very subject there is more likelihood not less likelihood that there will be sexual misconduct.

One talk, given days ago, around the same time Genpo had his confession... and a month after Eido's letter to the NY Times...

Timing is everything.

[edited by moderator ~Carol]

Yes, timing means a lot; therefore, I find Junpo's talk very timely. Even though I believe in the absolute I don't believe in absolute morality; nevertheless, I can't imagine the circumstance where a teacher who has intimate relations with a student hasn't made an egregious error of judgement. I've made many errors in my life, but I am grateful I have never made this one. To think that we are ever beyond the laws of causality, is foolishness in the extreme. We cannot ignore the harm we have done, and we must use our errors to learn from our mistakes. This is the only way to maturity. Our great vow to care for all beings great and small, animate and inanimate must be our guide. However, even with a great vow, we must never forget how easy it is to fool ourselves.  
 Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
 by **Shodo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 6:33 pm

Christopher said:

I agree, the timing of this blog essay is strange, given Junpo's association with DBZ and Eido Shimano, as well as Ken Wilber and Integral Zen. Unlike Genjo who has been apologizing Junpo hadn't said anything publicly, until now.

edited by moderator -- Nonin

It is mentioned a few times in the archives...

From the Woman's Workshop...

"-Junpo's behavior and his being made a dharma heir caused alot of people to become disillusioned and angry. Many people didn't want to come back to DBZ as a result. Some people left the sangha permanently.

[edited by moderator ~Carol]

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1993 ... rkshop.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1993...rkshop.pdf)

The minutes from a Special ZSS Board Directors meeting...

"Kelly read his letter of resignation (copy attached) and added that he and Eido Roshi was of similar character, lacking ethical and moral standards..."

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1993 ... \\_Board.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1993..._Board.pdf)

EDIT: Yikes.... Im sorry Carol! This info is in the Archives... I thought everyone knew...  
 srry

Last edited by Shodo on Fri Feb 11, 2011 6:48 pm, edited 1 time in total.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 6:43 pm

Moderator's Note: Potentially slanderous statements have been removed. Even if true, they expose this site to lawsuit by allowing them to be published here. Please make no allegations about anyone's sexual conduct here unless the evidence backing your statement up is public, more than hearsay, an unimpeachable admission by the party(ies) involved, and explicitly details the allegations rather than generally suggests the allegations might be true. Also, passing on other peoples' unsubstantiated allegations and/or rumors doesn't meet the standard of verifiable facts.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 6:46 pm

Genjo said:

Yes, timing means a lot; therefore, I find Junpo's talk very timely. Even though I believe in the absolute I don't believe in absolute morality; nevertheless, I can't imagine the circumstance where a teacher who has intimate relations with a student hasn't made an egregious error of judgement. I've made many errors in my life, but I am grateful I have never made this one. To think that we are ever beyond the laws of causality, is foolishness in the extreme. We cannot ignore the harm we have done, and we must use our errors to learn from our mistakes. This is the only way to maturity. Our great vow to care for all beings great and small, animate and inanimate must be our guide. However, even with a great vow, we must never forget how easy it is to fool ourselves.

Genjo, I find you to be a likeable fellow - and I really like what you said here. I am antagonistic to Eido, and you get caught in the cross-fire because you are his heir. But the precepts to me are where the "rubber meets the road"... and you seem to have all your tires on the road, and the tread is good.

I do hope that you lead ZSS out of this mess... if it survives.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.



Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 6:54 pm

Genjo wrote:

Shodo wrote:

Carol said:

Gag me with a spoon!

You thought THAT was stomach turning... keep reading a little - we find out that she was only 19, and yeah, he most certainly had sex with her.

I hope any one reading this reads the whole article: [http://integrallife.com/member/jun-po-k ... omiscuity#](http://integrallife.com/member/jun-po-k...omiscuity#)

Junpo also says, "if you want to learn from me. It wouldn't be appropriate" and "Now that I have your attention, know that I do not in any way support unconscious, lust-driven sexual relationships."

My interpretation of the article is that he's supporting wakeful ("I thought you were Awake" ~ hot Swedish coed) sexual encounters with the sacred feminine ("a deeper truth about sexual union ... demanded by the Sacred feminine I encountered" ~ Jun Po Kelly Roshi).

Probably have to be young and hot to represent the sacred feminine, I imagine.

lok91

Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 7:11 pm

lok91 wrote:

Probably have to be young and hot to represent the sacred feminine, I imagine.

Hell, no! Women are at their best after 40.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 7:16 pm

Carol wrote:

lok91 wrote:

Probably have to be young and hot to represent the sacred feminine, I imagine.

Hell, no! Women are at their best after 40.

I'm sure that's true!

lok91

Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 9:28 pm

I read the article. I won't rant about colors, yet it seems a bit manipulative considering where he goes with the article. I have no answers either. BUT, I am reluctant to take this article at face value... and to let this image stand as a representative of the sacred feminine. Sounds like someone (the coed) who is after bragging rights, like notches on a belt, more sexual politics? ... so perhaps Junpo was being presented with a self-reflection. Can't tell with the information given. I don't know any of the background. She seems on track though when she recognizes that he's not awake, with the implication being that this exchange needs two awakened players... precisely why these relationships are so destructive between teacher/student.

The Sacred Feminine is so far beyond youth and the small sexuality that we ascribe to it. Nor is it reserved one gender, nor even sacred in the one. Yet, at this point it needs to be distinguished from sexual politics, if it is to be rediscovered. and, I do mean, rediscovered.

Linda

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 10:16 pm

also from the article:

Insight alone is not enough. There have been many Awakened teachers who did not have the correct view to understand their insight in the face of their relationships, their sexuality, their emotions, and their cognitive understanding of the world. Because of this, we need insight, but we also need a philosophical re-indoctrinate that allows us to develop emotional maturity and mental stability. From this disciplined state of mind, intelligent compassion enlightens passion. It is only through the insight of meditation, the mental discipline of philosophy, and the emotional work of uncovering our psychological shadows that we can reform our heartbreaking and restricting ignorance that obscures the sacredness of sex.

This seems right on to me. And more to the point than did he or didn't he...

The question for me ... is zen a vehicle for discovering this kind of maturity. I am not so sure, in these times.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by lok91** on Fri Feb 11, 2011 10:41 pm

I wouldn't take the "case study" too seriously, dialogue that bad is usually only written in Hollywood. What da ya bet in part two the Swedish coed turns out to be a virgin and he rediscovers his Buddha-nature in not taking her. See:

Sorry if I spoiled the ending sensei!

lok91  
 Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Sat Feb 12, 2011 6:14 am

From Dosho Port's Blog  
 A Little About Genpo, Zen Teachers, and Sex  
 [...]

On days like today, though, one thing that strikes me is how American Zen has attracted a self-righteous lot quick to pounce on someone when they're down and bragging about how right they were about it all to begin with. Looks like sanctimonious self-righteousness.

There used to be a precept discouraging that kind of thing called taking up the way of not elevating the self while belittling others but there seems to be fine print to the effect "...unless you do something I have a problem with."

But whoops - there I go joining the elevating-the-self crowd!

Back down to earth I wonder, where's the loving kindness?

[...]

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by christopher:::** on Sat Feb 12, 2011 8:12 am

Carol wrote:

From Dosho Port's Blog

A Little About Genpo, Zen Teachers, and Sex

[...]

On days like today, though, one thing that strikes me is how American Zen has attracted a self-righteous lot quick to pounce on someone when they're down and bragging about how right they were about it all to begin with. Looks like sanctimonious self-righteousness.

There used to be a precept discouraging that kind of thing called taking up the way of not elevating the self while belittling others but there seems to be fine print to the effect "...unless you do something I have a problem with."

But whoops - there I go joining the elevating-the-self crowd!

Back down to earth I wonder, where's the loving kindness?

[...]

thanks for posting this, Carol.

Last edited by christopher::: on Sat Feb 12, 2011 4:32 pm, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Nonin** on Sat Feb 12, 2011 4:04 pm

Chris,

Dosho Port wrote the above, not Carol. She posted it.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by christopher:::** on Sat Feb 12, 2011 4:33 pm

Nonin wrote:

Chris,

Dosho Port wrote the above, not Carol. She posted it.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Thank you Nonin sensei, I corrected the error.

~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Sat Feb 12, 2011 4:39 pm

Nonin wrote:

Chris,

Dosho Port wrote the above, not Carol. She posted it.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Yes, he did. I posted some similar thoughts here in the Genpo topic  
I've been thinking a lot lately about the precept about not harboring ill-will. These sex and money scandals sure do bring that one out in me and a lot of others, too.

I'm working on it... but it's a very hard one when we see harmful conduct from zen teachers who are remorseless and/or fail to make actual atonement for the harm they have done. Cynicism isn't the answer, retribution isn't the answer, abandoning our spiritual practice isn't the answer (and I believe harboring ill-will is abandoning my spiritual practice) ... So, what is the answer? partofit22 wrote a beautiful post not long ago that has really stuck with me.

<http://www.zenforuminternational.org/viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&p=80542#p80542>  
wishing someone experiences remorse is not quite the same as wishing they realize the errors of their ways, and experience the joy of seeing-  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by CSSF** on Tue Feb 15, 2011 6:10 pm

A group of former ZSS sangha members have been communicating over the past several months. We felt it was important to deal openly, and in a safe, supportive environment, with the pain Eido Shimano's choices have caused so many of us. For this reason we have organized a facilitated meeting in NYC on Sunday, March 20th from 9 am to 5 pm.

Please visit the web page (<http://www.sanghasteppingforth.com>) for more detailed information and join us on the 20th if you feel that this meeting may be beneficial for you.

Committee for Sangha Stepping Forth (CSSF)  
CSSF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Tue Feb 15, 2011 7:28 pm

CSSF wrote:

A group of former ZSS sangha members have been communicating over the past several months. We felt it was important to deal openly, and in a safe, supportive environment,

with the pain Eido Shimano's choices have caused so many of us. For this reason we have organized a facilitated meeting in NYC on Sunday, March 20th from 9 am to 5 pm.

Please visit the web page (<http://www.sanghasteppingforth.com>) for more detailed information and join us on the 20th if you feel that this meeting may be beneficial for you.

Committee for Sangha Stepping Forth (CSSF)

Thanks to those who are organizing and facilitating this meeting. I wish healing, understanding, and liberation from suffering for all those who have been harmed by Eido Shimano's conduct over the years.

Deep bows,

Carol

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Tue Feb 15, 2011 7:31 pm

From Dosho Port's blog

Les Kaye Letter to Kanzeon Board re: Genpo and AZTA History  
Dear Chet and Kanzeon Board Members;

Chozen Bays has informed the AZTA membership that Genpo's Salt Lake City students' are concerned about AZTA's failure to respond to Genpo's recent admissions.

They asked her: "Why are all the Zen teachers silent about this situation with Genpo? " " Is there some kind of conspiracy to protect any Zen teacher, no matter what they do to harm others?"

I am writing to let you know that AZTA has not been silent about Genpo's behavior, and in fact was quite active several years ago in trying to change what we felt was an intolerable situation. Following is part of that history.

In August, 1992 , the AZTA teachers at the time (known in those early days as the Second Generations American Zen Teachers group) wrote a letter to Maezumi-roshi expressing our concern about Genpo's on-going sexual exploitations and his

misappropriation of funds. We asked that his permission to teach be revoked. That letter is attached [Dosho note: see the Sweeping Zen site for the letter in pdf].

Those of us who signed the letter to Maezumi received responses from Genpo's students, criticizing us and denying that he had created harm.

Here is an excerpt from one of those letters to the Second Generations American Zen Teachers:

The issues of student-teacher relationships and sexual misconduct are very relevant to Zen in North America. I have seen Genpo Sensei work personally on these issues and have seen him take responsibility for his past sexual misconduct. I question and am very much disturbed by your approach as a group to address such issues. It appears that it has become somewhat of a personal vendetta for some of you and that a case has been presented to have Genpo Sensei, a lineage holder and Dharma successor, stop teaching. I feel very sad that Zen in North America has come to this. As a group, would it not be more productive to offer a context of support for one another, and a fair forum to discuss such issues rather than trying to slander and undermine one another? I question your integrity as spiritual leaders to have so irresponsibly signed such a letter without realizing the implications to the Dharma in the West and without investigating its accuracy, not to mention the effects it could have on the hundreds of students that Genpo sensei now has in Europe and America.

- From a wom[a]n at Kanzeon Bald Peak Mountain, Hillsboro, OR, August 19, 1992.

Here is a second excerpt:

It seems that those of you who felt so ethically and morally responsible for signing this letter attacking the ethical and moral behavior of a fellow teacher do not have the first clue about practicing such conduct in your own lives.

- From another women at Kanzeon Bald Peak Mountain, Hillsboro, OR, August 25, 1992

The following month, Sept. 1992, a meeting - organized by Chozen Bays and Yvonne Rand of the San Francisco Zen Center, and moderated by a paid, professional facilitator - was held with Genpo, Maezumi-roshi, and others, at Green Gulch Farm, an affiliate of San Francisco Zen Center. The purpose of the meeting was to help Maezumi-roshi, and everyone else, understand the situation and to give Genpo a chance to respond to our concerns. Many of Genpo's students from Los Angles attended, as well as his attorney. Genpo was confronted by four women (actually, three women and the husband of a fourth) who told their stories of being personally abused by Genpo. The meeting was respectful and courteous, except at one point when the husband said to Genpo: "If you touch my wife in the dokusan room again I'll kill you."

Edit: This Paragraph has been removed, as questions regarding it's accuracy have been raised.

At the end of the meeting, Maezumi-roshi was asked to comment. I don't recall his exact words but they were something like: "Don't be the first to throw stones." He did not accept our request to withdraw Genpo's sanction to teach the Dharma.



In sum, AZTA has not been indifferent. Almost twenty years ago, we tried to curtail Genpo's behavior and were told that we were in the wrong. Today we are being told by Genpo's more recent students that we are in the wrong for NOT doing something.

If others express concern about AZTA's lack of involvement, please share this message with them.

Respectfully,  
 Les Kaye  
 Kannon Do Zen Center  
 Mountain View, CA  
 It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by christopher:::** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 4:19 am

Great to hear about the Committee for Sangha Stepping Forth (CSSF) initiative!

The situation with Genpo roshi is tragic to read about. Too often we really are limited in how much we can help others. Such stories make it pretty clear though why firm rules/protocols in regards teacher/student relationships are so important.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Anders Honore** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 10:06 am

Shonin wrote:

It wasn't a lack of rules that was the problem. He broke a number of rules. The problem was that no one was enforcing the rules.

To be honest, I am shocked at this. Even appalled. That a Zen master could be allowed to sexually exploit and abuse a woman [text deleted due to possible inaccuracy of facts in Les Kaye's letter.] AZTA may have tried to address the situation through mediation 20 years ago, but they have other means at their disposal they could have opted for that they didn't.

This culture of discretion and 'forgiveness' (I am fine with forgiveness, but I think it is utterly mistaken to think that allowing someone to continue teaching Zen Buddhism to others as an extension of this is completely mistaken) is very damaging to Zen Buddhism.

In most traditional Buddhist countries, the person would simply be thrown out of the Sangha. I can't help but think that American Zen Buddhism suffers in this regard from it's 'isolationist' birthing. Separate communities propping up all over the place. They may have chosen to create some bonds with other communities, but they are still segregated organisations accountable only to themselves. Hard to avoid probably. But we do need to move towards a situation where the Buddhist communities across the US are tied more closely into something approaching a whole sangha. And from where I am sitting, the current 'networking' organs such as AZTA is the obvious place to move forward in such a direction and start adopting more responsibility on behalf of all its members.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Anders Honore

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **AlasdairGF** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 10:41 am

Anders Honore wrote:

To be honest, I am shocked at this. Even appalled. That a Zen master could be allowed to sexually exploit and abuse a woman [text deleted due to possible inaccuracies in Les Kaye's letter]. AZTA may have tried to address the situation through mediation 20 years ago, but they have other means at their disposal they could have opted for that they didn't.

I was horrified by this too - and tried to check up on it but could find no other mentions of this. I see now that the original letter by Les Kaye, hosted at [http://wildfoxzen.blogspot.com/2011/02/ ... rd-re.html](http://wildfoxzen.blogspot.com/2011/02/...rd-re.html) has now been amended... and it now says:

Dosho Port wrote:

(Dosho's note: I'm deleting this paragraph and related comments because I've been made aware that some of the information may not be correct.)

Things are bad enough... let's not rush into hasty speech that makes things worse.

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **genkaku** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 2:01 pm

Interesting how forthright some 44 Zen teachers might be with regard to Genpo's miscues and yet seem reluctant to be equally forthright as a body about Mr. Shimano: Collective statement  
genkaku

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 3:40 pm

genkaku wrote:

Interesting how forthright some 44 Zen teachers might be with regard to Genpo's miscues and yet seem reluctant to be equally forthright as a body about Mr. Shimano: Collective statement

A whole bunch of Zen teachers were equally forthright about Eido Shimano. If you'd read the letters sent to the ZSS Board and posted all over the internet, you'd know this.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 3:45 pm

Here's the letter from the Zen teachers:

We, the undersigned Zen Buddhist teachers, endorse these recommendations to the Kanzeon Zen Center Board, and to whatever body governs the Big Mind trainings regarding the rehabilitation of Genpo Merzel after his recent admission of sexual misconduct with students. Because this repeats a pattern of more than 30 years, many of those signing on to these recommendations would prefer more stringent measures. We agree, however, that Genpo should take a leave of absence from teaching in any capacity. Further more, the appropriateness of his return to functioning as a teacher in any capacity

should be determined by a therapist who is an expert in the field of misconduct of this nature.

RECOMMENDATIONS for GENPO MERZEL, the KANZEON ZEN CENTER BOARD, and the Big Mind teaching organization regarding the status of Genpo Merzel

1) TEACHING: Take an indefinite leave, but at least one year, off from all teaching duties. To make it clear that Genpo takes working with this long-term issue seriously, and to provide the time and energy necessary for the work that needs to be done (personal inventory, specific therapy, reconciliation and community-healing, work with his marriage) we recommend that he takes an indefinite leave from all teaching in all forms until he has been cleared to do so by a therapist who is an expert in this field.

2) THERAPY: Expert inpatient treatment. There is an over 30 year pattern of repeated sexual misconduct with students, repeated episodes of discovery, emotional community upheaval, liquidation of assets, moving to another location, finding a new stable partner, and beginning the cycle all over again. This kind of deep-seated, repetitive pattern is not amenable to ordinary therapy. It requires admission of the full extent of the problem and surrendering to treatment with experts in sexual addiction, misuse of power and clergy misconduct. We can provide recommendations for an appropriate residential center. Full disclosure is important both for therapy and to avoid more traumatic revelations. This process has served other teachers and centers in the past, and has proved its efficacy.

3) SALT LAKE KANZEON CENTER: Make every effort to retain the Salt Lake facilities. The Kanzeon sangha has entered a critical period since these new revelations. A significant amount of time, at least a year, will be needed for the many processes that can help support sangha members through this time of great transition. They need a place to hold events, to gather, to support each other, to grieve, to be witnessed, to learn, and hopefully to reconstitute their spiritual practice. To lose their teacher and their center at the same time would be a double blow.

4) MONEY ISSUES: Reach out to other teachers to lead workshops and retreats. Genpo is justifiably worried about stepping back from teaching for an extended period because of the effect on the center and staff of loss of revenue. In a recent similar case, teachers from various traditions volunteered to come and teach at a Zen center that had lost its teacher. Particularly in a center focused on one charismatic teacher, this has the advantage of bringing in new voices and viewpoints, and reassuring students about the many ways to manifest and practice the dharma. It keeps the center open and makes spiritual support constantly available during a time of extra need. It also helps with revenue.

5) PUBLIC STATEMENT and APOLOGY: It is very important for Genpo to make a public, thorough statement and apology about what he has done, and state his plans to set things right, for himself, his students and the Kanzeon Center. The absence of a statement from the teacher himself provides fertile ground for gossip, leaks, speculation, gathering resentment and unfounded reactions. The statement could be published on the Kanzeon,

Big Mind and White Plum websites and on his Facebook page. The statement on the Big Mind website is a start. But without specific actions to make amends, it is not enough. Such actions should be spelled out in the public statement.

6) OUTSIDE EXPERT ASSISTANCE IN HEALING THE SANGHA: Hire experts to help with the work that needs to be done. There are many pieces to the work that needs to be done to help the sangha: witnessing, processing, education about clergy misconduct and power structures, setting up prevention strategies. We highly recommend the Faithtrust Institute, which has had decades of experience in these matters and has excellent trainers, curricula and media materials for appropriate workshops and trainings. See <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org> for books, media, trainings, and consultations on clergy misconduct.

Eiko Joshin Carolyn Atkinson, Everyday Dharma Zen Center  
 Shosan Victoria Austin, San Francisco Zen Center  
 Chozen Bays, Great Vow Zen Monastery  
 Hogen Bays, Great Vow Zen Monastery  
 Dai-En Bennage, Mt. Equity Zendo  
 Mitra Bishop, Hidden Valley Zen Center  
 Angie Boissevain, Floating Zendo  
 Gyokuko Carlson, Dharma Rain Zen Center  
 Kyogen Carlson, Dharma Rain Zen Center  
 Roko Sherry Chayat, Zen Center of Syracuse  
 Nonin Chowaney, Nebraska Zen Center  
 Jundo Cohen, Treeleaf Zendo  
 Shotai De La Rosa, Daishin Zendo  
 Norman Fischer, Everyday Zen Foundation  
 James Ford, Boundless Way Zen  
 Eshin Godfrey, Zen Centre of Vancouver  
 Gaelyn Godwin, Houston Zen Center  
 Sunyana Graef, Vermont Zen Center  
 Ruben Habito, Maria Kannon Zen Center  
 Elizabeth Hamilton, Zen Center of San Diego  
 Zenkei Blanche Hartman, San Francisco Zen Center  
 Taigen Henderson, Toronto Zen Centre  
 Kokyo Henkel, Santa Cruz Zen Center  
 Soeng. Hyang, Kwan Um Zen School  
 Les Keido Kaye, Kannon Do Zen Meditation Center  
 Daijaku Kinst, Ocean Gate Zen Center  
 Barry Magid, The Ordinary Mind Zendo  
 Genjo Marinello, Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji  
 Ejo McMullen, Eugene Zendo  
 Mary Mocine, Vallejo Zen Center  
 Tonen O'Connor, Milwaukee Zen Center  
 Susan Ji-on Postal, Empty Hand Zen Center  
 Al Fusho Rapaport, Open Mind Zen Meditation Center

Zuiko Redding, Cedar Rapids Zen Center  
 Shinshu Roberts, Ocean Gate Zen Center  
 Grace Jill Schireson, Empty Nest Zendo  
 Yozen Peter Schneider, Beginner's Mind Zen Center  
 Hozen Alan Senauke, Berkeley Zen Center  
 Joen Snyder O'Neal, Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center  
 Daniel Terragno, Rocks and Clouds Zendo  
 Katherine Thanas, Santa Cruz Zen Center  
 Jordan Thorn, San Francisco Zen Center  
 Sallie Jiko Tisdale, Dharma Rain Zen Center  
 Jisho Warner, Stone Creek Zen Center  
 Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
 USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by genkaku** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 4:15 pm

Nonin wrote:

genkaku wrote:

Interesting how forthright some 44 Zen teachers might be with regard to Genpo's miscues and yet seem reluctant to be equally forthright as a body about Mr. Shimano: Collective statement

A whole bunch of Zen teachers were equally forthright about Eido Shimano. If you'd read the letters sent to the ZSS Board and posted all over the internet, you'd know this.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

I am aware of the individual statements (19 letters, 20 signatories) on James Ford's site. I would only note that 1. The signatories to the Genpo petition numbered 44; 2. The signatories to the Genpo petition did so collectively, under a single set of observations and suggestions; 3. The singular letters on James Ford's blog present some sincere and some seemingly sincere observations in what often amounts to strikingly similar wording, but can not be imagined as having the same collective impact or clarity as the Genpo petition; and 4. What happened to the 23 who signed the Genpo petition and yet are notable in their absence on Ford's blog?

genkaku

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 4:36 pm

genkaku wrote:

Nonin wrote:

genkaku wrote:

Interesting how forthright some 44 Zen teachers might be with regard to Genpo's miscues and yet seem reluctant to be equally forthright as a body about Mr. Shimano: Collective statement

A whole bunch of Zen teachers were equally forthright about Eido Shimano. If you'd read the letters sent to the ZSS Board and posted all over the internet, you'd know this.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

I am aware of the individual statements (19 letters, 20 signatories) on James Ford's blog. I would only note that 1. The signatories to the Genpo petition numbered 44; 2. The signatories to the Genpo petition did so collectively, under a single set of observations and suggestions; 3. The singular letters on James Ford's blog present some sincere and some seemingly sincere observations in what often amounts to strikingly similar wording, but can not be imagined as having the same collective impact or clarity as the Genpo petition; and 4. What happened to the 23 who signed the Genpo petition and yet are notable in their absence on Ford's blog?

1. All of the letters were not posted on James Ford's blog.
2. I don't know what happened to the 23 (the number is less, when you consider that not all of them were posted on James's blog). If you really want to know what happened, why don't you write each of them and ask?
3. You've criticized Zen teachers for not speaking out; you've criticized Zen teachers when they do speak out; you've criticized Zen teachers for the way they've spoken out; you've criticized Zen teachers for not saying things that you've wanted them to say when they've spoken out; you've criticized Zen teachers for the form in which they've spoken out. There certainly is a pattern here.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **genkaku** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 5:28 pm

You've defended Zen teachers for not speaking out; you've defended Zen teachers when they do speak out; you've defended Zen teachers for the way they've spoken out; you've defended Zen teachers for not saying things that you've wanted them to say when they've spoken out; you've defended Zen teachers for the form in which they've spoken out. There certainly is a pattern here.

I guess we're both in a rut.

But for the record, I will defend Junpo's original letter to AZTA and Zen Studies Society ... unless of course defending this transmitted-teacher's letter is also apostate.

And you are right ... perhaps I should write to all of those whose letters do not appear on Ford's blog and ask them why they have not spoken up with the transparency they evinced when it came to Genpo. Sorry, but just now I am composing a letter to the president of the United States to ask why we are spending a trillion dollars in wars that have no logical grounding while cutting back on schools, jobs and other minor matters.

I imagine my letter to him will have the same effect that a letter to those who spoke up openly and collectively and transparently once, but have not done so again in a matter that is strikingly similar and painfully compelling.

You're right, though to point out my/our ruts.  
genkaku

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Wed Feb 16, 2011 6:17 pm

Posted over at SweepingZen

Sexual Ethics, Zen Scandals, and Cults  
By Kuzan Peter Schireson

February 14, 2011



The root of the word “scandal” comes from the Greek skandalon, meaning snare or cause of moral stumbling. Over time “skan” became the word for the stick used to spring a trap. Now its meaning has shifted from pointing to the cause of stumbling to the stumbling itself. Every human society and organization is prone to moral stumbling, and just in case we’re tempted to think our way is above it all, we should remember that Zen Buddhism is no exception.

Recently, two scandals – I should say two more scandals - have drawn attention in the Zen world. Both involve male teachers having sexual relations with their female students. One of the scandals involves Reverend Eido Shimano, founder of the Zen Studies Society in New York. Mr. Shimano was one of the first Japanese Zen teachers to come to America, eventually establishing what became a very active Zen community.

By reports, Mr. Shimano has been a serial sexual predator for decades, making uninvited and intrusive sexual advances on female students, some of whom became involved with him in sexual affairs which resulted in great psychological suffering. Over the years as reports of this behavior surfaced, there were attempts to call him to account. However, he had supporters in the sangha who resisted meeting his misdeeds head-on and imposing consequences. In some cases, his conduct was excused by the idea that his spiritual awakening is so profound that he somehow “lives in the absolute” and that questions of harm or abuse are matters in the relative world and do not apply to him.

Recently, documentation of Mr. Shimano’s behavior became more widely available to the public with the release (<http://www.shimanoarchive.com>) and an article about trouble in his sangha was published in the New York Times ([http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/21/us/21 ... ano&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/21/us/21...ano&st=cse)). After a kind of public apology, Mr. Shimano tried to refute allegations made about him in a private letter to the Times, a letter which later became public. He appears to be unrepentant and, as of this writing, it’s my understanding he has been barred from teaching in the sangha he founded. While it’s hard not to have some feelings of anger toward Mr. Shimano, it’s also important to remember that he has himself been a suffering being, perhaps in the grip of some kind of sexual addiction. His sangha and his victims have a long road ahead as they try to take on the task of healing and reconciliation.

More recently, Dennis Genpo Merzel has apparently resigned from his his leadership role in the Big Mind Big Heart Zen sangha in Salt Lake. He has confessed to having sexual relations with students. Mr. Merzel’s apology sounds heartfelt to me, but of course it remains to be seen whether and how his promised repentance will be actualized. He says he will take off his Zen priest’s robes but continue to offer his unique “big mind” teaching. How this squares with his remorse is unclear to me. We’ll see. His statement is available at <http://www.bigmind.org/Home.html>.

What’s the point in bringing up these two situations? As a Zen priest, I’ve promised to try to encourage people in their practice, and these two situations, emblematic of others like them, are pretty discouraging, even heartbreaking. But I think there are good reasons to look at them carefully. It’s always our practice to keep our eyes on reality even when it’s

painful, and more specifically I believe these situations can teach us something about how to build healthy sanghas.

What is it that allows these kinds of boundary violations and misbehavior to arise and continue in environments and communities which people create and join with good intentions? I've considered this in the light of personal experience. When I was young – in my early 20s – I spent several years living in a spiritual cult. I didn't know at the time it was a cult. I figured that out later. But when I reflect on the teacher during those years and on the dynamics of the group, I appreciate something about how sanghas enable things like the Shimano and Genpo situations to develop.

We bring our deepest hopes and vulnerabilities to spiritual practice, along with all of our confusion. We also tend to forget that our teachers, however deeply and however long and hard they've practiced, are no different. This is tough, and many teachers also forget this about themselves, especially when they are subject to the adulation and idealized projections of their students. What's more, sanghas sometimes tend to mitigate against challenging the teacher or questioning his/her authority because everyone's hopes and vulnerabilities are at stake and so banking on the teacher's wisdom as a kind of refuge from anxiety and a hedge against uncertainty becomes a high stakes game. So some sanghas tend to close ranks around unrealistic ideas about their teacher, ideas the teacher may encourage, consciously or otherwise. And in some cases, the formalized empowerments and rituals of Zen practice may foster a sense that the teacher's role is sacred and not to be challenged. I think these kinds of dynamics are intensified in residential sanghas.

I saw some of this up close in my own early experience of residential practice with a spiritual teacher. The teacher, not connected to the Zen tradition, was a brilliant man who had many profound things to say to the community and to each of us individually. He encouraged others to see him as a kind of special being and any challenge to his teaching came to be perceived as evidence of a flaw in the student's understanding, sincerity, and/or character. On the surface, the teacher invited questions, but the flavor of his responses told a different story and when caught in obvious mistakes, he said he made them purposely so students would have the freedom to reject his teaching.

Because the community was isolated physically and psychologically, members depended on each other and the teacher for everything, including relationship and a sense of meaning and belonging. Persistent argument with or challenge to the teacher led a kind of ostracism. Everyone understood you were essentially "out," a status the teacher would reinforce using many means, subtle and otherwise. It was a case of "my way or the highway" and over time the group became a self-reinforcing hothouse with the teacher at the center. In other words, a cult.

There are many lists of cult characteristics, not all of which apply in every case, but they are useful tools for analyzing one aspect of a sangha's health. In my experience, cults don't become cults overnight. They move in that direction by degrees. Alternance to cultish signs and tendencies is a useful safeguard against the abuses that cult dynamics

enable. I think several points are applicable to how we practice together in Zen sanghas, including but not limited to those listed here, which are drawn from the International Cultic Association website – [http://www.csj.org/infoserv\\_cult101/checklis.htm](http://www.csj.org/infoserv_cult101/checklis.htm) -

The group displays zealous or unquestioning commitment to its leader/teacher and regards his/her belief system, ideology, or practices as “the Truth” or in Zen terms, the true Dharma or correct understanding. In such sanghas, the head teacher’s words and view become the sole teaching or the only teaching paid serious respect.

Questioning, doubt, and dissent are discouraged or even punished. Discouragement can be subtle and punishment can be in the form of isolation and disapproval.

The leadership dictates, sometimes in great detail, how members should think, act, and feel; for example, members must get permission to date, change jobs, etc. This may sound foreign to our practice tradition, but in fact it really isn’t. Some Zen teachers impose such conditions on students who wish to enter into formal discipleship and insist on having a say over even small details of disciples’ personal lives, even including such things as whether and when they can visit with old friends.

The leader isn’t really accountable to any authorities. While many sanghas may have boards and committees to which the teacher is technically accountable, real accountability can erode over time, especially when boards and committees are comprised of members who are the teacher’s disciples.

Subservience to the leader or group requires members to cut ties with family and friends, and radically alter the personal goals and activities they had before joining the group.

Further to what has already been said, while the word “subservience” isn’t one we use much in Zen, we do place importance on the concept of home leaving and may also place spiritual value on the practice of “venerating” the teacher, which, combined with a teacher’s insistence on micro-managing disciples’ lives, can lead to a kind of subservience.

What I’m suggesting is that it might be useful to consider every spiritual community, every Zen sangha, as a cult risk. Human tendencies in this direction are strong. Societies and groups develop hierarchical structures and the impulse to endow leaders with special traits and powers seems hard to resist, arising from deep socio-biological roots. And these impulses are especially dangerous when a leader himself (or herself) – often an ambitious person despite other good intentions – is pulling for adulation and power. When they tore down the statue of Sadaam Hussein in Iraq, someone commented, “They should keep the pedestal. They’ll want to use it again in the future.”

We appreciate strong teachers in the Zen tradition and I’m not suggesting that having a strong teacher always risks turning a sangha into a cult. However, as distasteful as it may be, sanghas would be wise to put concerns about cultish tendencies or teacher behavior that leans in this direction up for discussion sooner rather than later. It’s a matter of the sangha’s overall health and the safety of its individual members.

Kuzan Peter Schireson is currently Practice Leader at Empty Nest Zendo in California. He was ordained as a Lay Teacher by Sojun Mel Weitsman of Berkeley Zen Center in 2003 and as a Soto Zen priest by Chikudo Lew Richmond of Vimala Zen Center in 2008.

Peter was originally introduced to practice by Joshu Sasaki Roshi in 1964 and has practiced since then primarily in the Suzuki Roshi lineage in California as well as with Keido Fukushima Roshi, the now retired abbot of Tofuku-ji Monastery in Kyoto, Japan. He is the husband of Myoan Grace Schireson and is especially interested in Zen practice as it arises in and enlivens everyday life in the world. Peter is also a partner in a market research company, a grandfather, and a student of classical guitar. Website:

<http://kuzanzen.org/>

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Nonin** on Thu Feb 17, 2011 12:02 am

genkaku wrote:

You've defended Zen teachers for not speaking out; you've defended Zen teachers when they do speak out; you've defended Zen teachers for the way they've spoken out; you've defended Zen teachers for not saying things that you've wanted them to say when they've spoken out; you've defended Zen teachers for the form in which they've spoken out. There certainly is a pattern here.

I guess we're both in a rut.

Not really. I don't defend any Zen teacher's behavior when there's no defense for it. I don't put forth a blanket defense for all Zen teachers no matter what they do, nor do I have a particular ax to grind against a particular form of wrongful conduct or a particular personal grudge against any teacher. I also don't put forth blanket praise for all Zen teachers.

Take the opposite of the above and you have your views, and you also have some basic differences between you and I.

genkaku said:

... perhaps I should write to all of those whose letters do not appear on Ford's blog and ask them why they have not spoken up with the transparency they evinced when it came to Genpo.

Then why don't you? No one here can answer this question for you. If you're really interested in answers to your question, ask those who can provide them.

Whatever a particular Zen teacher does or Zen teachers collectively do around the issue of Eido Shimano's misconduct or Genpo Merzel's misconduct will not satisfy those who

have deep-seated grudges against either Eido Shimano, Genpo Merzel, ZSS, Zen Buddhist teachers, or Spiritual teachers in general. That is perfectly clear to anyone who's followed this discussion around the internet and elsewhere.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Dan74** on Thu Feb 17, 2011 12:46 am

I don't think this is fair, Nonin.

Genkaku has often spoken with great affection of his teacher, Kyodo Nakagawa, so to accuse him of a general grudge against Zen teachers is incorrect, IMO. On the other hand he does rally against false teachers and the establishment that shelters them. To what extent Zen establishment is responsible is a matter of debate and frankly I don't know enough and make no judgment of AZTA in general and you in particular. I am happy there is a place for folks like genkaku to throw a gauntlet to the establishment and shake things up (after all it was folks like him that got the ball rolling at ZSS, not AZTA) and for folks like yourself to give your side of the story and help people form a balanced view.

Carol, just a comment on Grace Shireson's article. As someone without dharma transmission but with a phd who works as an academic, I find that this analogy is not really accurate (but perhaps useful to explore).

Universities and in particular academics have well-known and quite well-deserved reputations among their peers. Their work is peer-reviewed and their titles, awards and positions at elite Universities tend to reflect that. Compare this to well-known Zen teachers whose reputation tends to stem from their public presence rather than any genuine attainment or insight.

Students who complete their PhD with well-respected professionals or have them as examiners submit a substantial thesis which needs to show a level of mastery of the discipline and originality and on successful passing are judged have the right credentials for starting out as promising researchers in their fields, not as accomplished masters.

Compare this to a dharma heir of a well-known Zen teacher. Even insightful and well-meaning Zen teachers have often given transmission to students on very tenuous basis either due to perceived expediency (think of the many dharma heirs of Seung Sahn) or a misjudgment (eg Richard Baker).

Students who obtain their PhDs from third-rate Universities and have them examined by their supervisor's buddies at other third-rate universities have weak credentials and may well display ignorance of basic principles and methods. On the other hand true Zen masters have sometimes (not always) eschewed the limelight and remained quietly available to sincere seekers who would find them and study with them, never boasting of any credentials and transmission.

So the situation is starkly different from the academic world where top professionals are well-known and respected and having solid credentials like a phd from these people means neither too much nor too little - a necessary qualification to start a career as a researcher.

Sure in academic world there is a smattering of examples where people have got their qualifications by subterfuge, like one of the Bogdanov brothers, who had written a paper on high-level theoretical physics with diverse high-level theories woven together in a plausible pastiche that made no sense but slipped past referees and was published in a serious journal until it was exposed many years later. Still they must've had some serious knowledge to pull it off and never actually became researchers (they are French entertainers and former science show hosts).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bogdanov\\_Affair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bogdanov_Affair)

An example such as this shows just how different the scale of problems is in academia. The hierarchy, the structures, the level of scrutiny, peer review and recognition operate on a different level. Of course the nature of the discipline also lends itself much more easily to this and that's the chief reason why the analogy is weak.

Last edited by Dan74 on Thu Feb 17, 2011 3:28 am, edited 1 time in total.

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Thu Feb 17, 2011 4:40 pm

Moderator's note: Okay, let's get back on topic, which is "Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers." There seems to be interest here for discussing dharma lineage, so I'm going to split the posts here into a new topic called "Dharma Lineage." It'll be in the Zen Buddhism forum.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Thu Feb 17, 2011 11:09 pm

Response from the Kanzeon Zen Center Board regarding separation from Genpo:

To Members of the American Zen Teachers and White Plum Asanga:

As members of the Board of Kanzeon Zen Center, we have received many e-mails and phone calls concerning the highly-publicized situation resulting from Genpo Merzel's admission of his transgressions and sexual misconduct. These communications from Zen teachers in your organizations and others, not to mention open letters and other postings on various social media and internet sites, are filled with advice and recommendations, many of which are beyond the scope of our responsibility as a Board. To the extent that they are motivated by a sincere concern for the survival, healing and rebuilding of our sangha, we would like to share with you an account of some of our efforts to date.

- Feb. 3rd: Shortly after returning from the international sangha meeting in Europe, Genpo Merzel met with the sangha at the Zen Center in Salt Lake City in an open meeting which was widely publicized in advance. He admitted his misconduct (which had already been made public but wasn't known by all attending), apologized for his actions for which he bears the blame and responsibility, and responded to the pain, anger, concerns, questions, and feelings of his wife, family and sangha members.
- Feb. 6th: Genpo Merzel announced he is disrobing as a Soto Zen Buddhist priest, resigning as a member of the White Plum Asanga, acknowledged his own dishonest, hurtful behavior as well as his sexual misconduct, and said he has entered therapy which will continue indefinitely. This statement was posted on his website on Feb. 7th — <http://bigmind.org/Responsibility.html>.
- Feb. 8th: Kanzeon Zen Center announced that Richard Taido Christofferson Sensei will be taking over the teaching functions, training, administration, day-to-day operations, scheduling of all events, ceremonies, retreats, etc. as Vice Abbot and full time resident teacher. Kanzeon and Big Mind (a separate corporate entity) will also separate their websites, and Big Mind will continue as a separate secular practice, not connected with

the Soto Zen Buddhist School. This announcement is posted at <http://bigmind.org/Home.html>.

- Feb. 10th: The first of a projected series of council meetings was held with community members who wished to attend and express their feelings and their views on attempts for future healing.
- Feb. 13th: Taido Sensei arrived in Salt Lake City to lead a town hall meeting to which all local members were invited. He outlined his vision for the future of Kanzeon under his leadership and responded to the concerns of the audience.
- Ongoing: The Board is formulating a Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Procedures addressing issues of misconduct, abuse, and grievances within the sangha, based on models already instituted by other groups. They will be adopted as soon as possible.

Further, an e-mail sent to us yesterday by members of your organizations raised six issues, to which we briefly respond as follows:

1. Teaching. Genpo Merzel is taking an indefinite leave of absence of at least a year from Kanzeon. The Board has no authority over Big Mind, Inc.
2. Therapy. This is a matter for health care professionals working with Genpo to determine. This is not within the expertise or purview of the Board.
3. Salt Lake Zen Center. The Board is making every effort to maintain the facilities and keep the Center open for the community. This effort has been hampered by the heated rhetoric coming from the Zen Teacher community, in particular those who have reached out to members of our community to inflame reactions that are more adversarial than cooperative.
4. Money Issues. The Board is supporting Taido Sensei's effort to maintain the flow of revenue through memberships and programs. His teaching schedule for the next two months will be posted shortly. We are a small Sangha, which has been financially supported by Genpo's teaching for many years and more recently by his teaching through Big Mind, Inc. He has offered to continue to support Kanzeon to the extent he can. Therefore, donations you wish to make to enable the Board to implement item 6 below would be welcomed.
5. Public Statement of Apology. Genpo has apologized and his apology is posted at <http://bigmind.org/Responsibility.html>. He continues to talk full responsibility for the harm his actions have caused.
6. Outside expert assistance. Taido Sensei has been in contact with several Dharma teachers in the White Plum Asanga, who have offered their support and willingness to come to Kanzeon to share their skills as teachers, therapists, and leaders who have experienced the problems of leading centers through similar crises. The Board in



consultation with Taido Sensei will develop a plan that will include consultation with and participation of these and other Zen teachers. The Board has also been in contact with organizations, which can provide experienced, objective, professional assistance in guiding us to the creation of a healthier sangha with proper safeguards and strategies to avoid any future misconduct and abuse.

As you might expect, these activities are occurring in an environment that is under great stress. The Center's very small staff which is implementing the changes we have set in motion, is struggling to maintain the Center's schedule and commitments in financially constricted conditions, not to mention the strong daily practice which all agree is vital especially now, while at the same time coping with a deluge of phone calls and emails engendered by the ever-increasing volume of recommendations and calls for action like yours. Long-time bonds of respect and friendship among members of the sangha are being frayed and broken. People with little or no connection to our sangha or Center have appeared at meetings designed to promote healing only to offer their own inflammatory views on our situation. Our Zendo has been vandalized, a beloved statue stolen from the altar.

Under these circumstances, we respectfully request that those people who sincerely hope that we at Kanzeon survive and heal as a community, and create an environment and adopt procedures that lessen the possibility of any future misconduct or abuse, will extend us a little patience and allow us the time and breathing space to restore the peace and harmony of the sangha and the strength and sound practice of its members. Genpo Merzel has repeatedly reiterated his full support for all of the actions taken by the Board and Sensei as outlined above.

Board of Trustees of Kanzeon, Inc.

Kanzeon Zen Center  
 1268 E. South Temple  
 Salt Lake City, UT 84102  
 It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by AlasdairGF** on Fri Feb 18, 2011 12:53 am

The Kanzeon Zen Centre Board wrote:

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constricted conditions, not to mention the strong daily practice which all agree is vital especially now, while at the same time coping with a deluge of phone calls and emails engendered by the ever-increasing volume of recommendations and calls for action like yours. Long-time bonds of respect and friendship among members of the sangha are being frayed and broken. People with little or no connection to our sangha or Center have appeared at meetings designed to promote healing only to offer their own inflammatory views on our situation. Our Zendo has been vandalized, a beloved statue stolen from the altar.

[Emphasis added]

Wow. Wishing the folk at the SLC sangha all the best at a tough time.

It's a no-brainer that we shouldn't vandalise the Centre (that's outrageous!!!), but perhaps we should also be a little more mindful of the unintended consequences of our actions, even if those actions are simply posting here - to what extent are we able to help promote a constructive dialogue vs fanning the flames, etc. I'm not saying we shouldn't discuss, but let's not pretend there are no consequences to our public discussions.

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Anders Honore** on Fri Feb 18, 2011 1:01 am

AlasdairGF wrote:

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a constructive dialogue vs fanning the flames, etc. I'm not saying we shouldn't discuss, but let's not pretend there are no consequences to our public discussions.

well said, Alasdair. Anger (and kindness too fwiw) can often have unintended consequences beyond what is immediately apparent. Just because it's 'online' or 'right' or whatever wellmeaning intentions we use to justify or trivialise it, is no reason to be casual in our dealings with it in the mind. This letter is certainly a good reminder of this.

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My Blog: Leaves from the Tree of Life

Latest Blog Post: Chinese Landscape Painting: An Image for Happiness

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Anders Honore

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Fri Feb 18, 2011 5:03 am

From Brad Warner's Blog. I agree with Brad. I originally posted Les Kay's letter here. Then I learned that there may have been some inaccuracies so I edited out the paragraph about the suicide -- so did Sweeping Zen and Dosho Port on his blog.

This is a good lesson ...

LES KAYE'S LETTER IS UNBELIEVABLY IRRESPONSIBLE

No one commits suicide for a single reason. No one. Never.

In my book *Zen Wrapped in Karma Dipped in Chocolate* I wrote about my friend Robert "Iggy" Morningstar committing suicide. Iggy's girlfriend had just broken up with him. She did it as much for Iggy's good as for her own. I was sharing a place with them at the time and she was absolutely justified in what she did. Iggy was making a mess of his life and hers as well.

When Iggy killed himself he did the deed in such a way as to ensure that his girlfriend would be the one who found him and that it would appear as though he killed himself because she broke up with him. In the weeks that followed those of us who were around Iggy's girlfriend had to constantly assure her that she bore no guilt in the matter. Perhaps the break up was a factor in Iggy's suicide. But it was not the only factor or even the decisive one.

On February 14th, 2011, Dosho Port put a letter written by Les Kaye of the American Zen Teachers Association (AZTA) to the board of directors at Kanzeon, Genpo Roshi's temple, on his blog. You can find that post here. This same letter from Les Kaye also appears here on the Sweeping Zen website.

Les Kaye's letter was written in response to accusations by some people at Kanzeon that AZTA had failed to respond when they knew that Genpo Roshi was having sex with his students and misappropriating funds. Les Kaye points out in the letter that AZTA had been trying to get Genpo's authorization to teach Zen revoked at least since 1992.

I understand Les Kaye's desire to clear AZTA's good name. But one section of his letter strikes me as perhaps the most irresponsible thing I've seen come out of this whole mess. It makes me very angry to see this.

In his letter, Les Kaye reveals the story of a woman who was allegedly seduced by Genpo Roshi. Kaye says that she "had been abused by her father as a child, which left her extremely vulnerable and confused." She attended a meeting organized by AZTA about Genpo's transgressions in which "she described how she had been seduced by Genpo numerous times and the pain of betrayal that she felt." Kaye directly follows this with a sentence that reads in full, "Several months after the meeting, she took her own life."

Although he uses the proper somber, sepia colored tones of heartrending melodrama approved by contemporary American Buddhists, Mr. Kaye appears to me to be accusing Genpo Roshi of causing this poor woman to kill herself. Please see the opening two paragraphs of this article for my opinion on that. I know that the effect of what Mr. Kaye wrote is to make people think that Genpo's sexual behavior caused a suicide because that is precisely how it was defined to me by two people who emailed me about these articles.

I don't like Genpo Roshi. I've made no attempt to hide that fact. But accusing him of causing someone to commit suicide is taking things much too far. We do not know what really transpired between Genpo and that unfortunate woman. I'm going to say that again and I'm going to be a little firmer this time. You -- and I mean you dear reader, whoever you are -- do not know what happened between Genpo and that unfortunate woman. If Genpo is reading this (which I doubt) maybe he has some clue. But even he doesn't know all of it. The rest of us only know what we've read about it. And that is not very much.\*

Am I trying to say that it's fine that Genpo seduced some poor woman who'd been abused by her father? No. No, I am not saying that. No. OK? Not at all. No.

I'm saying that we do not even know that's what really happened. Maybe it did. Maybe it didn't. We don't even know what that woman actually said at the meeting. All we have is someone's paraphrase of what he thought he heard her say 18 years ago.

Which is also not to say it did not happen or that I don't believe what she said. I don't know what she said. So I cannot either believe or disbelieve it. But I do know what Les Kaye said because it's there on the Internets for all to see.

There is no reason to add this to the piles of accusations that have already been hurled at Genpo. Believe me, I am not someone who would easily stand up in Genpo Roshi's defense. But this is too much to ignore.

continued here

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Linda Anderson** on Fri Feb 18, 2011 5:44 am

Thanks to Brad for standing up. I was disturbed about the suicide assumption, but frankly it doesn't feel right to comment anymore... so much suffering with several different situations now. It's not my job to separate the serious breach of ethics from the highly volatile responses which cross their own boundaries, respect and sensibility towards practice, imo. It may be for some, but not for me. These violations need to be dealt with by their respective communities. Or not. So, so sad. As I think I've said before, justice maybe done, or not. The bigger question is what do we see about ourselves, our pain and our vulnerabilities in our reactions. I don't know where else to go with this, at this point. Nothing I say can make a difference.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Sat Feb 19, 2011 5:12 pm

Posted over at Sweeping Zen. I like this ...

Simply Uncool  
By Diane Musho Hamilton

Websites:

dianemushohamilton.com  
bouldermountainzen.org

I have been listening to a lot of discussions on the web recently about ethical violations of Zen teachers, about their breaches of trust, and lack of good faith in how they have treated the people they purport to be guiding. The heated complaints elicit an outcry of responses calling for the development of standards, guidelines, sound and consistent ethical policies which can provide oversight and accountability to the teachers in the Zen world. This is so that teachers and students alike are held accountable to the impacts that their decisions and behavior have on the communities in which they practice.

Let's face it, some bad decisions, particularly by teachers, can be very destructive to the community of people who constitute the practice and who have given a tremendous amount of their good will, time, attention, and money into sustaining themselves as a group that desires to awaken together. When scandals break, people scatter, and value is lost. Once shared aspirations shrink into doubt, overwrought cynicism, and an unwillingness to risk participating again. In short, scandals destroy sangha.

Any community of practice – whether it is medicine, psychology, child care, or car dealerships – will develop institutional protections over time as the groups mature into organizations and organizations turn into institutions. These guidelines, written policies, and legal contracts provide the basis for durable structures that can outlast the unruly behaviors and destructive tendencies of the individual humans who inevitably pass through them. And who among us hasn't contributed to some mayhem among our friends?

Formulating these policies is natural, necessary, and even admirable, when you realize that we are capable of holding each other to higher standards of conduct. Higher standards of conduct make for greater peace, ethical behavior provides for more stability, and an abundance of good faith creates lasting good feelings between the members of any group. It is a simple equation, and we need to understand it.

In the meantime, however, while we are learning and while these policies are developed and implemented, I would like to introduce a handy word that may help guide you in your decisions until the ground rules are put on paper. The word that I want to offer to you in your search for integrity is simply “Uncool.”

“Is this cool or uncool?” It is a simple word, decidedly American, and the question serves as a very user-friendly test. You just ask yourself whether what you are about to do cool or is it uncool? Cool translates as sound ethical conduct and will win you the respect and support of your friends and colleagues. Uncool means that if you do it, people aren't gonna like it, they are gonna be pissed, and you are gonna suffer for it.

There are many beautiful methods for invoking ethical behavior. Receiving and practicing the Buddhist precepts is one example. In another, the great Zen Master, Dogen Zenji, uses the metaphor of a steelyard to represent the imperative for us to consider all things of which are aware in any moment, and resolve to act to bring them into balance for the benefit of all beings. This is a remarkable image for the enactment of equanimity. And while Dogen's metaphor is infinitely more sophisticated, beautiful, and subtle than

mine, I still recommend that when you take a minute to consider what is “cool” and what is “uncool,” you can find an immediate measure to help guide you in these dark times.

Here are a couple of examples of how you might apply this method.

Consider lying. Why do the precepts include the vow not to lie – well, because lying is uncool. Lying makes the people around you mistrustful and wary, and you have to keep scrambling and distorting reality to protect yourself and cover your tracks. Clearly uncool.

Greed. Why should you strive not to be greedy? Because greed is uncool. People get pissed when you take what is not yours, and see you grabbing for more than your fair share. They may be patient for awhile, but inevitably, they will start a revolution ending up in an overthrow.

Sexual Misconduct. Students bring a tremendous amount of vulnerability to the spiritual search, it gets very confusing and harmful when the student’s spiritual aspiration and their un-clarified ambition or desire is mixed with the erotic impulses of the person in power. Add to the mix the jealousy, competitiveness, and unresolved love issues from the group, and you’ve got a big problem all around town. If you are a teacher and want a relationship with a student, first rule-out those in committed relationships, rule out the fragile, emotionally unstable, wounded, and the underage. In other words, look for maturity, acknowledge your position and change your contract, and model cultivating a relationship with some consciousness and integrity. But habitually sleeping around with the people who are studying with you? Uncool.

Students of Zen need to ask themselves the same kinds of questions. Is giving away my ethical discernment to the person in charge cool? Probably not. Is failing to clarify my sexual energy and unconsciously coming onto my teacher cool? Uncool. Is turning a blind eye to breaches in the community because they threaten my feelings of being protected and belonging to the group cool? Unlikely.

In short, we have a long way to go until the people in charge can get us the guidelines they are talking about. In the meantime, we are not lost, we can discern, and we can, hopefully, find our way together. I know we are going to still make mistakes; Dogen also says that “A zen master’s life is one continuous mistake.” Sometimes the mistakes are big ones, but then again, forgiveness and compassion are, by their nature, unmistakably cool.

---

Diane Musho Hamilton Sensei is a gifted mediator, facilitator, and teacher of Zen and Integral Spirituality. She has been a practitioner of meditation for more than 25 years. Diane began her studies at Naropa University in 1983 with Choygam Trungpa Rinpoche, and became a Zen student of Dennis Genpo Merzel Roshi in 1997. In 2003, she received ordination as a Zen monk with her husband Michael Zimmerman, and received dharma transmission from Genpo Roshi in 2006. Diane facilitates Big Mind Big Heart, a process

developed by Genpo Roshi to help elicit the insights of Zen in Western audiences. She has worked with the Integral Institute since 2004.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Seigen** on Sat Feb 19, 2011 6:13 pm

My limited but not irrelevant experience in Zen community tells me that is the "cool factor," those who develop around themselves an aura of cool, that often makes a context for ethical breaches possible. For example, Richard Baker, no matter whether you respect his teachings or you don't, was arguably a master of cool. It kind of goes "with the territory," so to speak.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Sat Feb 19, 2011 9:45 pm

Seigen wrote:

My limited but not irrelevant experience in Zen community tells me that is the "cool factor," those who develop around themselves an aura of cool, that often makes a context for ethical breaches possible. For example, Richard Baker, no matter whether you respect his teachings or you don't, was arguably a master of cool. It kind of goes "with the territory," so to speak.

I think you're redefining "cool" to mean something other than what Diane Musho Hamilton meant and that is pretty hard to read into the examples she used to illustrate "uncool" conduct -- lying, greed and sexual misconduct.

The reader does have an obligation, IMO, to take the writer's meaning when defining words to criticize the writer's point, rather than some other meaning the writer didn't intend and, IMO, explicitly excluded. I think the kind of "cool" you describe is a red herring, since that's not how the writer used the term.

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and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi



Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher**::: on Sun Feb 20, 2011 12:35 am

Is Diane Musho Hamilton part of Ken Wilber's Integral Spirituality community? If so then her use of the word "cool" may carry with it some of the implications that Seigen was concerned with, for others within that community. This shouldn't take away from an appreciation of the wisdom in her words, imo, just that Seigen's point has validity as well. ~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 12:55 am

christopher::: wrote:

Is Diane Musho Hamilton part of Ken Wilber's Integral Spirituality community? If so then her use of the word "cool" may carry with it some of the implications that Seigen was concerned with, for others within that community. This shouldn't take away from an appreciation of the wisdom in her words, imo, just that Seigen's point has validity as well.

I don't buy that, Christopher. Guilt by association isn't something very appealing to me. I read the article at face value ... not reading into it something that isn't there ... "integral value" or "zen value" or whatever. Putting our prejudices aside, it's just plain speaking. It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Seigen** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 1:14 am

I think you're redefining "cool" to mean something other than what Diane Musho Hamilton meant and that is pretty hard to read into the examples she used to illustrate "uncool" conduct -- lying, greed and sexual misconduct.

The reader does have an obligation, IMO, to take the writer's meaning when defining words to criticize the writer's point, rather than some other meaning the writer didn't intend and, IMO, explicitly excluded. I think the kind of "cool" you describe is a red herring, since that's not how the writer used the term.

I know fully well what I was doing, and I fully understood Diane Musho Hamilton's argument for the word "cool" - there is no red herring here, as I am in pretty full disagreement with settling on this word as some kind of answer for the problems in American Zen. The word cool in American usage is the word cool in American usage - it's the least modicum of usage to know what it does in all of it's aspects. And to think you can make "cool" count as the turning word is ... poor thinking. Just calling it like I see it, Carol.

The philosophy of ordinary language asks of us to understand what it is that words do in our actually lived lives, and in mine and I trust most people's experience of "coolness," the claims that are being made in the above essay are extremely vulnerable to other meanings of the word - this is called, frankly, bad writing. A good writer knows what words do, and in the context for which they are intended. But more than that, as a practitioner to count on cool as a measure of anything, let alone ethics, is offensive to me. I feel it strongly and I'm saying it.  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 1:36 am

OK. You don't like "cool" either in the sense that she used it or in your own usage.  
Gotcha.

For me, I think it's a damn good measure of my conduct ... if it gives me pause, then it's not cool and I shouldn't do it.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Seigen** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 1:47 am

I say "that's uncool" all the time. But if you are going to pick up the word as though it has value for understanding unethical practices in Zen community, you have real blinders on if you aren't responsible to the meaning of the word, which includes coolness as a social aura, and this social aura is definitely something that the people who are being discussed in this thread have. I am saying something more than that I disagree, but that something is awry. I know absolutely nothing about the author of that essay, but her writing in this one

instance - and that you have posted here - does not reflect a practice orientation or understanding that I am in any way drawn towards, that I would run away from in a heartbeat.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 1:58 am

Seigen wrote:

I am saying something more than that I disagree, but that something is awry.

Granted, that's what you are saying. I disagree.

Seigen wrote:

I know absolutely nothing about the author of that essay, but her writing in this one instance - and that you have posted here - does not reflect a practice orientation or understanding that I am in any way drawn towards, that I would run away from in a heartbeat.

I see it differently, as I said ... I like her use of the common vernacular and the common feeling that something is "uncool" -- it speaks quite eloquently to me in a helpful way. I think those signposts are important, and I'm glad she made it so plain (to me), and sorry she didn't communicate her meaning to you. But that's why there are many different teachers with different "styles", I suppose. Different ways in. I don't usually like Brad Warner's practice orientation or use of vernacular language, either, but sometimes he nails it for me just as Hamilton did here.

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and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 2:05 am

Carol wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

Is Diane Musho Hamilton part of Ken Wilber's Integral Spirituality community? If so then her use of the word "cool" may carry with it some of the implications that Seigen

was concerned with, for others within that community. This shouldn't take away from an appreciation of the wisdom in her words, imo, just that Seigen's point has validity as well.

I don't buy that, Christopher. Guilt by association isn't something very appealing to me. I read the article at face value ... not reading into it something that isn't there ... "integral value" or "zen value" or whatever. Putting our prejudices aside, it's just plain speaking.

This isn't a matter of guilt, the point here (which I think Seigen is trying to make) relates to communication, context and language. If I hold up a CD and say "this is hot" I could mean it's great music, it's been sitting in the sun too long or it was stolen from someone. Twenty people who hear me may each interpret the words differently. This article worked for you, for Seigen it brought up other associations, for people connected with Big Mind and Integral it may be understood somewhat differently.

I've looked at a number of things from Diane Musho Hamilton. She's cool and insightful. I wouldn't kick her insights aside because of her connections to Genpo Roshi and Ken Wilber, nor would I raise them up and place her observations on a pedestal.

She seems to be speaking from her heart and has wise things to say.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Seigen** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 2:27 am

Thanks, Christopher:::. I think I'm being a little more exacting with regard to the use of words however, it's really not as widely interpretable as you say:

If I hold up a CD and say "this is hot" I could mean it's great music, it's been sitting in the sun too long or it was stolen from someone.

If you hold up a cd to me and say "this is hot," it's probable that you don't mean it's been sitting in the sun too long, or that it was stolen. You want me to know one of two things, usually both - a) this cd really turns you on and b) not only does it turn you on but it is so good it's turning everyone else on too. That's how language works, there are social conventions that do their work through words and their meanings.

So to use the word "cool" as an ethical guide - in this social context - is one big stinky fish to me. I would say that even if her teacher were not who he was, because that is just how language works in the social world we live in.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Gregory Wonderwheel** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 2:53 am

Seigen wrote:

I say "that's uncool" all the time. But if you are going to pick up the word as though it has value for understanding unethical practices in Zen community, you have real blinders on if you aren't responsible to the meaning of the word, which includes coolness as a social aura, and this social aura is definitely something that the people who are being discussed in this thread have. I am saying something more than that I disagree, but that something is awry. I know absolutely nothing about the author of that essay, but her writing in this one instance - and that you have posted here - does not reflect a practice orientation or understanding that I am in any way drawn towards, that I would run away from in a heartbeat.

Personally, I think the word "cool" is too vague to be of much help. but I took her article to be directed at an audience even if I am not in the target audience. I find I'm not in the target audience for most advertising, so it was no big deal to me that I did not resonate with the word "cool. " To say that asking "is it cool?" is some kind of way to tell if something is good behavior seems rather circular thinking to me.

For example. Question: "Is hitting someone in the face good behavior?" To answer, "No it's uncool" hasn't really added anything to the inquiry into ethics, morality, etc. It has just pasted an emotional and judgmental label onto the behavior.

But for some people who are so twisted up in their emotional lives that they don't even slow down enough to consider their behavior, slowing down to put the label cool or uncool on their behavior may be very helpful and really important. It is all in the audience. That is the meaning of expedient teaching of the Dharma.

So when hearing all the responses to the issues of sexual conduct of whomever, I don't take all the ramblings and ravings as being necessarily worthwhile or worthless just because I don't personally relate to them. The Dharma is not a formula. The Dharma is not something that is enshrined as a dogma or doctrine to be followed in all times and places and circumstances. Even this statement is that way.

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 3:02 am

Gregory Wonderwheel wrote:

But for some people who are so twisted up in their emotional lives that they don't even slow down enough to consider their behavior, slowing down to put the label cool or uncool on their behavior may be very helpful and really important. It is all in the audience. That is the meaning of expedient teaching of the Dharma.

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for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Dan74** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 3:59 am

Our 4-year-old is into all things cool and scary. He doesn't like nice, he says. Only cool. So linking cool to doing the right thing and caring for other people and uncool to being a selfish brat, is what we try to do. Luckily for us he is a pretty sensitive and compassionate kid (most of the time) so he buys into our "brainwashing".

Sorry if that's off-topic.

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 4:02 am

Dan74 wrote:

Sorry if that's off-topic.

Doesn't seem to be.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Sun Feb 20, 2011 7:03 am

I'm apparently not in the target audience either. I've disliked the word cool since the 60's because it says nothing, and to me, is a bit ungrounded, unrelated and non-committal. So using uncool to describe or evaluate misconduct seems a bit silly next to the reality of causing others harm. It seems lacking in responsibility... and close to using "interesting" when you don't have anything else to say. It gets one off the hook and is so one-dimensional. Uncool seems to sterilize the whole thing, and quite un-zen actually, eliminating a larger perspective into suchness and compassion.

BUT, there is also the aspect of going below the words and hearing Diane's point which is a good one.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Thu Feb 24, 2011 6:23 pm

Posted over at Sweeping Zen a heartbreaking letter from Maezumi Roshi's daughter about the suffering his sexual affairs caused her and her family, and a response from Jan Chosen Bays which offers IMO the wisdom and compassion that can arise from truly examining our misconduct, repentance, and sharing that wisdom with others to alleviate suffering.

Kirsten Mitsuyo Maezumi wrote:  
 A Letter from Kirsten Mitsuyo Maezumi

To Whom it may Concern,

I am the eldest daughter of Maezumi Roshi and I am writing in regards to the situation involving Genpo Merzel Roshi and Kyozen sensei, former vice abbot at Kanzeon Zen Center in Salt Lake City.

First of all, it has been brought to my attention that the woman spearheading the aggressive involvement of the American Zen Teachers Association and the White Plum Sangha is Jan Chosen Bays.

This woman and Genpo were both students of my father and I remember them both well from my childhood at ZCLA.

It may or may not have been brought to your attention that Chozen had affairs with both my father and Genpo in the 70's and 80's.

This was not the only affair that each of these people had, but the only relevant one in regards for this letter.

The fact is, her 5 year long affair with my father, from 1978 through Dec of 1983, was what caused the separation of my parents and was the reason my mother left the Zen Center of Los Angeles with my brother and I in 1983.

She was pregnant with my little sister.

My mother felt especially betrayed by Chozen.

She says she hurt her most.

She was our pediatrician; my mother trusted her with her children and opened up to her on a personal level.

They were friends.

She was also my father's doctor, my mother's doctor, Genpo's doctor and his wife Hobai. It made no difference to her that she was married and my father was married with 2 small children.

I was only 4 when we left the final time, but I remember the despair and confusion I felt at our family being torn apart.

We went to live with my grandmother, and she never forgave my father and I have spent many years deprogramming myself from the utter distrust of men that took root in this formative time of my life.

I remember my mother often crying and could feel her sense of abandonment, betrayal and loneliness.

At ZCLA there was uproar and a strong contingent that wanted my father out of the position as abbot, and another wanted him to stay.

After much ado, the vote was cast, and by the thin margin of one vote, he stayed on as Abbot and Roshi at ZCLA.

I think the validity of that decision speaks for itself.

It has taken me the last 7 years of intensive meditation and therapy to make any sense of the toll that "Zen" took on our family, and I realized that my suffering was caused by my expectation of him as a father.



He wasn't perfect, not by a long shot, but that did not need to limit me in my life the capacity for forgiveness and understanding.

He was not a good father, or a good husband to my mother, but he was an outstanding teacher with a love for the dharma and a vision of liberation that took precedence in all he did.

As an adult, in my travels and own seeking, I hear testimonials to his awakened Buddha nature and hear and see the proof of it in the difference it has made for so many other gifted beings to step into their place as teachers and facilitators of peace and consciousness.

It is a lineage spanning continents and decades and I am very proud of him. It is the best consolation I can have; seeing and hearing his students teach. Now I see history repeating itself.

Yes. Of course what Genpo Roshi did was wrong and caused a great deal of hurt and pain to his wife Stephanie, his children and the sangha.

Does this mean as punishment he should be cast out and not allowed to teach or be recognized as a senior Zen successor?

To do this is throwing the baby out with the bath water.

Genpo Roshi is a wonderful teacher and humanitarian, and I feel that his contributions to Zen in America and the raising of consciousness now and in the future are of great importance to continue on my father's work and his own personal vision as an American teacher of Zen.

I think to deny what he can offer in the evolution of Zen in America would be a travesty. And for me at this point in my life, I wish not to focus on the aspects that cause separation and discord, but the larger picture and really accepting and transcending the fact that we are fallible.

That we are human.

That we exist in wheels with in wheels of karma that I don't understand, but that the ultimate lesson seems to be forgiveness.

My intention behind this letter is to express that in my experience there is a mysterious way that meditation, therapy and Zen Wisdom make sense of the dichotomies that cannot be explained by the mind, but felt with the heart.

If I can forgive Jan Bays for making a my childhood a sordid, rootless existence and shattering my sense of a father figure and family, I think the same compassion can be applied here.

Please consider an appropriate atonement.

I have no quarrel with the fact that what he did was deceitful and devastatingly hurtful to many, and but to disregard this teacher from the great lineage of Zen in North America is a mistake.

I also feel that a decision like this, based in puritanical righteousness is not Zen. There is no compassion or understanding in a verdict like this and the punishment exceeds the crime, as well as depriving the community of a valuable, gifted teacher. Personally I think this is between him and his wife. And him and his sangha.

I think they need to decide what needs to be done, but I understand this casts a shadow on our whole community and many other concerns need to be brought into consideration.

I also would like to add that all motivations for writing this and feelings that are expressed here are my own, but that I have the full support of my mother and sister. As my father's life mission was seeing Zen in America flourish, you can understand my concern.

I thank you for your time and consideration and for all that you are doing to perpetuate the light of this dharma torch we are passing on from generation to generation.

In Gassho,

Kirsten Mitsuyo Maezumi

Jan Chozen Bays wrote:

Response to Kirsten Mitsuyo Maezumi By Jan Chozen Bays

Website: <http://www.zendust.org/>

Dear Kirsten,

Thank you for your letter to Sweeping Zen, which eloquently described some of the suffering that occurred at ZCLA in 1983, when we acknowledged Maezumi Roshi's alcoholism and discovered, day by day, the sexual relationships that had been occurring with Roshi and Genpo and their students. It was a very difficult and painful time, and, as you pointed out, it continues to affect us all to this day.

You ask why forty four American Zen teachers have written to the Kanzeon board, asking that Genpo take a leave and enter therapy with a specialist in sexual misconduct

by clergy? To me it is like a drunk driver who gets into a wreck and people are injured. He apologizes and swears not to do it again. He gets a new car, drives drunk, and harms more people. Apologizes, stops drinking for a while, then does it a third time. It is time to take away the keys, stop driving, and get into a good treatment program. Your father admitted his addiction. He had the courage to enter residential treatment and attend AA meetings where his addiction was understood and his special status in the Zen world didn't matter at all. His honesty is still inspiring. Because of it he was able to resume teaching us all for another decade. I hope if we get in trouble with addiction, we will all follow his example.

Zen teaching is a profession. Professionals have an obligation not to betray the trust of their students/clients/patients, trust that is essential to the work of spiritual teaching or therapy. When we take on the profession, we take on the responsibility to maintain proper boundaries with those we are caring for. If a patient tries to kiss a doctor or a minister or a therapist, it is the professional's responsibility to stop the behavior. A doctor or even a lawyer who has repeated sexual contact with clients can lose their license to practice permanently.

The American Zen teachers also have written letters to the Board of Kanzeon — and before that, to the Zen Studies Society — because we have a special concern about women. When male teachers have sexual relationships with women students, it creates a very difficult situation for these women. They are enrolled in the secrecy that is so corrosive within a sangha. Or within a partnership — one woman told me that her marriage was failing because her husband blamed her for her relationship with a teacher. Also, when a teacher sleeps with a woman and then transmits to her, it puts her credentials in doubt. “Horizontal transmission” it's jokingly called. If women are to have a respected place as teachers of Zen, this behavior has to stop.

The experiences you described so vividly in your letter struck me and many others to the heart. This is exactly why the Zen teachers acted, so that wives, husbands, children, and students don't have to experience the kind of suffering you described. And so that your father's legacy, his wife, you and your brother and sister, and his many Zen descendants, can continue to bring benefit to the world.

I am very sorry for any suffering my role in these events caused in yours or your family's life. In an earlier letter you asked me how I could have behaved in this way? What have I done about it? I will give you the simplest answers first. Then some longer explanations.

I took my own role in the events at ZCLA very seriously.

I did specifically focused therapy.

I did specific repentance work.

I realized that the best form of repentance was to change my behavior — for good.

I educated myself about clergy misconduct.

My husband and I emphasize the importance of the precepts in their literal form in our Zen teaching.

We have helped other Buddhist groups that requested assistance with issues of ethics and misconduct by teachers.

I have never had an inappropriate relationship with a student, nor has my husband.

I have been in a faithful marriage for 27 years.

Here are the longer explanations.

I left ZCLA in 1984 with the feeling, “If this is an example of what we have been touting as enlightened behavior (and I include my own), I want no part of it. “ For several years I did not practice Zen. I explored other religions. I got a job and spent more time with my children. I met many people who had never heard of Zen or who had no religion at all, who were kinder and wiser than we had been. Gradually I began to sit again, and rediscovered the purpose and power of practice. I felt renewed gratitude to your father for the invaluable gift of dharma that he had given us all.

I decided to educate myself about what can go wrong in spiritual communities, and I did a lot of reading, for example, about the Rajneesh group – which was then making headlines for all kinds of misconduct – and other communities. From that study I concluded that early warning signs that a group is headed for trouble are these.

over-adulation of the teacher

too much power residing in the teacher, with lots of “yes” men and women, and no checks and balances

believing that the ends justify the means (as in having healthy young people go on welfare at ZCLA so they could be on “staff”)

talking about us “inside” who know the truth and the “outside world” who do not resultant loss of outside perspective

lack of clear ethical guidelines, maintained first and foremost by the teachers

resultant misuse of power – monetary, sexual, etc.

secrecy

manipulation, intimidation, coercion or threats

I also studied clergy misconduct. I read books such as *Sex in the Forbidden Zone: Why Men in Power – Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers and Others – Betray Women’s Trust* by Dr. Peter Rutter, and *Is Nothing Sacred?: The Story of a Pastor, the Women He Sexually Abused, and the Congregation He Nearly Destroyed* by Dr. Marie Fortune. I invited Dr. Rutter to give a presentation at a White Plum meeting in Palm Desert.

My husband Hogen and I took a professional workshop on clergy misconduct sponsored by the Alban Institute and Faithtrust Institute. We have since been invited to give this training at Buddhist teachers' conferences and at the invitation of Buddhist groups in crisis. I've learned a lot by talking to many survivors of abuse by Buddhist clergy. Their stories are poignant, their wounds long-lasting.

I learned that often, in the chaos of an acute crisis, the wife of the offending teacher gets pushed aside. As I read your letter, I realized that nothing has been written about the suffering of the children. I'm glad you have begun our education about how children in the community are traumatized, too. (I had assumed, wrongly it seems, that when your father went into recovery and your parents reunited and moved out of LA to Idyllwild, that you had eleven years of good family life before your father's untimely death in 1995.)

Chozen, Maezumi Roshi, and Genpo

(A historical note. This is not an excuse, but a framing of the times. Looking back 30 years, it was a strange thing to do, to try to combine a hippie commune with a Zen monastery. In matters of mores, the hippie commune won out. It was the age of Aquarius, of rebellion against the old, of free love, open marriages, of turn-on-and-drop-out. Jealousy was regarded as a character flaw, and the Happy Hooker books extolled the joy and virtues of prostitution. When your father's good friend and drinking companion Trungpa Rinpoche traveled to cities like LA, he was supplied with consorts, sometimes offered up by their husbands as gifts for their teacher. As someone said recently, "ZCLA in the old days was a highly sexually charged atmosphere." While I can understand that it could seem to you that I was the cause of many difficulties, I and others got caught up in something that had been going on for some time there. While this is no excuse, it was a reality.)

Because of what happened at ZCLA, I know that my mind has a big capacity for delusion and rationalization. Therefore I've surrounded myself with safeguards, an empowered board, ethical guidelines that are posted, a standing committee that is available to work with any sensitive issues in the sangha, and By Laws that allow a vote of the Board or sangha to remove me from teaching at any time. I study with a Zen teacher to whom I am accountable.

You are right, your father was an outstanding teacher with a tremendous love for the dharma and a vision of liberation that took precedence in all he did. He poured his life energy into this work. May we make the necessary adjustments so that it can continue to bring benefit, not harm, to many people in the world.

In warm affection and gassho,

Chozen

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Jan Chozen Bays (b. August 9, 1945) is a Zen priest of the White Plum Asanga practicing in Oregon, where she is co-abbot of Great Vow Zen Monastery with her husband Laren Hogen Bays and also the teacher of the Zen Community of Oregon. Jan began her Zen studies in 1973 and in 1979 she received priestly ordination from Taizan Maezumi. A licensed pediatrician, Chozen Bays headed the medical center located at the Zen Center of Los Angeles for many years. In 1983 she completed the Harada-Yasutani koan curriculum and received Dharma transmission from Maezumi-roshi. Since the death of her teacher in 1995, Chozen Bays has practiced with the Rinzai priest Shodo Harada of Sogen-ji in Okayama, Japan and One Drop Zendo in Whidbey Island, Washington.

Jan has published a book for Tuttle Library titled *Jizo Bodhisattva: Modern Healing and Traditional Buddhist Practice* which has since been republished by Shambhala Publications as *Jizo Bodhisattva: Guardian of Children, Travelers, and Other Voyagers*.

A response from Ms Maezumi raises some of the grey areas in teacher student relationships:

Kirsten Mitsuyo Maezumi wrote:

[...]Honestly the most helpful insight I got out of our illuminating conversation, is the one into the nature of the affair you had with my father as you say, ” It was mostly an affair of the heart, taking intimately about dharma and translating Dogen Zenji.”

That you didn’t feel her victimized you, or that your vulnerability was preyed upon, or that sex was the only reason for the affair.

I think that is important... NOT that it makes it right, or appropriate, but that it was not, in its nature, an abuse of power.

It was a love of the dharma.

I think this could be the case in many of the consensual affairs that happen in sanghas between teacher and students.

Again, NOT that it makes it right at all! ; it is just another shade of grey in the black and white of right and wrong...and of being human.

It makes the line so much more complicated.

That there are other reasons than abuse of power, desire of position, lust or addiction, that cause these lines to be crossed.

How will these be judged?

[...]

Good question!

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Ted Biringer** on Sat Feb 26, 2011 9:55 am

Seigen wrote:

My limited but not irrelevant experience in Zen community tells me that is the "cool factor," those who develop around themselves an aura of cool, that often makes a context for ethical breaches possible. For example, Richard Baker, no matter whether you respect his teachings or you don't, was arguably a master of cool. It kind of goes "with the territory," so to speak.

Thank you for this comment.

While it is sad, it is certainly true - it goes with the territory...

As I walked from the reception area to the lecture hall, I saw what appeared to be two Asian monks arguing about a flag that was blowing in the wind. One monk argued that the flag was moving, the other argued that the wind was moving.

As they seemed unable to settle themselves, I said, "Flag and wind are both motionless; moving moves moving."

I soon discovered, the two were not Asian monks (the shaved heads and Asian robes had fooled me), they were American roshis of the Zen center.

Accordingly, the whole assembly was startled, not by what I said, but by the mere fact of my saying it. For as I have since discovered, roshis are rarely challenged in western Zen communities unless some proof of sexual exploitation has become incontrovertible.

~The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing, p.20-21

Peace,

Ted

Ted Biringer - Zen student and practitioner  
Author of The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing

Ted Biringer

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **CSSF** on Sun Feb 27, 2011 4:57 pm

The Committee for Sangha Stepping Forth has an update on the facilitators for the March 20th meeting in NYC.

The meeting will now be co-facilitated by Barry Magrid and Grace Schireson.

For more details, please check our web site:  
<http://www.sanghasteppingforth.com/>

Thank you.  
 CSSF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Kobutsu** on Tue Mar 08, 2011 5:35 am

Shortly after the “Committee for Sangha Stepping Forth” (“CSSF”) announced its intention to sponsor a ZSS sangha event in New York City on March 20, 2011, an attorney familiar with the turmoil involving Eido Shimano and Zen Studies Society provided disclosure / disclaimer language to protect event participants from unwittingly jeopardizing their legal claims or the claims of other prospective plaintiffs in anticipated litigation. The language was provided to CSSF on February 18th.

On March 5th, CSSF issued its own “privacy” statement, advising registrants and prospective event participants that (i) discussion of legal matters was not to be part of the event, (ii) an agreement among participants to keep the matters discussed at the event “confidential” would serve to keep the matters discussed from “public” disclosure, and (iii) advising participants to seek the advice of their own attorneys – at their own expense – prior to attending the meeting.

The CSSF leadership has declined – inexplicably – to offer sangha members the benefit of reading the disclosure / disclaimers and determining for themselves how the information contained there might affect the manner in which they participate in the event. For the benefit of registrants, participants and the event organizers and facilitators, here is what was provided to CSSF:

“If the Sangha Stepping Forth meeting proceeds as scheduled, here are some cautionary “disclaimers” to prospective attendees. This might be one way in which the event might proceed while mitigating (but not eliminating) the risk that prospective plaintiff-attendees might unwittingly jeopardize their legal claims or the claims of other prospective plaintiffs. For example, prospective participants, registrants and attendees might receive the following disclaimers:

“Before discussing openly your experiences concerning the Zen Studies Society and Eido Shimano with organizers and other participants at the Sangha Stepping Forth event, you should carefully consider (i) that you may be entitled to participate as a plaintiff or class member in one or more lawsuits currently being prepared to redress injuries you may



have sustained, or suffering you have endured, as a consequence of your affiliation with the Zen Studies Society and Eido Shimano and (ii) that your communications with organizers and other event participants might be used against you and other prospective plaintiffs in such lawsuits.”

“Those who may be entitled to participate in such lawsuits include, but are not limited to, individuals (i) who were injured or were caused to suffer directly by Eido Shimano’s conduct, (ii) who were injured as a result of the Zen Studies Society’s Board of Directors’ failure to disclose, or deliberately to conceal, material facts concerning Eido Shimano and the situation at ZSS, (iii) who were injured as a result of the Zen Studies Society’s Board of Directors’ failure to exercise their fiduciary duty to take appropriate actions to protect students from Eido Shimano or to take decisive remedial action with respect to Shimano, (iv) who made financial donations or donations in kind either to the Zen Studies Society or Eido Shimano, and (v) those who took the precepts during ‘jukai,’ were ordained by Eido Shimano, attended ‘sesshin’ with Eido Shimano or did ‘dokusan’ with Eido Shimano.”

“It is extremely important that you understand that despite what you may have heard or believe about your claim being “time barred” or “barred by the statute of limitations,” you may nevertheless have a valid legal claim against the Zen Studies Society and Eido Shimano, even if the event that you believe caused your injury or suffering happened ten, twenty or even thirty or more years ago. Even if your own legal claim turns out to be time-barred, you may nevertheless be able to tell your story in court in order to support others whose claims are not time-barred.”

“None of this is meant as legal advice or to encourage you to pursue any legal action. Nor is it an endorsement of the merits of any possible lawsuit. It is rather provided to you as a caution and a disclosure so that your decision about whether and how to participate in this event is informed by some very important considerations of which you may not previously have been aware.”

\* \* \*

I’m not an attorney, and can’t give a legal opinion, but it certainly seems like the envisioned lawsuit is not based solely on sexual misconduct and the cautions are well worth considering.

Kobutsu

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **So-on Mann** on Tue Mar 08, 2011 5:16 pm

Thanks for the post from Chozen, Carol.  
Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by CSSF on Tue Mar 08, 2011 6:07 pm

After discussing the legal disclaimer sent to the committee and facilitators by an anonymous lawyer, we have advised people, via the web page, to seek legal counsel if they are considering participating in a lawsuit. We hope that those who may be interested in a legal solution will communicate together at a meeting other than the March 20th meeting.

We do not represent ZSS and are not interested in reviving or continuing with that organization but wanted to come together with former friends and members. The main intention is to take a step that the ZSS Board failed to take and try to provide a safe space where people could come together and try to understand, from skillful facilitators and speakers, what the heck happened and what we can do to best move on in our lives.

[http://www.sanghasteppingforth.com/  
CSSF](http://www.sanghasteppingforth.com/CSSF)

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by CSSF on Mon Mar 14, 2011 3:21 am

We are now one week away from our meeting -- a meeting planned for an opportunity to come together for the purpose of healing and helping each other move forward from the difficulties experienced at ZSS.

We have every confidence in our facilitators, Grace Schireson and Barry Magid and their ability to facilitate the meeting in a way that will honor our experiences.

We expect that you have some feelings about what has happened at ZSS and we expect that coming together in this way will provide some sense of empowerment and the positive connections of Sangha. This is the essential purpose of this meeting - coming together to help each other.

It has come to our attention that in the near future there may be a possible legal action against the ZSS. The legal issue will not be a subject of this meeting.

We understand that you may have legal recourse available through pending lawsuits. If you feel you may want to join in the legal action and attend the March 20 meeting you should seek legal counsel beforehand.

Our strongest intention is to be there for each other, to not cause any further harm—either through withholding information or through pressure to share--and to find a way forward through the healing power of sangha.

CSSF

[http://www.sanghasteppingforth.com/  
CSSF](http://www.sanghasteppingforth.com/CSSF)

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Wed Apr 20, 2011 8:26 pm

The following is a copy of a letter signed by 66 Zen Buddhist teachers and sent to Genpo Merzel.

It was also sent to a variety of publications, websites, and blogs.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

19 April, 2011

Dear Mr. Merzel,

We are a group of Zen teachers, affiliated with all of the major schools of Zen in the west. We write as individuals, however, not as representatives of any group. We are deeply concerned at your apparent turning away from your own stated intention of stepping back as a teacher in order to take care of your habitual abuses of power with students and others. We are addressing this letter to you with the heartfelt wish that you read and heed our counsel. We are also sending this letter to various Dharma journals and websites because we have deep doubts that the letter will convince you and we feel that the greater sangha needs to be made aware of the problem and our views.

On the 15th of February forty-four teachers sent you a public letter, in response to your admission of serious misconduct, expressing deep concern both for you and for the sangha you serve. The letter recommended that you take a leave of absence from teaching and enter into counseling with people qualified to work with clergy sexual misconduct. We know others including close colleagues and friends offered similar counsel.

On February 6, you published a confession of unethical behavior, adultery and sexual misconduct with students. You called this statement, "Owning My Responsibility: A Personal Statement from Genpo Merzel." In it you say you will disrobe as a priest, "as just a small part of my response." You describe yourself

as having engaged in “dishonest, hurtful behavior as well as sexual misconduct.” Earlier in the year, in at least two meetings, you acknowledged having engaged in a long affair with one of your students. You claim you will no longer give the Buddhist precepts, that you will spend the rest of your life integrating the precepts into your life and practice so as to regain “dignity and respect” and characterize yourself as having missed “the mark of being a moral and ethical person and a decent human being.” Finally, you stated that you have entered therapy and plan to continue indefinitely. A copy of the entire statement is attached to this letter.

This was not the first occasion such behaviors were revealed. Your response this time was to disrobe as a Buddhist priest and to resign from the White Plum Asanga, the only organization that may have had sway over your future actions. We write again because you seem to have decided to ignore your own best impulses and to return to your path of denial. The page on your website that contained your statement a few short weeks ago now reads: “This page does not exist.”

On February 6, you said you would spend the rest of your life “integrating the Soto Zen Buddhist Ethics into (your) life.” Many of us read this and understood your intention was to cease representing yourself as a Zen teacher and instead to give future energy to the Big Mind project you’ve developed.

In fact, you continued to use the titles of a Zen teacher (Zen Master, Roshi) and to act in every way as a Zen teacher, just no longer as a priest or as a member of a larger Zen organization. Initially, your Kanzeon Board of Directors committed to a process of separating from your “Big Mind” organization and to bringing in new leadership for the Center. You were to take an indefinite leave from leadership at Kanzeon, of at least one year. Yet, a few weeks later, your Board at Kanzeon now says you have “retired” as a priest only and that they will sell off the assets of Kanzeon. Your Board’s statement also says that you will now teach nearby and offers your teaching to all members of Kanzeon, in the new location. The statement reads, in part, “The sale will also allow Kanzeon to pay off its obligations and sustain its existence, with Genpo Roshi continuing as its Abbot, outside Salt Lake City at Solitude in Big Cottonwood Canyon.”

We sincerely hope you will eventually find in your heart a way to genuine repentance, and out of that follow a course of remediation that may actually lead to healing. Others have acknowledged misconduct and have made appropriate amends in the past, and been rehabilitated within the mahasangha. May you be encouraged by their example?

However, at this point we see no evidence of good faith action on your part. It seems you continue to hold yourself out as a religious leader, a Zen Master and that the Kanzeon Board has turned and followed your lead. We are concerned for people who may come to you as a Zen teacher. Those among your current

students who choose to continue with you have made a conscious decision, aware, we assume, of all the facts regarding your repeated history of exploitative behaviors.

Therefore, as members of the Zen teaching mahasangha deeply concerned for the wellbeing of anyone to whom you present yourself as a Zen teacher, we feel we cannot remain silent. We need to state publicly our belief that you are not acting faithfully within the bounds of our tradition. We reiterate our call for you to enter treatment with people qualified to diagnose and address your repeated unethical and exploitative behaviors. And, we call on you to honor your commitment to step aside from Kanzeon and allow a remediation process to happen there as well.

Sincerely yours,

Janet Jiryu Abels - Still Mind Zendo  
 Gregory Hosho Abels - Still Mind Zendo  
 Robert Joshin Althouse - Zen Life & Meditation Center  
 Eiko Joshin Carolyn Atkinson - Everyday Dharma Zen Center  
 Shosan Victoria Austin - San Francisco Zen Center  
 Chozen Bays - Great Vow Zen Monastery  
 Hogen Bays - Great Vow Zen Monastery  
 Dai-En Bennage - Mt. Equity Zendo  
 Mitra Bishop - Mountain Gate Temple & Hidden Valley Zen Center  
 Melissa Myozen Blacker - Boundless Way Zen  
 Tony Bland - Starkville Zen Dojo  
 Angie Boissevain - Floating Zendo  
 Ingen Kevin Breen - San Francisco Zen Center  
 Domyo Burk - Dharma Rain Zen Center  
 Tim Burkett - Minnesota Zen Meditation Center  
 Gyokuko Carlson - Dharma Rain Zen Center  
 Kyogen Carlson - Dharma Rain Zen Center  
 Roko Sherry Chayat - Zen Center of Syracuse  
 Nonin Chowaney - Nebraska Zen Center  
 Jissan Larry Christensen - Zen Center of Portland  
 Jundo Cohen - Treeleaf Zendo  
 Michael Taiun Elliston - Atlanta Soto Zen Center  
 Norman Fischer - Everyday Zen Foundation  
 James Ford - Boundless Way Zen  
 Jake Jiyu Gage - Vista Zen Center  
 Eshin Godfrey - Zen Centre of Vancouver  
 Gaelyn Godwin - Houston Zen Center  
 Sunyana Graef - Vermont Zen Center  
 Elizabeth Hamilton - Zen Center of San Diego  
 Zenkei Blanche Hartman - San Francisco Zen Center  
 Joko Dave Haselwood - Stone Creek Zen Center  
 Taigen Henderson - Toronto Zen Centre

Soeng. Hyang - Kwan Um School of Zen  
 Les Keido Kaye - Kannon Do Zen Meditation Center  
 Myozan Dennis Keegan - Moon Water Sangha  
 Daijaku Kinst - Ocean Gate Zen Center  
 Bodhin Kjolhehe - Rochester Zen Center  
 Barry Magid - The Ordinary Mind Zendo  
 Genjo Marinello - Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji  
 Daishin McCabe - Mt. Equity Zendo  
 Ejo McMullen - Eugene Zendo  
 Misha Merrill - Zen Heart Sangha  
 Mary Mocine - Vallejo Zen Center  
 Dosho Port - Wild Fox Zen  
 Susan Ji-on Postal - Empty Hand Zen Center  
 Byakuren Judith Ragir - Clouds in Water Zen Center  
 Al Fusho Rapaport - Open Mind Zen Meditation Center  
 Zuiko Redding - Cedar Rapids Zen Center  
 Lewis Richmond - The Vimala Sangha  
 Joan Rieck - Three Treasures Sangha of the Sandias  
 Diane Eshin Rizzetto - Bay Zen Center  
 Shinshu Roberts - Ocean Gate Zen Center  
 David Rynick - Boundless Way Zen  
 Grace Jill Schireson - Empty Nest Zendo  
 Yozen Peter Schneider - Beginner's Mind Zen Center  
 Hozan Alan Senauke - Berkeley Zen Center  
 Joen Snyder O'Neal - Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center  
 Myogen Steve Stucky - San Francisco Zen Center  
 Haju Sunim - Zen Buddhist Temple, Ann Arbor  
 Val Meiren Szymanski - Bamboo In The Wind  
 Daniel Terragno - Rocks and Clouds Zendo  
 Katherine Thanas - Santa Cruz Zen Center  
 Jordan Thorn - San Francisco Zen Center  
 Sallie Jiko Tisdale - Dharma Rain Zen Center  
 Jisho Warner - Stone Creek Zen Center  
 Baizan Cathleen Williams - San Francisco Zen Center

Addendum

Owning My Responsibility

A Personal Statement from Genpo Merzel

I have chosen to disrobe as a Buddhist Priest, and will stop giving Buddhist Precepts or Ordinations, but I will continue teaching Big Mind. I will spend the rest of my life truly integrating the Soto Zen Buddhist Ethics into my life and practice so I can once again regain dignity and respect. My actions have caused a tremendous amount of pain, confusion, and controversy for my wife, family, and

Sangha, and for this I am truly sorry and greatly regret. My behavior was not in alignment with the Buddhist Precepts. I feel disrobing is just a small part of an appropriate response.

I am also resigning as an elder of the White Plum Asanga. My actions should not be viewed as a reflection on the moral fabric of any of the White Plum members. With great humility I will continue to work on my own shadows and deeply rooted patterns that have led me to miss the mark of being a moral and ethical person and a decent human being. I appreciate all the love and support as well as the criticism that has been shared with me. Experiencing all the pain and suffering that I have caused has truly touched my heart and been the greatest teacher. It has helped open my eyes and given me greater clarity around my own dishonest, hurtful behavior as well as my sexual misconduct. I recently entered therapy and plan to continue indefinitely with it. I am in deep pain over the suffering I have caused my wife, children, students, successors and Sangha.

With sadness and love,

D. Genpo Merzel

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Thu Apr 21, 2011 12:34 am

A recent post from Joan Halifax Roshi's facebook page...

It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom.  
— Gandhi

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Thu Apr 21, 2011 11:36 pm

I read this on another blog... regarding Eido Shimano.

What I heard the ZSS lawyer is Shimano's student.  
Did it explain everything?

Did the board fight Shimanos? Yes, they fought to prohibit Aiho visiting Shobo-ji. The main criminal, ES, still roams around and is allowed only to pick his stuff. The loop-hole is that stuff can be anything, tooth-picks, incense, etc., and ES can and is allowed to pick one stick at a time (and there tons of tooth-picks). How many Kalpa will ES stay around ZSS ... just count!

And I replied with this... because I found the above charge to be staggering...

Wait... is this literally true...?

Does ES come back to DBZ under the guise of "taking his stuff" and leave with a "stick of incense" so that he can still be around the place...?

To which the reply came:

Of course! Why are you so surprised? This is all so typical to those of us who have been around ZSS.

is all of this true?

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Nonin** on Thu Apr 21, 2011 11:45 pm

I wouldn't believe anything you read on a hate blog.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA



<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 2:43 am

Nonin wrote:

I wouldn't believe anything you read on a hate blog.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Hoe

How do you get "hate blog," he didn't even say which blog it is?

lok91

Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 3:36 am

Nonin said:

I wouldn't believe anything you read on a hate blog.

I don't believe everything I read - it's why I came here to ask.

Is Eido still allowed on Shobo-ji/DBZ property to get his stuff in this way? Is the incense considered "his stuff" ...? Does he come back on the property often?

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 4:16 am

Shodo wrote:

Nonin said:

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I don't believe everything I read - it's why I came here to ask.

Is Eido still allowed on Shobo-ji/DBZ property to get his stuff in this way? Is the incense considered "his stuff"...? Does he come back on the property often?

I don't think there are any DBZ members of this forum, so probably no one can answer that question here.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Linda Anderson** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 5:28 am

hate blog .... read between the lines and pay attention to the tone and vibration, and its investment in form and retribution.

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Jundo Cohen** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 6:00 am

Carol wrote:

Shodo wrote:

Nonin said:

I wouldn't believe anything you read on a hate blog.

I don't believe everything I read - it's why I came here to ask.

Is Eido still allowed on Shobo-ji/DBZ property to get his stuff in this way? Is the incense considered "his stuff"...? Does he come back on the property often?

I don't think there are any DBZ members of this forum, so probably no one can answer that question here.

I have made inquiries to see if there is any basis to it.

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 6:57 am

Linda Anderson wrote:

hate blog .... read between the lines and pay attention to the tone and vibration, and its investment in form and retribution.

I know, what a trip, that perception.

lok91

Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 10:01 am

lok91 wrote:

I know, what a trip, that perception.

Somewhat related to this topic - concerning the recent public group letter posted from 66 Zen teachers to Genpo Merzel, some thing just doesn't sit right. Certain things are better said by individuals, not groups, in my opinion.

The individual letters written by teachers to Eido Shimano some months back were a breath of fresh air. Many were quite insightful, well worth reading. Most probably E.S. didn't read many (or any) of them but I think the letters were helpful and were appreciated by many members within the Zen community, former ZSS students and others. It was really good to hear how many Zen teachers were thinking about this.

I don't get the same sense from the recent group letter to Genpo Merzel. In trying to come up with a collective statement censuring a peer, then putting it out publicly, it just... i dunno.... something doesn't feel right.

Anyway, just a perception i thought it might be helpful to share.

Last edited by christopher::: on Fri Apr 22, 2011 10:40 am, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 10:39 am

christopher::: wrote:

I don't get the same sense from the recent letter to Genpo Merzel. In trying to come up with a statement that 66 Zen teachers agreed to sign, then putting it out publicly, something just doesn't sit right. Some things are better said by individuals, not groups, in my opinion.

Anyway, just a perception i though it might be helpful to share.

I get the feeling that Zen teachers are damned if the do and damned if they don't speak out publicly about sexual transgressions of Zen teachers.

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for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 10:43 am

Carol wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

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I get the feeling that Zen teachers are damned if the do and damned if they don't speak out publicly about sexual transgressions of Zen teachers.

Perhaps so.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi

by **Shodo** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 1:41 pm

Jundo said:

I have made inquiries to see if there is any basis to it.

Gassho, Jundo

Thank you very kindly Jundo.

Edit x2: Nevermind - Some things are so small it just isn't worth addressing.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **lok91** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 4:16 pm

christopher::: wrote:

lok91 wrote:

I know, what a trip, that perception.

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Anyway, just a perception i thought it might be helpful to share.

Putting the letter out publicly helps to distinguish Merzel from the group, as though to say he is different and the 66 are not like him.

lok91

Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by christopher::: on Fri Apr 22, 2011 5:42 pm

lok91 wrote:

Putting the letter out publicly helps to distinguish Merzel from the group, as though to say he is different and the 66 are not like him.

Perhaps.

What the Zen teachers' letter is speaking of is an understandable cause for concern. Looking at future events listed at the Big Mind website they still refer to Genpo as "Roshi" so it sounds like even with Big Mind he (and others) may have had second thoughts, that they needed him to stay a Zen priest for marketing purposes.

Five Days to Deepen — July 7-12, 2011

Working closely with Genpo Roshi from morning to night, including six hours a day of Big Mind and meals and informal time with him in a small group, can lead you to more liberating insights than years of sitting in meditation.

What makes these five days so powerful is Roshi's extraordinary ability, honed by 40 years of Zen training, to focus on the exact places where each individual is stuck and then to compassionately turn unhealthy and negative qualities into healthy and positive attributes.

Donation: \$5,000

Limited to 20 participants

All donations are non-refundable.

Lots to comment on, without a doubt.

My point was not for teachers to stay silent, not to be uncritical - just i think the opinions of Zen teachers tend to contain more insight and wisdom when written individually, mindfully and from the heart.

Just my opinion.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi

by Carol on Fri Apr 22, 2011 5:55 pm

christopher::: wrote:

lok91 wrote:

Putting the letter out publicly helps to distinguish Merzel from the group, as though to say he is different and the 66 are not like him.

Perhaps.

What the letter is speaking of is indeed an understandable cause for concern. Looking at future events listed at the Big Mind website they still refer to Genpo as "Roshi" so it sounds like even with Big Mind he (and others) may have had second thoughts, that they needed him to stay a Zen priest for marketing purposes.

A Roshi is not necessarily a Zen priest. They are two different roles that are sometimes combined and sometimes not. Roshi means "teacher" (actually senior or "old" teacher). Zen priests do not always take on the "teacher" role, but may perform more ministerial and ceremonial role as I understand it.

So, apparently, Genpo believes it's OK for him to keep teaching and that he is still a Roshi, even though he has given up his priestly status. The distinction is probably lost on many if not most people -- but I suppose it's a logical rationalization he can make.

As to joint letters -- there were at least two of those circulated by Robert Aitken Roshi about Eido Shimano over the years. Apparently, he felt they carried more weight when a number of Zen teachers signed on even if they were less personal.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by lok91 on Fri Apr 22, 2011 7:02 pm

Carol wrote:

So, apparently, Genpo believes it's OK for him to keep teaching and that he is still a Roshi, even though he has given up his priestly status. The distinction is probably lost on many if not most people -- but I suppose it's a logical rationalization he can make.

I don't know if it's logical or a rationalization but he's not alone, the center (formerly the Kanzeon Zen Center) is also OK with it.

lok91  
Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Jok\_Hae** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 7:14 pm

Carol wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

I don't get the same sense from the recent letter to Genpo Merzel. In trying to come up with a statement that 66 Zen teachers agreed to sign, then putting it out publicly, something just doesn't sit right. Some things are better said by individuals, not groups, in my opinion.

Anyway, just a perception i though it might be helpful to share.

I get the feeling that Zen teachers are damned if the do and damned if they don't speak out publicly about sexual transgressions of Zen teachers.

Couldn't agree more, Carol. Especially in the fantasy world of the interwebs, where people can take shots at others while hiding behind an anonymous screen name. You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 7:41 pm

From Dosho Port's blog ...

Dragons and Snakes Intermingle: Genpo, Eido and All of Us

I signed the recent letter to Genpo from the gang of 66 Zen teachers after not signing the previous one. This one seemed to have fewer hidden agendas (go ahead and call me paranoid...) and was clear - step down and do your work, do what you said you'd do.

I've noticed in what I've been scanning in the cyberwhirl how polarizing these issues are. Duh!

Some think Eido Shimano is pure evil and Genpo is close behind and the rest of the rotten Zen teacher lot come next. Or Eido and Genpo are misunderstood unexcelled masters who have such deep samadhi that they have the power to enlighten others.



Or maybe it's those 66 teachers who are dogs, truly defiling the pure dharma for self-centered motives (jealousy and thirst for fame and gain and power, for example). Or are the 66 nobly standing up for the precepts of the honored tradition and really seeing the how it truly is for others (e.g., that those who defend Genpo are swallowing his justifications hook, line, and sinker)?

We seem to want it one way or the other.

read on here

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Genjo** on Fri Apr 22, 2011 9:58 pm

Shodo wrote:

Wait... is this literally true...?

Does ES come back to DBZ under the guise of "taking his stuff" and leave with a "stick of incense" so that he can still be around the place...?

Come on! Let's get real, sticks of incense?!? Eido Roshi is not doing dokusan, not giving Teisho, he is not teaching or supervising in anyway. He was very instrumental in procuring and building both ZSS properties. He and his wife do still have a number of personal belongings on site collected over the course of 40 years. In fact it will be months before we totally figure out what belongs to whom. It is my understanding neither is allowed on ZSS property without an invitation and the presence of either the new Abbot or NYZ Director.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 1:03 am

Carol wrote:

From Dosho Port's blog ...

Dragons and Snakes Intermingle: Genpo, Eido and All of Us

Response from Alan Gregory Wonderwheel...

I appreciate the “dragons and snakes intermingling.” It is also a great expression for the feelings stirred up. People thought these fellows were dragons and “lo and behold” they acted like snakes. To paraphrase the Bodhisattva of the Levant, “Let those who have never acted like snakes throw the first stones.” Any adult who believes they have never acted like a snake is truly delusional. It is no excuse to say “I’ve just been a ribbon snake, not a king cobra.”

If nothing else, the venting of venom against these Zen teachers has shown that people are meeting on the common ground of being snakes. Three threes in front! Yet, to see only the dragon and not the snake; three threes in back!

I’ve been reluctant to say much about these controversies because I’m all too aware of past lives where I was a mass murderer or a wife-beater.

We can only make these events into Dharma food by the alchemical transformation of turning the three poisons into the three treasures. People who criticize Genpo, Eido, and others for not living up to their dragon persona do no service to the Dharma by maintaining the mental apartheid of dragons and snakes. The lineage of awakening now called Zen, as Bodhidharma told us, is entering by the gate of principle in which we bear profound faith that the one true nature of beings is the same, without self and without other, with the ordinary and the sagely one and the same.

It is not someone else’s greed, hatred and ignorance that must be transformed. It is our own. It is not that the three poisons are jettisoned, discarded, or left behind and replaced by the three treasures. It is three by three: three threes in front. The greed itself is and becomes the compassion of the sangha, the hatred itself is and becomes the equanimity of the Dharma, the ignorance itself is and becomes the wisdom of the Buddha.

What is most difficult for the inexperienced to understand and accept is how the transformation works in the opposite direction: with three threes in back; where the wisdom of Buddha manifests as ignorance, the equanimity of the Dharma revealing aversion, and the compassion of the sangha showing our greed. What kind of topsy-turvey world is this?

Our Idealism wants a world where poisons become treasures, and not a world where treasures become poisons. But hey, it’s three threes in front, three threes in back, nothing amiss. For the Dharma it is essential to be able to distinguish poisons from treasures, but

it is just as essential to see their sameness, and to see in what way dragons and snakes intermingle within each of us.

April 22, 2011 3:52 PM

Thank you, Gregory. Hope that its okay for me to repost this here.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by So-on Mann** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 2:27 am

Carol wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

I don't get the same sense from the recent letter to Genpo Merzel. In trying to come up with a statement that 66 Zen teachers agreed to sign, then putting it out publicly, something just doesn't sit right. Some things are better said by individuals, not groups, in my opinion.

Anyway, just a perception i though it might be helpful to share.

I get the feeling that Zen teachers are damned if the do and damned if they don't speak out publicly about sexual transgressions of Zen teachers.

Yeah wait a monute- in one breath it's "why didn't Zen teachers speak out against Eido Roshi's misconduct!?" and when they make a very strong statement against Genpo's misconduct, something "doesn't sit right." I don't get it.

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 3:07 am

Genjo said:

Come on! Let's get real, sticks of incense?!?

I KNOW RIGHT!? I mean... how petty would that be, to use a loophole in the rules to come on the property for a simple stick of incense.

And if it was anyone other than Eido Shimano - a man who has never atoned for one jot or tittle of the pain he has caused over the past 40 years I would roll my eyes along with you...

I'm sad to say, that there is very little that I would put beyond him... So I had to ask.

But I am sorry to say... I don't agree with this balancing job of Gregory Wonderwheel's. I am sick and tired of equanimous Buddhists with zero capacity for action. Where the minute somebody calls out an abusive teacher, there is a chorus of blissful faces finger-wagging as they chant "DON'T SPEAK OF OTHERS ERRORS AND FAULTS". Where Buddhist leaders in our community who are more than willing to use this view (so prevalent in zen) to keep on abusing.

Well you go right on ahead and practice that way if it makes you feel peaceful... Eido is not even my lineage! I have never met him... WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HE IS DONE?? I feel like my inaction lets this happen! I feel like this view of Gregory's helps to justify leaders who just aren't practicing! Am I alone here??

Real people were hurt by Genpo and Eido, but I see more institutional circling of the wagons than teachers caring for the people who were hurt and who will never practice the dharma ever again because of what they went through...

How in the world do you act to right a wrong were real people were hurt - and hurt badly - while trying to live up to this don't cast the first stone unless you were not a rapist in a former life nonsense....??

I am sorry in advance... I think I am getting sick

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 5:15 am

Perhaps the challenge is to hear the "truth" in all our voices? The hate blogs, the 66 teacher letter, Dosho Port's blog, Gregory's response, the way the folks at ZSS and Kanzeon Zen Center have/are responding. The suffering of students in the past, our personal responses, the silence, speaking out, taking an "appropriate" stand, blaming individuals, forgiving individuals, trying to see the situation nondualistically, honoring the precepts, respecting and caring about subjective feelings and reactions, letting go of our subjective reactions...

I really appreciated Gregory's thoughts, others really appreciate the 66 teachers who spoke out. Can we (should we) try to listen to all these perspectives without judgement and just accept and hear what's happening, keeping our hearts and minds clear? What happens when/if we do that? What would happen if more and more of us could do that, skillfully?

Very very challenging, but isn't that what Zen Buddhist practice is all about?

HSIN HSIN MING: Verses of the Faith Mind

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **thewhitesquirl** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 5:38 am

I, for one, am glad that Zen teachers have come out against Genpo Merzel and called him out on his behavior. I had a problem with Zen teachers rationalizing his behavior before but I support their recent effort to call a spade a spade. Hopefully, the conference with Barry Magid goes well.

Zen teachers have been getting mixed responses in regards to these matters and all I have to say is, "these are things of old."

As for Gregory's response, I find his argument that if you haven't been a snake you have no right to criticize snake behavior completely irrational and ad hoc. It's like telling someone they have no right to say cat shit doesn't taste like tootsie rolls unless they've had a kitty-litter-lunch or telling a straight male they don't know if they're gay or straight because they're never blown another guy. What about wall-street investors? Do we have a right to criticize their behavior unless we're all lived wealthy lifestyles? How about sociopaths? Can we criticize their behavior if we haven't been sociopaths in another life? We are talking about behavior conducted by a person and not the person. Please de-personalize the issue and talk about behavior, actions, words and inconsistencies regarding these matters.

I apologize for the crude analogies but this is a ridiculous line of reasoning portraying itself as intellectual.

What is nearness if it fails to come about despite the reduction of the longest intervals? What is nearness if it is even repelled by the restless abolition of distances? What is nearness if remoteness also remains absent? -Martin Heidegger

thewhitesquirl

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 6:22 am

I have not read Gregory's comments.... this topic has the good, the bad and the ugly all contained within. It seems a bit sun burned to me.

I can only respond to the quoted comment about the snakes, if you haven't been one, you can't criticize. It's not irrational to me, so arguments about cat sh\*t tasting like anything is somewhere between the sublime and the ridiculous in the world of perception. I've cleaned up a lot of it, I've never tasted it. The snake image, for me, is calling me to remember when I accuse someone that there is one finger pointing out and three fingers pointing back... it's shadow work, and projection work in form.... there but for the grace of g\*d go I. It is a way of cultivating compassion, it's not a way of denying anything. In the vaster realm, being snake reduces the separation, leading to more compassion.

I've felt harmed in sangha, and only I've affected my practice negatively. At the end of the day, I have no choice but to drop my own reactivity by seeing through it. I agree, something doesn't feel in the flow with the 66... there is a complexity arising that I don't care to analyze, but I'm left wondering.... what kind of example of practice is this? I can't remember which paramita talks about how to hold something when you have been wronged... it could be kashanti paramita... sure I've misspelled it....

The whole thing is so sad and inherently lacking

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
**by christopher:::** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 6:36 am

Hi Linda. Here's Gregory's response to Dosho Port, again. I think you are both saying something similar. Not everyone agrees, but i do think it's very important for us to reflect upon and consider. That no situation is black and white, at a deeper level there is always this complexity....

Response from Alan Gregory Wonderwheel...

I appreciate the “dragons and snakes intermingling.” It is also a great expression for the feelings stirred up. People thought these fellows were dragons and “lo and behold” they acted like snakes. To paraphrase the Bodhisattva of the Levant, “Let those who have never acted like snakes throw the first stones.” Any adult who believes they have never acted like a snake is truly delusional. It is no excuse to say “I’ve just been a ribbon snake, not a king cobra.”

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April 22, 2011 3:52 PM

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Dan74** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 6:47 am

Reprimanding someone for their unethical behaviour and reprimanding someone for reprimanding are not so different, it seems to me.

We make distinctions, we speak up when we feel that something is amiss. And? Yes, it's important to recollect our projections and work on our own issues, but why is this incompatible with speaking out when necessary?

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 7:20 am

No reprimand intended, looking deeper is something else that we can all do for each other.

I resisted inflicting this on you all before... even my astrologer in the UK is tuning in to the little toe:

There's an old Indian story about three blind men encountering an elephant for the first time. One inspects the trunk and concludes that the beast is like a snake. The next finds a leg and decides he is in front of a tree. The third finds the tail and figures he is holding a rope. The moral? We all see life from a different perspective and we are all 'blind' to some extent because none of us can fully grasp what is going on. Your view of a current situation is not the only view that can be taken.

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 12:00 pm

Linda Anderson wrote:

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I've felt harmed in sangha, and only I've affected my practice negatively. At the end of the day, I have no choice but to drop my own reactivity by seeing through it. I agree, something doesn't feel in the flow with the 66... there is a complexity arising that I don't care to analyze, but I'm left wondering.... what kind of example of practice is this? I can't remember which paramita talks about how to hold something when you have been wronged... it could be kashanti paramita... sure I've misspelled it....

The whole thing is so sad and inherently lacking

Linda

Who hasn't been a snake? I don't know anyone who can honestly say they have not, though they may not have fully realized it and seen through it to the compassion that arises when you do.

As for addressing another person who is doing harm ... usually it's difficult, sometimes it's necessary, even if awkwardly done. Though it may do more good for the ones being harmed than the one doing the harming ... I think that's a good reason to speak out, even if awkwardly done.

The kashanti paramita is "forebearance".  
It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by fragrant herbs** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 12:19 pm

I was told by a teacher to never talk about the sexual exploitations of another teacher, that it was bad karma. One could not know whether it was being done out of resentment or to warn others, and if it was done out of resentment, it was bad karma, but we also have the Dalai Lama saying that "it is our duty to expose," and here we have a very long thread talking about teachers that have done wrong. What is everyone's opinion on this?

fragrant herbs

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by moon face buddha** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 12:28 pm

I see nothing wrong with warning the rest of flock that there is a wolf in close proximity wearing a sheep costume.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **fragrant herbs** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 4:05 pm

I hope to hear more on this subject about being open about talking over these things and it not causing bad karma.

I know that when I see a shade of the tyrant in my old man, very painful old and half-forgotten feelings come flooding in and it takes a lot of effort to keep them at bay.

I remember once reading something that Thich Nhat Hanh said about painful experiences, how they often don't go entirely away. I think he was referring to his painful experience in Vietnam during the war. And I don't even think that they can go entirely away with therapy. We can learn to live with them and do our best to forgive them but that is all.

I have heard of and had two gurus who were or had been fooling around with their disciples, so I basically do not trust gurus. I have trouble trusting a teacher that tells others to be quiet because it is bad karma to talk about it, but I don't trust the Dalai Lama either, from things I have heard, who tells others to speak out. But the Dalai Lama's comments seem to be wiser to me. But I don't know for sure.

And look at this thread, 59 pages long, and it doesn't seem that the teachers here are telling people that it is bad karma to speak out.

Last edited by fragrant herbs on Sat Apr 23, 2011 7:30 pm, edited 1 time in total.

fragrant herbs

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **fukasetsu** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 4:25 pm

fragrant herbs wrote:

I hope to hear more on this subject about being open about talking over these things and it not causing bad karma.

Sorry to butt in fragrant herbs, this is how I apply it.

If my intentions/will are not unwholesome or wholesome, then I do not cause unwholesome or wholesome effluents/karmas in my mind.

Then I should correlate my speech to it, although my speech is not intended to be unwholesome I do however notice that it can be unwholesome to others, so ofcourse I'm responsible for that, so I should practise to be mindful of it.

So there's no fixed karma which says if you say this or that it's bad, neutral or good.

If you understand how the mind works, you'll also understand how karma works.

Ofcourse even if you are as civil and compassionate as you can be there is always the case that someone who reads your words will cause karma for themselves by means of aversion and attachment. But at least you can know how to apply it according to yourself, just check your volitions.

As an example, smoking the whole day will plant habitual tendencies=karmic seeds within your mind, now if someone in your enviroment starts smoking because he/she sees that your doing it, did you cause it then? Was it by your volition?

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Genjo** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 4:45 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Perhaps the challenge is to hear the "truth" in all our voices? The hate blogs, the 66 teacher letter, Dosho Port's blog, Gregory's response, the way the folks at ZSS and Kanzeon Zen Center have/are responding. The suffering of students in the past, our personal responses, the silence, speaking out, taking an "appropriate" stand, blaming individuals, forgiving individuals, trying to see the situation nondualistically, honoring the precepts, respecting and caring about subjective feelings and reactions, letting go of our subjective reactions...

I really appreciated Gregory's thoughts, others really appreciate the 66 teachers who spoke out. Can we (should we) try to listen to all these perspectives without judgement and just accept and hear what's happening, keeping our hearts and minds clear? What happens when/if we do that? What would happen if more and more of us could do that, skillfully?

Very very challenging, but isn't that what Zen Buddhist practice is all about?

HSIN HSIN MING: Verses of the Faith Mind

Bravo! Well said Christopher. Knowing that we are all snakes and we are all dragons we must be willing to listen to all perspectives. If we can't see an issue from all sides we haven't looked deeply enough. I would add, once we have listened and allowed ourselves to see through each others eyes, then we must reach a judgement (informed decision) about how we ourselves will proceed.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Jundo Cohen** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 5:06 pm

Hi,

I don't know anyone who signed the letters expressing self-righteousness and superiority, a "holier than thou" attitude or the like. Most Zen teachers I know are quite familiar with what it means to be human, and the potential for human failing in all beings (Zen teachers no less) ... dragons and snakes. Anyone who thinks otherwise about what went into the letters is perhaps just looking for a bone to pick, or engaging maybe in their own backhanded form of self-righteousness and feelings of superiority. Come on!

Rather, I would describe the attitude behind the letters as simply that of a group of race drivers, doctors, school teachers or the like (gosh, I hope I don't open the door to someone calling us "professionals!" ) who see one of their kind driving dangerously/performing hack surgery/handling school students in a way where someone may get very hurt and which discredits what we do.

The central concern and emphasis of about everyone, I feel, was simply to put out a warning beacon (we have little resources at hand other than the power of the pen, the wagging finger and the warning beacon) for new students researching the fellow that 66 teachers say to keep alert, do your homework, there may be something to be concerned about here. This situation was rather large and rather more serious than usual, and merited a response (I, for one, am not one to get my panties in a twist just because a teacher has an affair with a fellow mature, consenting adult. None of my business, that. It takes a lot more for me, many others too, to think a situation merits some action).

Further, nobody ever forgot that forgiveness and compassion must remain at the forefront. I, for one, feel great understanding, compassion, sadness for my fellow driver/doctor/school teacher who has fallen ... I know that, for all human beings, "there but for the grace of Buddha go we".... I know that most human failings are best overlooked. Still, the pedestrians/patients/students needed to be warned. Simple as that.

Speaking for myself here, but I think my words would reflect the attitude of about everyone who signed these letters.

Gassho, Jundo Cohen

Last edited by Jundo Cohen on Sun Apr 24, 2011 5:17 am, edited 1 time in total.  
 Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
 by **Shodo** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 5:49 pm

Genjo said:

Knowing that we are all snakes and we are all dragons we must be willing to listen to all perspectives. If we can't see an issue from all sides we haven't looked deeply enough. I would add, once we have listened and allowed ourselves to see through each others eyes, then we must reach a judgment (informed decision) about how we ourselves will proceed.

This is my question - is there a shred of possibility that there just may be a few zen teachers who are simply charlatans?

Whose "points of view" are entirely self-serving...?

Who don't care if they hurt people? Who don't care if you get upset about it? Who just want to make a quick buck... or get laid?

What's the point of empathizing with such a view - I mean sure, it'll help us generate compassion I guess, but it wont change anything except spin our wheels in the mud, or hinder us to act decisively in the face of something that should be crystal clear.

Deep down, I don't think we want to even think that this may be a possibility - because if it is true, somebody eventually will have to suck it up and get their hands dirty... generate some karma and come down off the mountain for the benefit of others. I am glad that now in the internet age teachers CAN mobilize quickly to speak out - because before the internet, teachers tried to speak out against Eido and were squashed and told "We request that you keep this reply among you signers so as to avoid even further conflicts with the precepts." Precepts turned to poison.

Deep down we want to think that people who have been transmitted to are operating on some deeper level... and we twist and turn trying to work out how they could be teachers, or that they have a "true Dharma eye", or that we are all not perfect, or that we shouldn't judge them, or any of the other explanations this thread has entertained... But I don't think anyone wants to even think about the possibility that they could be enlightend... passed all those koans AND simultaneously just simply... not... care.

Last edited by Shodo on Sat Apr 23, 2011 6:12 pm, edited 1 time in total.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 5:53 pm

Well said, Jundo. Thanks.

I feel a debt of gratitude to those teachers who signed this letter. I do think the warning beacons are compassionate lights to help us all along the way.

~Carol

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 6:25 pm

Shodo wrote:

Deep down we want to think that people who have been transmitted to are operating on some deeper level... and we twist and turn trying to work out how they could be teachers, or that they have a "true Dharma eye", or that we are all not perfect, or that we shouldn't judge them, or any of the other explanations this thread has entertained... But I don't think anyone wants to even think about the possibility that they could be enlightend... passed all those koans AND simultaneously just simply... not... care.

This is the really really painful question.

I think this is where the Zen practice of "don't know mind" really matters.

~Carol

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and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi

by **lok91** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 8:37 pm

Carol wrote:

Shodo wrote:

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This is the really really painful question.

I think this is where the Zen practice of "don't know mind" really matters.

~Carol

Disillusioning certainly, but I don't find it painful, personally.

Isn't disillusionment considered a good thing in Zen.

lok91

Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Sat Apr 23, 2011 11:07 pm

Thanks Carol and Jundo for sharing some of your views about the motivations behind the recent Zen teachers letter. I agree, people do need beacons, do need to be warned. After so many years of silence its better that warnings are spoken awkwardly then not at all. That matters.

I just hope we continue to hear more about the dragons and snakes within us all, cause that matters too. Otherwise it can become a witchhunt. People pick up cues from their teachers, on how to think and behave.

Genjo wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

Perhaps the challenge is to hear the "truth" in all our voices? The hate blogs, the 66 teacher letter, Dosho Port's blog, Gregory's response, the way the folks at ZSS and Kanzeon Zen Center have/are responding. The suffering of students in the past, our personal responses, the silence, speaking out, taking an "appropriate" stand, blaming individuals, forgiving individuals, trying to see the situation nondualistically, honoring

the precepts, respecting and caring about subjective feelings and reactions, letting go of our subjective reactions...

I really appreciated Gregory's thoughts, others really appreciate the 66 teachers who spoke out. Can we (should we) try to listen to all these perspectives without judgement and just accept and hear what's happening, keeping our hearts and minds clear? What happens when/if we do that? What would happen if more and more of us could do that, skillfully?

Very very challenging, but isn't that what Zen Buddhist practice is all about?

HSIN HSIN MING: Verses of the Faith Mind

Bravo! Well said Christopher. Knowing that we are all snakes and we are all dragons we must be willing to listen to all perspectives. If we can't see an issue from all sides we haven't looked deeply enough. I would add, once we have listened and allowed ourselves to see through each others eyes, then we must reach a judgement (informed decision) about how we ourselves will proceed.

Genjo

Yes, indeed. Thank you Genjo.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 2:02 am

Carol wrote:

Shodo wrote:

Deep down we want to think that people who have been transmited to are operating on some deeper level... and we twist and turn trying to work out how they could be teachers, or that they have a "true Dharma eye", or that we are all not perfect, or that we shouldn't judge them, or any of the other explanations this thread has entertained... But I don't think anyone wants to even think about the possibility that they could be enlightend... passed all those koans AND simultaneously just simply... not... care.

This is the really really painful question.

I think this is where the Zen practice of "don't know mind" really matters.

~Carol



Please, I think this is a really important question to ask.

I think where we have decided to begin the debate has been a part of the problem - many of us have just taken for granted that these guys are "enlightened masters"... they have mastered the koan curriculum, been authorized to teach by modern day zen legends, passed the precept koans. Wisdom is compassion - They just gotta care... right? So it looks like, when folks come on strong against them, the reaction is that we have to "hear all points of view"... "give them a chance to heal themselves".... "they can atone" for what they have done...

But show me the evidence that either of these two guys actually care that they have used, harmed and hurt!

Because if we cannot demonstrate that they actually care about what they have done, then we are engaging in a sort of Zen hubris by refusing to acknowledge the facts.

...and they will just continue to do what they do - and we will be the ones left to debate endlessly why it is so!

Take Eido... there is literally VOLUMES of his many MANY abuses on <http://www.shimanoarchive.com/>, they have continued since the late 60's, and ever since his vague and half-hearted apology last summer - can anyone actually argue that he cares since the letter retracting ALL of it was sent to the New York Times? He denied everything!

In fact, could anyone take seriously any forthcoming apologies from him? He is a bold-faced LIAR!

The evidence is that he does NOT care! Why give him any benefit of the doubt - what will be the purpose of hearing his point of view when it is entirely self serving??

I wish I could speak more on Genpo, since there is no Shimano Archive equivalent on his many misdeeds stretching back many years... but from what I understand, he's got quite the track record... and his actions since his letter of apology has been essentially a big, well, "fuck you"... and when 66 of your peers write a letter calling you to task it is fairly obvious his motives are self-serving!

If Zen is about seeing clearly, we need to see this clearly - we need to stop assuming the best because of who these guys are, and start seeing them for what they are.

Charlatans.

(I am not against forgiveness. Nor against giving second or third chances... we are human and we err. But it doesn't work unless there is true and real atonement. And repeating the same abuses over and over and over and OVER doesn't show human weakness - it shows something else.)

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Seigen** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 2:51 am

Well, this does seem to be the point of all those signatures, and all of those letters of personal address to Eido Shimano. There does seem to be a point at which one needs to stop saying "to each his own/don't know mind," and teachers are not afraid to band together and say so. I'm very glad they did. So yes, there does seem to be a strong willingness to draw the line in order to protect others - I don't think there is any mistake about that. Before and after that, plenty of commentary, plenty of room to embrace your inner snake or condemn all sinners, a lot of selfing going on, in all kinds of directions. Maybe it is in the more personal sense of things that embracing don't know mind is useful, to let your words no matter what they have been sit still as curious artifacts, just for a bit.

Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Jundo Cohen** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 3:00 am

Shodo wrote:

Deep down we want to think that people who have been transmitted to are operating on some deeper level... and we twist and turn trying to work out how they could be teachers, or that they have a "true Dharma eye", or that we are all not perfect, or that we shouldn't judge them, or any of the other explanations this thread has entertained... But I don't think anyone wants to even think about the possibility that they could be enlightened... passed all those koans AND simultaneously just simply... not... care.

This comes, in my view, from a deep misunderstanding of what it means to have "True Dharma Eye", to have passed all the Koans, be profound Insight, Kensho, Satori, Enlightenment and all the rest. Zen students have been sold a bill of goods.

And I say that without, in any way, diminishing or casting aspersions upon what is this "True Dharma Eye" and all the rest. There is a Treasure which need not be bought or sold, the Pearl Beyond Price.

Both at once, at one. How so?

The old stories sure leave readers with the impression that once one "becomes enlightened" the work is done, all obstructions are removed, the Eye is Clear, all

psychological issues are eradicated, all moral failings purified, one can never fall down (not only because "there is not place to fall", but because one becomes in'fall'ible). This comes from hagiographic tales of old dead guys in the worshipful stories being written and rewritten by fans, each Patriarch dipped in gold and polished up into a "Perfect Being". [Stuart Lachs (although way overstating his case, as usual) makes the same point in a recent paper on this process with two modern masters ...

[http://www.hsuyun.org/chan/docs/ENGLISH ... rching.pdf](http://www.hsuyun.org/chan/docs/ENGLISH...rching.pdf) ]

Well, in fact, such a "Dipped in Gold, Pearl Beyond Price" description of "enlightenment" is fully right. It is also half right. Both at once, not two (a Koan, not a particularly tricky one either).

An instantaneous instant of enlightenment realized is all the world's work done, all obstructions are removed, the Eye is Clear. It is just as it is billed to be. As the little "self" is dropped away, all conflict flows released in intimacy, all psychological issues are resolved, all moral failings purified (for there is nothing to steal or do violence to, no separate one to take or do violence), one can never fall down as there is no separate place to fall.

The Bodhisattva rises from the lotus or Zafu, completely a different being from before (what "before"?). 'Cept, of course, to the degree that he or she is the same schmuck as before. One is One Beyond One and Whole beyond Big and Small ... one is still just a small human. No conflict there in the least (AND IF YA THINK THERE IS ANY CONFLICT THERE OR EVER WAS, YA NEVER HAD THE 'TRUE DHARMA EYE', NOT EVEN IN YOUR DREAMS).

For this reason, Soto folks speak of Practice-Enlightenment (most schools of Zen express this in some similar way too ... after the Ecstasy and Purity, the laundry of Wisdom and Compassion to be daily washed ... ), in which one is already Buddha ... as well as on the train heading to Buddha ... realizing (making real) Buddha or Mara through each good/bad choice and each step/misstep in life ... getting better and better at it all through life (or lifetimes), yet ever arrived and complete nonetheless. (AND IF YA THINK THERE IS ANY CONFLICT THERE OR EVER WAS, YA NEVER HAD THE 'TRUE DHARMA EYE', NOT EVEN IN YOUR DREAMS).

Thus, "enlightenment" fully and completely evaporates all psychological issues and all moral failings, no place to fall down not safely in Indra's Net. Thus hand-in-hand, so long as we (Dharma Teachers too) retain this human form so precious, vowing to save all Sentient Beings, some psychological issues and moral failings may remain, we may sometimes stumble and fall down. Such is what is to be human. In fact, for a Bodhisattva to remain in the muddy Saha world is a damn good thing. Here is what I usually say when these stories come up ...

All human beings have the tendency to fall down from time to time. A Zen Teacher, guided by the Precepts, Wisdom and Compassion, should be expected to have more skill

and experience in avoiding life's temptations and pitfalls ... they should be expected not to fall down easily, not to yield to life's temptations too easily. But Buddhist "Masters" are yet flesh and blood, and only perfect in their human imperfection. (Beware of any "guru" who claims to be so far beyond humanity that they are now beyond all possible falling).

In my view, any human being can fall down, and it is just a matter of what the person does then ... picking themselves up, recovering balance, getting back on the trail, apologizing and learning from any damage caused. The real "Master" should much more --rarely-- fall down but, even more impressively, should show true "mastery" in getting back up if she does. Like any great athlete or dancer, the point is not that we never get knocked around, never trip or stumble ... but how we handle the fall (as in the martial arts ... there is no training offered on how to never fall, but endless training on how to fall well). Show me the man or woman who falls down sometimes ... but who demonstrates how to fall well and recover one's footing ... and I will show you a great Zen "Master".

On the other hand, beware of any purported "master" who falls down again and again ... or harms his students again and again ... or who tries to recover from falling down mostly concerned about covering his own ass . This, in my mind, is what makes the difference between, for example, a "master" who may have fallen at some time in life into an affair, or a drinking and gambling problem that he or she recovers from ... and those that repeat the behavior again and again over many years. (That, in my mind, appears to be the difference between such cases and Genpo "Roshi" and Eido "Roshi" who seem to have repeated their harmful behavior over decades).

If I may add my own "test" for finding a teacher, I would say find a man or woman who sometimes (though rarely) falls down, makes mistakes, makes a donkey's ass of him or herself... and observe closely what happens, watch how he or she does it. Oh, don't get me wrong... probably you do not want as a teacher someone who falls down each and every day, nor someone who falls down too BIG (robbing banks, lying profusely and intentionally starting fires, for example). No, I mean someone who... every so often, now and then, like everyone... makes a fool of him/herself, loses his Zen Master cool, over-indulges, does a real face-flop, says something she regrets, breaks some (hopefully not too big) Precepts in some very human way.

How does this person recover their balance? With what grace do they fall or, at least, get back up on their feet? Do they profoundly reflect on their mistakes, learn from them, apologize sincerely to anyone hurt (hopefully not too badly) ... and move on? As a matter of fact, since this crazy practice is greatly about living with some grace in this imperfect, often disappointing, trap and temptation filled world, a teacher with a couple of serious imperfections may be a good guide on how to avoid, lessen or escape the worst of it!

Oh, I am not trying to excuse any truly heinous abuses or scandals which have been seen among clergy of all traditions, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist no less (not these "Zen teachers" who keep on with their harmful behavior year in and year out). NOT AT ALL! I have little tolerance for members of the clergy who abuse their positions of trust and

hurt others, sometimes children. But also we must be cautious of anyone who wants to be our teacher by telling us that they are beyond all failings, never ever break a Precept (not even the small ones), are "Perfectly Enlightened Beings" who never trip and fall down. I'll believe it when I see it!

Certainly, it is true that within Enlightenment, there is no place to fall, nothing which can be a mistake. Yet, in this world of Samsara where we live, I do not think there is anyone who gets away always without cuts and bruises and difficult days. (Anyone who thinks that Zen practice is going to ensure that they never have another "bad day" is in for a bad surprise. Whether we fully "drop good and bad" or not, we must live in a world sometimes real good and real bad.) Sure, this "self" is but an illusion... and so are all the other "selves" in this world, but we are going to bump and bang into each other sometimes nonetheless. The hole you stumble in may be like a dream, and ultimately there is no place to fall. But fall into that hole and break your imaginary leg, you may!

AND IF YA THINK THERE IS ANY CONFLICT THERE OR EVER WAS, YA NEVER HAD THE 'TRUE DHARMA EYE', NOT EVEN IN YOUR DREAMS!

(if anyone wants to hear a perfectly imperfect talk by me on the subject) ...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOCcuOx64Ck>

More here:

<http://www.treeleaf.org/forum/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=2074>

Gassho, Jundo

Last edited by Jundo Cohen on Mon Apr 25, 2011 3:43 am, edited 6 times in total.  
 Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 3:31 am

Thank you for the long response Jundo - I think I see where you are coming from.

On the other hand, beware of any purported "master" who falls down again and again ... or harms his students again and again ... or who tries to recover from falling down mostly concerned about covering his own ass . This, in my mind, is what makes the difference between, for example, a "master" who may have fallen at some time in life into an affair, or a drinking and gambling problem that he or she recovers from ... and those that repeat the behavior again and again over many years. (That, in my mind, appears to be the

difference between such cases and Genpo "Roshi" and Eido "Roshi" who seem to have repeated their harmful behavior over decades).

Even the above doesn't go far enough to state what teachers who "repeat the behavior again and again over many years" are... we just can't seem to say it...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by Carol on Mon Apr 25, 2011 3:42 am

Shodo wrote:

Carol wrote:

Shodo wrote:

Deep down we want to think that people who have been transmited to are operating on some deeper level... and we twist and turn trying to work out how they could be teachers, or that they have a "true Dharma eye", or that we are all not perfect, or that we shouldn't judge them, or any of the other explanations this thread has entertained... But I don't think anyone wants to even think about the possibility that they could be enlightend... passed all those koans AND simultaneously just simply... not... care.

This is the really really painful question.

I think this is where the Zen practice of "don't know mind" really matters.

~Carol

Please, I think this is a really important question to ask.

I think so, too.

In fact, I think it may be the most important question raised by the whole fiasco.

Shodo wrote:

I think where we have decided to begin the debate has been a part of the problem - many of us have just taken for granted that these guys are "enlightened masters"... they have mastered the koan curriculum, been authorized to teach by modern day zen legends, passed the precept koans. Wisdom is compassion - They just gotta care... right?

You care, I care. Obviously, we know what wisdom and compassion are.

Shodo wrote:

So it looks like, when folks come on strong against them, the reaction is that we have to "hear all points of view"... "give them a chance to heal themselves"... "they can atone" for what they have done...

But show me the evidence that either of these two guys actually care that they have used, harmed and hurt!

I have not seen any.

Shodo wrote:

Because if we cannot demonstrate that they actually care about what they have done, then we are engaging in a sort of Zen hubris by refusing to acknowledge the facts.

...and they will just continue to do what they do - and we will be the ones left to debate endlessly why it is so!

I have not seen much debate about that.

Shodo wrote:

Take Eido... there is literally VOLUMES of his many MANY abuses on <http://www.shimanoarchive.com/>, they have continued since the late 60's, and ever since his vague and half-hearted apology last summer - can anyone actually argue that he cares since the letter retracting ALL of it was sent to the New York Times? He denied everything!

In fact, could anyone take seriously any forthcoming apologies from him? He is a bold-faced LIAR!

The evidence is that he does NOT care! Why give him any benefit of the doubt - what will be the purpose of hearing his point of view when it is entirely self serving??

I wish I could speak more on Genpo, since there is no Shimano Archive equivalent on his many misdeeds stretching back many years... but from what I understand, he's got quite the track record... and his actions since his letter of apology has been essentially a big, well, "fuck you"... and when 66 of your peers write a letter calling you to task it is fairly obvious his motives are self-serving!

If Zen is about seeing clearly, we need to see this clearly - we need to stop assuming the best because of who these guys are, and start seeing them for what they are.

Charlatans.

(I am not against forgiveness. Nor against giving second or third chances... we are human and we err. But it doesn't work unless there is true and real atonement. And repeating the same abuses over and over and over and OVER doesn't show human weakness - it shows something else.)

I thought your question was HOW could they not care? Not whether or not they care. Actually, I don't know if they care or not ... I cannot see into their deepest hearts. But I

can sure see that they act like they don't care ... like they are blind to the pain they cause, or if they see it, they think it doesn't matter.

So, I do think it's a very painful question .... how could someone who spent his or her life studying the dharma, teaching the dharma, and in many cases truly helping others along the path ... how could such a person be an unfeeling "charlatan" in their own moral behavior?

I don't know the answer to that question ... though I think Jundo's thoughts on the matter point in the right direction.

For me, the question is so painful because of my own failures and shortcomings and my deep seated wish that all that could be eradicated and I could embody perfection fully. That is a wish that doesn't die easily! Why? Because I care about the harm I do. But, then how is it that I keep falling down and doing harm and having trouble seeing and acknowledging and atoning? That's the damned question for me ... Shimano and Genpo are just stand-ins.

And I don't know the answer, even when I think I do.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Linda Anderson** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 3:57 am

Carol wrote:

Shodo wrote:

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~Carol



Well, all things being true, I will say this. Then perhaps we should look at the deep down idolization that is the product of our mind and question if any of it exists or holds truth.... as in yes, Virginia, there is NO Santa Claus. So, just how do we arrive at trust, which is a fixed and permanent phenomena, when the world isn't promising us that, or a rose garden, and is dancing circles around us? Just as there is no one teaching for all, there is no one teacher for all, as if teaching even existed on either side .... we are on our own to recognize the difference (woe to you to hear me saying that you don't need a teacher), that is the benefit (tho I like to say blessing) ... and tell them when they are full of sh\*\*t. Just pray that you are speaking from clarity and see the wisdom of the separation which is not true.

Linda  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 4:06 am

Linda Anderson wrote:

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Linda

Hey, I've done my share of telling them when they are full of shit. That's not even an issue for me any longer. And, yeah, there is always more to it than I can see. And I think that's where the question points.  
 It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.  
 ~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 4:28 am

Thank you for responding Carol... I feel a little better knowing that I'm not the only one who struggles with this.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 4:49 am

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Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 4:57 am

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If Zen is about seeing clearly, we need to see this clearly - we need to stop assuming the best because of who these guys are, and start seeing them for what they are.

Charlatans.

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And I don't know the answer, even when I think I do.

This really gets to the heart of the matter, imo. The teachers who have fallen in front of us provide a mirror of our human fragility and weakness. It's about them, but also about us, simultaneously.

It also raises questions about some of the "myths" or beliefs of Zen Buddhism, which Jundo mentioned. If you talk with a Theravadan Buddhist (and even some Chinese Chan Buddhists) they'll point to a certain confusion in the teachings, practices and expectations of Japanese Zen Buddhist teachers and masters, especially since the 1800s when the expectation of celibacy for priests/monks was dropped altogether. That we all have Buddha Nature (potential) yes, but we are NOT yet Buddhas, not most of us. An awakened Buddha has mastered the dharma 100%, not partially or imperfectly. To believe otherwise may in part account for why some "Masters" fall as far as they do.

Gandhi again...

It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom.

— Gandhi

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Genjo** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 5:17 am

Shodo wrote:

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since the letter retracting ALL of it was sent to the New York Times? He denied everything!

In fact, could anyone take seriously any forthcoming apologies from him? He is a bold-faced LIAR!

The evidence is that he does NOT care! Why give him any benefit of the doubt - what will be the purpose of hearing his point of view when it is entirely self serving??

I too would have trouble taking any forthcoming apology from Eido Roshi seriously. Not unless he entered and maintained intensive psychotherapy and then faced those who have felt used or abused in a public Truth and Reconciliation Forum, where he deeply listened and openly acknowledged his faults, could I begin to hope that he might see past his blinders in some real way. I wish this would happen, but I will not be holding my breath.

However, we must remember that our idealization of teachers is part of the problem. All humans are naked apes who have evolved the capacity to be the voice of the Dharma. Somehow we have come to think that when this capacity is actualized that we magically lose our great ape heritage. Time and time again it has been proven that we don't.

If you haven't already I suggest the following two great reads: "The Third Chimpanzee" by Jared Diamond and "Sex and the Spiritual Teacher" by Scott Edelstein.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by Carol on Mon Apr 25, 2011 5:57 am

I just opened up my copy of Shattering the Great Doubt by Sheng Yen ... this page fell open and seems to go right at the heart of it.

beginning at page 33 ...

Faith in Mind

Faith in Mind is a famous Chan poem that is attributed to the master Sengcan (d. 606), the third patriarch of Chan. It opens with the following lines:

The supreme way is not difficult  
If only you do not pick and chose.

In these lines, Sengcan says that the path toward buddhahood is achievable if you put aside all doubts and you truly believe you can accomplish it. Thus, the first requirement for a practitioner is to have faith. Faith in what? Faith in one's own mind. "The supreme way," is the Mahayana path of a bodhisattva who defers self-liberation in order to help sentient beings. "If only you do not pick and choose" refers to the grave mistake of those who withhold faith in the Dharma until they can resolve all their doubts through thinking and analysis. With this kind of "picking and choosing," it is very difficult to gain a genuine entry into the practice. True entry cannot be gained by intellectual understanding but through confidence in the path and believing in one's own buddha-nature. After one engages in practice, understanding will come.

While some people lack faith, others believe that having buddha-nature means that one is already a buddha. This is another grave mistake! To see your buddha-nature is to have no more uncertainty in your mind, but that is not the same as attaining buddhahood. In the beginning, however, we must have resolute faith in our own potential to reach buddhahood. How can we give rise to such faith? The Parinirvana Sutra, which was spoken by the Buddha before his death, clearly states that sentient beings are endowed with buddha-nature. Similarly, the Avatamsaka Sutra states that all sentient beings are fully endowed with the "merit and virtue of a buddha"; in other words, they have buddha-nature.

The Dharma that was spoken by the Buddha arose from his own experiences and awakening, and it was transmitted and recorded as spoken words. It has been testified to by his immediate disciples, as well as by the lineage masters throughout the ages; they also had faith; they engaged in practice; they fully experienced the Dharma and transmitted it to us. So, having faith in the Buddha's Dharma, in the teachings of the Chan masters and other enlightened beings, all point to one thing: believing that we have buddha-nature. Having this faith, we can practice Chan well.

In the Agamas and the Nikayas, the collected early discourses of the Buddha, practice is defined as consisting of four disciplines, or studies, the first of which is faith. Faith is the foundation of the other three studies of precepts, meditation, and wisdom. Without faith one cannot truly begin to practice the so-called higher studies, but with faith they can advance stage by stage, progressing on the path. Without faith, studying precepts, meditation and wisdom would be in vain. Later sutras, like the Avatamsaka, clearly state that faith is the foundation of the path and is the mother of virtue and merit.

The problem presented by "fallen" Zen teachers, I think, is that our faith can be shattered, one can fall into cynicism and give up our own aspiration for buddhahood. As I said, above, it's not so much that Shimano or Genpo failed, it's that I continue to fail. And my faith is severely challenged by these failures ... theirs and mine.

But, as Master Sheng Yen says, having the buddha-nature is not the same as being a buddha. It is possible to see one's nature, and still have a long ways to go in the practice of perfection!

Going back to my earlier statement about the importance of "don't know mind" or not knowing ... I was referring to the power of the open question. Answers are easy -- yeah, we're all human, yeah, it's hard/impossible to overcome our chimp nature, yeah, the myth of perfection is just a myth polished up by those tricky old masters ... yeah, yeah, yeah. That's easy. I can accept that, no problem.

But what about this aspiration I feel (maybe you do, too)? What about the most deeply held desire expressed in the 4 Boundless Vows?

Beings are numberless, I vow to save them all.  
 Endless blind passions, I vow to cut them down.  
 Boundless dharma gates, I vow to enter them.  
 The unsurpassed buddha way, I vow to embody it fully.

Just throw it out as some kind of religious mumbo-jumbo? I don't think so. I really don't. So, here we are stuck with this impossible aspiration we (some of us) vow to fully embody. And that's the powerful open question at the heart of spiritual practice, at the heart of life, for me ... and I don't know the answer. Though sometimes light and love just pours through anyway.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
 by **Jundo Cohen** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 6:50 am

christopher::: wrote:

That we all have Buddha Nature (potential) yes, but we are NOT yet Buddhas, not most of us. An awakened Buddha has mastered the dharma 100%, not partially or imperfectly. To believe otherwise may in part account for why some "Masters" fall as far as they do.

Of course, that is only if one believes that such "awakened Buddhas who have mastered the dharma 100%" are real or ever were, not just made up fairy tales by worshipful religious followers. I think most of the old stories are fables and lies, and the golden statues and paintings are but idealized artwork of the human imagination. (Such a Buddha would be just as much a trickster as maybe perhaps possibly was the late Sai Baba <http://www.skepdic.com/saibaba.html> ) I have my doubts and frankly do not believe in

make believe "Buddhas" ... or, better said, the issue is not important to my Buddhist practice in the least.

Why?

Because I know that such Buddhas exist as a paradigm, an ideal, a goal representing the best of the human condition to which we all best shoot. Saints and superman may not be "really real", but we can point our compass in that direction and make "Buddha" more real in this life.

What more, the teachings of the 'Ol Buddha that we can each verify in our lives ... the Four Noble Truths and so much more ... are worth the whole ticket of admission!

What's what's more, "awakened Buddhas who have mastered the dharma 100%" are as real as real can be real. (No conflict at all with my first statement, though it is a bit of a Koan!). I believe in Buddhas who are Perfectly Buddha, Perfectly Reality ... beyond small human concepts of the "pure" and "impure", fully manifesting and enlivening the dance of Emptiness. I believe in Buddhas who are always moral, never breaking a Precept ... for there is no Precept that can ever be broken, nothing to steal or do violence to, for no separate world to take or injure in any way ... even as we do our best in this life to live Compassionately by the Precepts avoiding harm. (I offered a talk on Kannon this week and said that each of his/her 1000 helping hands are real and reach out in this world ... when each of our hands, yours and mine, reach out in a gesture of compassion. Kannon and all the Great Bodhisattvas are also real as real can be!)

Thus, Buddhas are but fables and lies, Buddhas are human aspirations, Buddhas are Truth.

Gassho, J

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Dan74** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 8:27 am

Our 4-year-old has doubts he will even learn to read. His 7-year-old brother (quite real and not mythical) is really good at reading and in a way that makes it worse. We tell him how his brother had the same doubts at his age, draw letters together and play literacy games, not particularly worrying about the destination so as not to stress him out any further.

For other kids, focusing on the destination may be the way to go - it motivates them to imagine themselves reading.

Many of us here who have practiced know times when we see things differently, when we function very differently to the usual. When things that usually push buttons, don't, and we can somehow respond to them in just the right way. When the usual demons are silent, or on vacation somewhere. It doesn't take a huge leap of faith to see that with due diligence and commitment, this can become more of the norm than the exception, especially when all those dead guys who have passed this way down to us, say precisely the same thing.

It also doesn't take a huge leap of imagination to see that human beings have very different struggles. There are people who don't go a day without beating and humiliating those weaker than themselves and there are those whose greatest vice is an extra chocolate after dinner. There are people who give their last shred of clothing to those in greater need and and those who obsess about a newer fancier car or a bigger house in a better suburb and would do just about anything to get them.

But it is more comforting to the monkey to adapt the Way to his way and throw out whatever doesn't fit. You get more students, you lay all the struggles of conscience to rest and finally feel free of the Victorian/Catholic/Jewish/etc guilt. But you don't really learn to "read" this way. You learn to pretend to read and some people actually get through high school with this skill. Sad but true...

Perhaps it is a similar sort of a lie that is ultimately responsible for these scandals? After all they managed to convince themselves (and others) that they were Zen Masters... and some still believe so.

Dan74

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 9:35 am

Today i was thinking how complicated the Dharma is...

[i've deleted my post - too far off topic]

~chris:::

Last edited by christopher::: on Mon Apr 25, 2011 1:05 pm, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::



Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **fukasetsu** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 12:44 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Today i was thinking how complicated the Dharma is

Yet, I vow to master "it"

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Seigen** on Mon Apr 25, 2011 12:51 pm

This was posted today on Sweeping Zen:

Response from Kanzeon Zen Center Board to 66 Zen teachers

Dear Kyogen Roshi and 66 Signers of the Letter from the AZTA,

We are in receipt of your letter to Genpo Roshi sent on April 19th. Before responding to it we would like to offer some background which we believe the signers of your letter, the editors of the various Dharma journals and websites to which you sent it, and their readers should be aware of.

As you and some of the 66 Teachers may know, the Board of the White Plum Asanga has also been preparing a statement about Genpo Roshi's actions and recent events at Kanzeon. Before issuing their statement, the President of the WPA Board, Gerry Shishin Wick Roshi, wrote Genpo Roshi of their intention and the contents of their statement. When we on the Board read his letter, we wrote to Shishin Roshi requesting the opportunity to review their statement prior to their issuing it publicly. Shishin Roshi very courteously granted our request. He also had several phone conversations with Genpo Roshi in which they discussed and clarified various issues raised by the WPA's statement.

On April 19th the Kanzeon Board sent a detailed response to the WPA, and the same evening Shishin Roshi wrote back to us that he had sent our document to the rest of the board, and that they were going to revise their statement. Of course he did not say what changes they would make, but we appreciate his willingness to consider our perspective. He also wrote that we should know that the AZTA letter was going to be published the next day and would be "all over the internet."

We immediately sent an email to the AZTA recounting our correspondence with the WPA and requesting the same courtesy they had shown us, attaching the statement we had sent to the WPA, and asking that the AZTA consider it before issuing your letter.

Perhaps you did not receive our email. Since no one from the AZTA had contacted us, we sent it to the only address we could find, the contact address on the AZTA website. In any case, we feel the AZTA's letter perpetuates inaccuracies that could have been avoided if its authors had more fully informed themselves of the facts here. The letter speaks of a deep concern at Roshi's "apparent turning away from" his stated intentions; and says that "at this point we see no evidence of good faith action on [his] part."

As we acknowledged in our letter, we as a Board may well have failed to communicate to those outside an accurate picture — or at least, our perspective — of Genpo Roshi's actions and of the situation at Kanzeon. However, if your letter's authors had contacted us or anyone here at Kanzeon, then we are confident they would have found evidence of Roshi's good faith action and of relevant events here which they couldn't see from where they were looking, and some of which we will attempt to present here.

A copy of the letter we sent to the AZTA is attached at the end of this letter.

In your letter you make the following assertions: 1) that Genpo Roshi, although having issued a statement of "Owning My Responsibility, A Personal Statement from Genpo Merzel" has returned to a "path of denial;" 2) By stating that he would spend the rest of his life integrating Soto Zen Buddhist Ethics into his life the signatories assumed he intended to cease being a Zen teacher, and would drop the titles of Zen Master; 3) Disrobing as a Buddhist priest and resigning from the White Plum Asanga, was to avoid the oversight of that organization; 4) The Board committed to a process of separating Kanzeon from Big Mind organization and bringing new leadership for the Center, including Roshi's indefinite leave of absence from the Center.

Genpo Roshi's statement of apology and expressions of remorse

Over the last three months, the Board, staff and students who are still in touch with him have observed Roshi to be contrite, remorseful and apologetic for the harm and suffering that he has created. He continues to take full responsibility for his behavior, and has not blamed anyone but himself. He is continuing the intensive therapy, which he promised to undergo. He has not slandered anybody or spoken ill of others, nor condemned or judged anyone for their actions. Our observation is that he has chosen not to say anything publicly in response to the accusations, innuendoes and misinformation about him which are swirling around the internet because he did not feel that it was to the benefit of anyone to enter into that public discussion of his personal life. The statement of apology was on the website for about a month, and in our view the removal of it from the site does not indicate a lack of remorse or denial of responsibility for his actions and the harm it has caused to his wife, family, students and sangha. Those who continue to be in contact with him are very aware of his remorse and sorrow for his actions; and, that he is not denying anything, but completely owning his responsibility.

## Use of the titles Zen Master and Roshi

In his public statements Genpo Roshi did not say that he would discontinue use of the titles Roshi or Zen Master. It is our understanding that before issuing his announcement of Feb. 6th, he had written in private correspondence to his Dharma successors and Shishin Roshi that he was going to drop the title of Roshi and Zen Master. However, upon reflection he decided not to do so, because these titles have nothing to do with being a priest, or any priestly functions. We further understand that Zen teachers in the past, like Koryu Roshi and Yamada Roshi, and contemporary teachers like Roshi Bernie Glassman and many of his successors who are not Buddhist monks or priests, not to mention well-known historical figures, have been lay persons, and still been Zen Masters and Roshis. Even Philip Kapleau Roshi who, in our understanding, never received either Dharma Transmission or Inka, used the title of Roshi which was given him by his students as an honorific. Genpo is the name given to him by Maezumi Roshi in June 1973, the titles Roshi and Zen Master were given to him by Roshi Bernie Glassman and Kuroda Roshi in September 1996. He is still a lineage holder in the Maezumi Roshi lineage and cannot and will not remove himself from the lineage. That is why, when he made his public announcement on Feb. 6th he did not say he would drop those titles.

## Resignation from the White Plum Asanga and as Priest and Abbot in the Japanese Soto Zen Buddhist school

Genpo Roshi's resignation from the White Plum Asanga was not to avoid their oversight but out of deference to their concern about a continuing association with him and the potential impact it might have on their member organizations. He did not want his transgressions to bring shame or harm to the White Plum and his successors, to be viewed, as he wrote, "as a reflection on the moral fabric of any of the White Plum members." It is our understanding that the White Plum, like the AZTA is a collegial group, not a regulatory body, and the only "sway" they have over their members is through direct and indirect communication, such as your open letters and postings. Roshi's resignation did not end that communication, nor did he ask or expect that it would. In fact, he will be joining them on in a council circle at the Zen Mountain Center in California at the end of their annual White Plum Asanga meeting on May 15th. .

Though he did resign as a Soto Zen Buddhist Priest on February 6th, until April 15th he had not resigned from the Japanese Soto Zen headquarters, the Shumicho. He stayed involved with the Japanese organization temporarily out of concern for the official status of those of his successors who want to remain affiliated with the Japanese Soto school. When he first announced his intention to resign from the Soto school, he was told by Junpu Kuroda Hojo-san, Maezumi Roshi's younger brother, who had spoken to the head of the Shumicho, that if he did so, the ordinations of all those who had received Jukai, Shukke Tokudo, Denkai, and Shiho from him would be regarded as invalid by the headquarters of the Japanese Soto school. At that time he was, and still is, working on completing the necessary paperwork for Tammy Myoho Gabrysch Sensei to be recognized as both a Shuso and Dharma successor by the Shumicho. He chose not to

impose problems on his successors and those who had received Jukai and Shukke Tokudo from him by withdrawing from the Japanese Soto school before these matters were settled. From his discussions with Bishop Daikagu Rumme, General Director of the Soto Zen Administrative Office of North America, his understanding was that that if he did choose to resign it should not affect his successors etc., but even the Bishop was not 100% sure of that. On April 15th he received word from Bishop Daigaku that considering the imminent release of more statements critical of Genpo Roshi, and because this could be an embarrassment to the Japanese Soto school, now would be the time for him to officially submit his resignation, which he did on that date.

Roshi's use, and now his officially divesting himself of the title of Abbot, is also related to his connection with the Japanese Soto Zen school. Perhaps the situation at other American Zen temples is different, where an Abbot may be chosen by members or self-appointed, but Roshi's position as Abbot came from the Japanese Soto headquarters, which had designated him as a Kyoshi, the rank at which one can be the Abbot of a temple that is officially recognized as a qualified training center by the Japanese Soto School. This is a certification which none of his American successors has received. So although he is the only person who could be recognized as Abbot, since there is no longer a reason for Kanzeon Zen Center to hold on to the designation as a certified training center, he had asked Bishop Daikagu to be released from that position at the same time he stated he was resigning as a priest in the Japanese school. His official submission of his resignation as Abbot was also official as of the same date, April 15th, and he no longer uses the title.

#### The Board's Efforts to Maintain Kanzeon

As part of our efforts to sustain Kanzeon, with Genpo Roshi's support one of Roshi's successors was invited in early February to step in to take Roshi's place as full-time teacher at the Zen Center, which he generously agreed to do. It was hoped that during this time of transition he would help support the sangha and the continuing existence of Kanzeon Zen Center while it remained at its present location, and that he would be financially supported by Kanzeon Inc. Also, in response to the request of members of the White Plum, the Board created a separate website for Kanzeon, which included the introduction of him as our new teacher.

In large part because of the critical and hostile feelings expressed by a few people in the local community, further inflamed and amplified by some outside Zen Teachers, students and others, Roshi felt he was no longer welcome to teach at Kanzeon. Because his teaching activities at Kanzeon and mainly through Big Mind were the primary source of revenue for the Center, the necessary condition for this transition was that our properties had to be sold.

This decision to put Kanzeon's two buildings up for sale was particularly painful for all concerned, most of all for those of us who continue to live, meet and practice here in those very buildings. It has also generated a lot of comment and criticism to the effect that the properties were being sold out from under the local community without their

input, perhaps even to support Genpo Roshi's activities elsewhere. These suspicions and accusations are based on misunderstandings and mistaken assumptions which we would like to clear up.

First, the money originally used to buy the properties did not come from the local Salt Lake sangha. Almost all of it was donated with extraordinary generosity by members of Roshi's European Sangha and students, by his former wife Hobai and himself, and from his inheritance from his mother.

Second, for years Kanzeon's income from membership dues and programs have covered only a small fraction of Kanzeon's overhead, while additional donations and contributions from all but a few local members of the Center have been very minimal. Contrary to the impression that has been widely voiced on the internet, and even in our own community, the reality is that the Center has been largely supported by Genpo Roshi's teaching and Big Mind work.

As is well known, Roshi has been widely criticized within the Zen community for receiving large donations from people who have attended small Big Mind workshops with him. These people, almost all of them needless to say wealthy, successful in their professions or businesses, have chosen to give amounts which they could just as easily spend on other things, so that they could study with Genpo Roshi. To the best of our knowledge, not a single one has ever felt they wasted their time or money. On the contrary, they are extremely grateful, they gladly allow their expressions of thanks to be quoted, many of them have returned again for additional workshops.

On the other hand, those who criticize these events, and Roshi for giving them, have never attended them. And those who condemn them include not only representatives of the far-flung Zen world, but people in the Kanzeon community itself, the very people who are benefiting from them without realizing or acknowledging it. It is these donations that have enabled Roshi to support Kanzeon's Salt Lake City properties, full-time staff and office infrastructure, to continue supporting residents, extending scholarships, promoting social action programs, allowing free and partial tuition to many who could not attend at full price, and, by the way, provide Maezumi Roshi's widow Ekyo Maezumi a place to live and a salary to help sustain her. In fact, contrary to a widely disseminated but inaccurate impression, it is Big Mind that is supporting Kanzeon rather than the other way around, since the local Sangha provides only a minimal portion of the funds needed to support us.

With income to Big Mind drastically reduced and without revenue from Roshi's teaching available to support the Center, the decision to sell the properties seemed unavoidable especially in order a new teacher to relocate and teach in Salt Lake, and to provide a source of income for him, both before and after the buildings were sold. The Board and the teacher agreed that when the buildings were sold a substantial amount of the income from the sale would go to support him in a new location in Salt Lake where he would be the Abbot. With Roshi's concurrence, we even accepted the condition that he not be permitted to give talks or schedule events at Kanzeon. Unfortunately, during the weeks

after these arrangements were made, the teacher decided at the end of March not to come after all. This event coupled with other fallout from Roshi's conduct resulted in a loss of a great deal of momentum for rebuilding.

Over the past months, the Board has met with the Sangha and posted statements on our website to spell out the financial realities of Kanzeon's situation. We have held Listening Circles in the hope of providing healing opportunities for the Sangha, and scheduled Council Circles to be led by another member of the White Plum, who will be arriving in Salt Lake this week.

At the moment, Kanzeon is in an impossible position. Our income has shrunk to a level that cannot sustain us. We recently had to rent at great expense a location outside of Kanzeon where Roshi could lead a retreat expressly to raise money for Kanzeon while the Kanzeon buildings remained empty and unused. Roshi has been asked by people outside of Kanzeon not to teach here even when the people remaining at Kanzeon want him to teach here. We have no teacher, and the teacher those of us who remain want, who is also realistically the only teacher who could help sustain the Center financially, is deterred from being here by those who seem to have no genuine concern or knowledge about our actual situation.

While the Board does not condone Roshi's misconduct or underestimate the damage it has caused, we, as well as many others, still want to study with him and to help others who wish to do the same. There is no one in our community who is unaware of his actions; Roshi himself consistently acknowledges them. Those who choose not to study from him have other options even here in Salt Lake City. We feel that it is a greater service to the local sangha and students, as well as the larger Big Mind and Kanzeon communities to make it possible for Roshi to teach here in Salt Lake City.

As we have said publicly before, we too do not condone Genpo Roshi's misconduct. No one here at Kanzeon does, and anyone who thinks he is asking or expecting us to justify or excuse or overlook his transgressions simply does not know what is going on here. We are not a cult, all of us have relationships, work, lives outside the Center. We are disappointed and, no doubt, deluded, but probably less deluded than we were three months ago. We on the Board have not, as your letter says, "turned and followed [his] lead," but have tried in difficult circumstances to follow a course that would allow the Center to survive and the sangha to heal. Those who remain here are greatly saddened by the departure of those who feel estranged from the community, and we are not blind to the reasons they feel that way. We recognize that our proximity to the situation has the potential to limit our view, but we do ask that those who are far from the situation and cannot remain silent out of their deep concern for those to whom Genpo Roshi presents himself as a Zen teacher, at least inform themselves about his actions and the situation here before they speak.

Frankly, we on the Board do not know what is going to happen here. We are confident that Genpo Roshi is dedicated to healing himself and participating in the healing of both the local and the greater sangha, as well as to doing everything he can to support the Zen

Center financially. We would like to be able to take the Zen Center's properties off the market, but question whether we can survive financially if Roshi cannot teach here. We ask the support of the greater community of Zen teachers and students in our efforts to rebuild and restore the vitality of our sangha.

Sincerely,

The Kanzeon Board  
Addendum

Letter from the Kanzeon Board to the AZTA, April 19, 2011

Dear AZTA Members,

We are writing to you as members of the Board of the Kanzeon Zen Center. We apologize for not knowing to whom we should address this letter by name, but think you will understand the reason for writing in this manner.

A few days ago we received a letter from Gerry Shishin Wick Roshi, President of the White Plum Asanga, telling us their Board was about to issue a statement critical of Genpo Roshi's actions and events at Kanzeon in the weeks since his public announcement of his misconduct, and since their previous statement about it.

Our Board respectfully asked Shishin Roshi for the opportunity to address the issues the White Plum statement raised prior to its publication, to which he courteously agreed. He also had several phone conversations with Genpo Roshi, which we believe have helped at the very least to remove some misunderstandings and misapprehensions of matters of fact.

We sent him our statement today, and just a few minutes ago received his response, which says in part, "As a result of our conversations, we will revise our statement. You should know that the AZTA letter is being published tomorrow and will be all over the internet."

We don't know what your letter will say, or who has written it. We only know that no one from the AZTA has communicated with either members of the Kanzeon Board or Genpo Roshi about your letter.

Of course you are not obliged to do so, but our experience with Shishin Roshi leads us to think that, first of all, there is a great deal of misinformation and misunderstanding about events at Kanzeon among people who are not here and, second, that clear and open communication can go a long way removing misunderstanding and unnecessary controversy .

As for communication, perhaps we as the Kanzeon Board have failed to communicate clearly enough an accurate picture of what has been occurring here, of Genpo Roshi's

actions, and of what we are attempting to do here. We believe this information would provide a much better basis for comment and criticism, perhaps even for constructive conversation.

Submit Biography  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers  
**by christopher:::** on Tue Apr 26, 2011 12:25 am

Thanks, Seigen. Sounds like this is indeed similar to the elephant and blind men, as Linda noted. Snakes and dragons, great complexity, many povs, not something that can be understood from a distance, in black and white. Hope that Genpo Merzel and the Salt Lake Zen community are able to successfully weather this storm, gaining greater wisdom, compassion and insight from what is clearly a very difficult ordeal for them.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Sun May 01, 2011 9:05 pm

Here's another brilliant post by Nella Lou over at her Madhushala Blog -- Sympathy for the Devil. She'd better watch out! I'm becoming a groupie.

Excerpt

If he [Genpo] gave up any Zen and Buddhist connection, ran his self help seminars with his cohorts there is little doubt that he would be successful. He could make millions off all the hangers-on looking for a quick fix. He could put on a real big show, franchise the whole operation and retire to the Caribbean. A spiritual Tony Robbins or other such huckster. He could become as rich and popular as Deepak Chopra if he really wants to. He could move to India and be worshipped as a god. Now that the old faker Satya Sai Baba has bought the farm there's a vacancy. One doesn't need any kind of credentials for that sort of endeavor. Nobody cares as long as they're being spoon-fed the little escapes from the pain that they're used to. [I just had to stick some Depeche Mode lyrics in there]

But he keeps returning to Zen. Zen with it's focus on realization. Zen with it's sharp point of truth.

Why?



It's not really about the money. There's plenty of that for a person with his talents. Good talker, well connected with the woo crowd and authoritarian cult leaders. Fine examples of how to comport one's self without too much concern for messy stuff like ethics.

It's not really about the popularity, perks, sex or whatever else arises out of that situation either. There are many easier ways to get that. Junpo Kelly offers a lot of tips on that over on Wilber's Integral website.

After so many years it is likely that Genpo Roshi has experienced something that doesn't let him rest easy. If that were not so he would not be having the difficulties he has now. A while back he did a Buddhist Geeks interview about returning to the marketplace. It was a blatant rationalization for unrestrained accumulation and greed. That was at the height of the 50K meet ups and the hoopla that entailed. Then comes a backing away from all that. An attempt at humility.

It's about doubt. Those who do not experience doubt do not experience a lack of confidence in their activities. They are committed to the story to the bitter end. Look at Donald Rumsfeld, Donald Trump, Mohammar Quadaffi or similar people. Confident and absolutely without doubt. Wholly engulfed by their delusions of not only grandeur but correctness. People who have no doubt are dangerous as hell to the rest of us and to themselves. And yes I'd put Shimano in that category which is why this post is not addressing his situation.

But apparently Genpo Roshi has doubt. And a lot of it. I find myself oddly rooting for him.

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.  
~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Mon May 02, 2011 12:20 am

...apparently Genpo Roshi has doubt. And a lot of it. I find myself oddly rooting for him.

Good point, though ideally, shouldn't we be rooting for all of them?

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Linda Anderson** on Mon May 02, 2011 2:34 am

I heard an old Roshi give a teisho this week...

he said that he knew he had caused pain for people in the past, now everyday, he practices repentance. (sorry, I don't remember the exact word, but repentance seems to describe apology and seeking forgiveness for acting from separation.

And, long ago, a friend quoted Namkai Norbu Rinpoche, a very high Tibetan Lama who said "ah, the imperfections"

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Tue May 31, 2011 9:49 pm

From SweepingZen.com...

[http://sweepingzen.com/2011/05/31/bould ... ty-update/](http://sweepingzen.com/2011/05/31/bould...ty-update/)

Boulders Stuck in the Stream (Zen Studies Society Update)

This is a very open teisho by Genjo Marinello Osho on the status of his teacher, Eido Tai Shimano, who was recently forced to stop teaching upon new disclosures of sexual indiscretions with students. Apparently Shimano is interested in teaching again and has some supporters within the Zen Studies Society who wish to see this happen. While Genjo Osho speaks of his teacher Shimano with appreciation, he refers to the issues which led up to Shimano's removal as a boulder stuck in the stream—seemingly unmovable. This talk is well worth a listen.

[http://traffic.libsyn.com/genjo/RZR\\_Jodo\\_04.m4a](http://traffic.libsyn.com/genjo/RZR_Jodo_04.m4a)

Thanks for this Genjo - I do not envy your situation...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Wed Jun 01, 2011 10:59 pm

This was just posted on genkaku-again... After listening to Genjo's teisho I feel that it belongs here as well.  
From Banko Randy Phillips, who resigned from the board after the latest fiasco.

Dear Genjo Osho,

Thanks you for your email. I find the contents to be disturbing, to say the least. As you know I resigned from the board because I thought that Eido Roshi should take an immediate leave of absence and stop seeing students under the auspices of ZSS.

As you remember, during all of the many deliberations with the board Shinge Roshi would agree with the plan of action only to backtrack or reverse direction - sometimes only hours later. She does not fundamentally understand the situation and is apparently not capable of acting any other way. I do understand loyalty to a teacher but this is beyond the pale. She does not handle confrontation well and this is a situation that centers around an individual who needs to be confronted. I am not speaking behind her back in that I have written the same to her in the past. She apparently feels that all confrontation stems from anger. None of the board has acted in anger, myself included.

I am of the understanding that you wrote a letter to Eido Roshi (with the board's and Shinge Roshi's approval) requesting that Eido Roshi own up via a statement to what he had done (with some amount of specifics), honestly apologize and seek some sort of rehabilitation. After doing that the board might consider SOME kind of continuing relationship with him.

It appears that Eido Roshi has done nothing other that to try to figure a way to get back in. It appears that two old-time Shanga members (at his request) are soliciting what Sangha that is left to write letters to Eido Roshi explaining their desire to study with him. I speculate that these letters will then will be submitted to the board with the argument that the Sangha wants Eido Roshi and the board does not represent the heart of the Sangha.

If students want to study with Eido Roshi I sincerely wish them well. I feel that it is imperative, however, that ZSS does not offer him a venue. ZSS does not belong to Eido Roshi, though he has long acted like it did.

This is a time for leadership. A leader would explain to students that did not understand the situation what has transpired. What has transpired?

Eido Roshi has lied about almost every detail of his coming to America and New York. He has lied by omission and by outright lie. He has had very questionable financial dealings. He has gone against the wishes of his greatest benefactors repeatedly to the point where they "disowned" him. Soen Roshi did the same - and Eido Roshi repeatedly

lied about it. He had numerous sexual scandals that are well documented. He allowed his wife to run Shobo-ji nearly into the ground with her mean vindictive behavior. When senior Sangha members (lead by myself) got him to agree to a schedule where she would slowly step down he reversed his decision within months. When the recent scandal broke he wrote a very tepid apology and then retracted it via a letter to the NY Times. He has been asked repeatedly by the current board to return ZSS documents in his possession and he has not to my knowledge acted in good faith or complied with most requests. Now he is behind the scenes trying to pull strings to get himself back into a teaching situation with ZSS.

Teaching is a privilege and not a right. Eido Roshi has betrayed the trust that was given to him time and time again. This is patently ridiculous. It also remains a legal liability if the board backtracks. If Shinge Roshi can not agree to this (as she has in the past) then she should remove herself. We can chart the waters ahead without an Abbot, especially one the does not understand the basics. This is not the time for consensus, this is not the time to ask your students what they want. This is the time to explain to them why they can not have what they think they want. Eido Roshi does not have the moral authority to be entrusted with the responsibility of being a teacher because he repeatedly abused this power. This is the time to show some leadership and make difficult decisions - and stand by them.

Yes, Eido Roshi has been a great teacher, he was for me and he changed my life and countless others. But the fact that he can teach well and even open Dharma eyes is not a valid argument that he should be allowed to continue to teach. Unless he has a profound change of heart we should have nothing to do with him via ZSS.

Please not to agree to whatever compromise Shinge Roshi comes up with. I am sure that Fujin is in the heart of all of this as well as all of the other enablers. The time for compromise is AFTER Eido Roshi shows some real honesty, change and remorse.

I do not envy you this trip. Please know that I greatly respect your work and the work of the other board members. If there is anything I can do to help please let me know.

Feel free to share this email with whomever you wish.

Gassho,

Banko Randy Phillips

The boulder is stuck indeed...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by moon face buddha** on Thu Jun 02, 2011 7:48 am

One may be able to draw interesting comparisons between the failure of 70's hippie communes and modern zen communities.

At least the Paris Commune was destroyed from without before it suffered the indignity of being eaten from within.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Carol** on Thu Jun 02, 2011 8:17 am

Shodo wrote:

This was just posted on genkaku-again... After listening to Genjo's teisho I feel that it belongs here as well.

From Banko Randy Phillips, who resigned from the board after the latest fiasco.

Dear Genjo Osho,

Thanks you for your email. I find the contents to be disturbing, to say the least. As you know I resigned from the board because I thought that Eido Roshi should take an immediate leave of absence and stop seeing students under the auspices of ZSS.

This makes me sad ... that he resigned. It is this kind of clear-sightedness that is needed on the ZSS board at this time. It always puzzles me when someone resigns their responsibilities rather than stays on to help others trying to do the right thing. By resigning Banko Randy Phillips weakened the board and made it more likely, rather than less so, that Eido Roshi might return to teaching (in some "limited" capacity) under the auspices of ZSS. If that happens, then it is the death-knell of credibility for that institution.

Very sad indeed.

~Carol

It is time to sit down and be still,  
 for you are drunk,  
 and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by moon face buddha** on Thu Jun 02, 2011 6:48 pm

Carol, some people refuse to be tainted by association with people/organisations that they have come to find morally repugnant.

I salute these people.  
 Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by fukasetsu** on Fri Jun 03, 2011 5:09 pm

moon face buddha wrote:  
 Carol, some people refuse to be tainted by association with people/organisations that they have come to find morally repugnant.

I salute these people.

Well, yes. Or its not always about being tainted by an orginasation.  
 Thingy is, when a certain system/society/organisation has reached its relative peak, decay will set in, to stay active within the system hoping to bring it up back to it's peak or even a slight improvement is an useless futile struggle. Better to set the system/society ablaze, then to build up the ruins of the old. A new one will always appear. Useless to grasp a dream, a system of name and form, especially when it is called a 'zen organisation'  
 Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by nowornever** on Fri Jun 10, 2011 8:11 am

nowornever wrote:"We know examples of teachers and students making love...  
 What do you think about it?"

"Most of us think it is an abuse of power."  
 nowornever

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **fukasetsu** on Fri Jun 10, 2011 8:25 am

"We know examples of teachers and students making love...  
What do you think about it?"

Thoughts arise due to conditions, if it is coloured by likes and dislikes the view is distorted. Otherwise it is seen as it is.

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

June 8, 2011

by **nowornever** on Fri Jun 10, 2011 9:13 am

The following is an official letter to students. I used "..." in order not to hurt anyone.

"Dear...!

After having received numerous letters asking for a response to ...'s public statement explaining why he left our ..., I decided to give such a response, albeit this might not be the final response, and there may be a statement from the entire ...' group. Unfortunately, making a joint response is a big project which requires much time, especially since everyone is very busy with their day to day priorities. Meanwhile, here are the facts as I know them.

About a year ago, I have heard that ... is having a sexual/romantic relationship with ... This was in form of a rumour, and not a complaint, therefore I did not initiate any action on the part of our ..., but talked openly with ... asking him to be prudent and careful in his actions, especially because of his activities in ... where he was... Unfortunately, some time later I received a formal complaint against ... for exactly that issue from a person who has worked at ... and claimed that this relationship was common knowledge at ... and obvious to anyone who spent a bit of time there. At this point I asked the ... to form an ... to look into these allegations, and, if true, to find a solution to help ... and ..., as well as to safeguard the repute of ... and the .... Although in his public statement ... suggests that the allegations against him were not based on facts, he in fact admitted to the ... that he has had such a relationship with ... for several years. He also said that at that time already he and ... decided not to pursue the physical aspect of their relationship. Nonetheless, he agreed to the ... procedure, and, in fact, wrote a letter to the ... members in which he expressed full agreement up front with whatever consequences they thought were appropriate. Regretably, this agreement turned out to be just empty speech. I was not a member of the ..., but I had a full report from most of the members. At the meeting which took place in ..., at which ... and ... were both present, the ..., in conclusion,

asked as follows: that ... goes on teaching silence for a minimum of one year, and that he return to ... for this one year minimum period to continue his training as a ... amongst other ... Meanwhile, ... could continue to stay at ..., or do whatever else she wished to do, with her standing in the .... unaffected. I have been told that upon hearing this conclusion from the ..., ... became very angry, told the members that they did not understand anything that he communicated to them until then, and the meeting ended in a very tense and angry atmosphere. ... stayed at ... after all the other ... left, and continued to encourage ... to follow the ...'s directives. He (...) then left ... believing that he succeeded in convincing ... to do as the ... asked.

..., indeed, came to ... soon thereafter, but as it turned out, came only to ... Afterwards, without explaining to anyone where he is going, he disappeared. I tried to telephone him to find out what is going on, but all my calls were unanswered and messages ignored. I understand now that he returned already to ... where he commenced the work of trying to organize his own sangha. I received his public statement at the same time that the rest of the sangha heard about his departure from the....

Those are the facts leading up to today.

There are two side issues about which I wish to inform our ... because they bear on the situation with .... The first issue is that of Transmission in .... Our ..., upon giving Transmission to the ... Zen Masters in our ..., explained clearly the obligations and rights of the new teachers. ... explained as follows:

1. All new Zen Masters, after some period of further maturing their practice (minimum of ...), and after completing some additional ... work, are allowed to give ... and transmission to other students.
2. ... Zen Masters, notwithstanding the above, are not allowed to form their own ... and must stay within the ....
3. ... Zen Masters are allowed to make their own ..., but this must not be done within .... This means that they must not actively suggest to ... members to leave the ..., and follow them instead.

For ... students, or ..., ... explained that unlike the traditional ... in ..., his ... is conditional. This means that the ... recipient must remain under the supervision of a Zen Master and cannot be an independent teacher. The moment such a student leaves the ..., the ... is taken away.

The second issue that I wish to talk about is .... I have been told that at a meeting in ... with members of the ... community, ... said that he is willing to leave ... in the hands of ... as long as two conditions were met. First that there be people who wish to continue the organization (there are now such people), and second that the ... who wish it will receive their money back. The second condition is, of course, impossible because such a ... is illegal. The money was ... to ... while it was a part of the .... If it continues as part of ... there is no justification for giving money back and such a ... is not allowed. There are also issues concerning the ... of the ... at .... It is difficult to foresee the



consequences of actions done in the past by .... Some of these actions might be questioned and challenged by the government, and it is not clear whether ... might not become a burden, rather than an asset, to the ....

I am sorry, but I cannot say more at this time. This is not out of any reticence, but simply because the path is not clear, and we must study the situation more, especially as it relates to ... and whether we wish to keep it in the..., or not. We will continue to study this situation, and we will inform the ... about our conclusions.

In closing, I wish to invite ... and ... to rethink their decision. The ...'s intention was never to punish anyone. The members approached their task with lots of sympathy and love for ... and .... Their conclusion was reasonable and designed to help their practice, without any judgement of their love for each other. The path outlined would have, in ...'s opinion, reawakened people's trust in ... as a ... and ..., and everyone recognized ... as a wonderful member of our family. It is not too late. Our practice is always to return to zero point. That is the true repentance.

Whatever the future brings, our job is to continue to work on ourselves for the sake of others. These can be empty words, or they can be live words. That is up to each of us.

....

Zen Master ...

...

June 8, 2011"

nowornever

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Fri Jun 10, 2011 6:20 pm

Sorry, but with all the "...s" it's sort-of hard to follow.

Is this in regards to Genpo or Eido?

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Jok\_Hae** on Fri Jun 10, 2011 7:19 pm

Shodo wrote:

Sorry, but with all the "...s" it's sort-of hard to follow.

Is this in regards to Genpo or Eido?

Hello Shodo,

Before the feeding frenzy starts....

Nowornever is referring to a letter sent to the Kwan Um Sangha. The names were removed. The person in question is a monk/teacher in the European Sangha who is accused of maintaining an inappropriate relationship with a student. That student (who I have met, briefly) is a senior student, having practiced with the Kwan Um group for many years. The relationship is apparently completely consensual, albeit completely inappropriate for a celibate monk. It isn't the first time that a monk(of any tradition) has behaved this way, and it won't be the last. (edit: personal view removed) In this particular situation, the monk in question does not have a support system of other monks around him, so this is isn't very surprising. The monk and the female student apparently want to start their own group now.

Round and round....

please proceed with the tut-tutting...  
You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by moon face buddha** on Fri Jun 10, 2011 9:14 pm

Shocking  
Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Zenju** on Fri Jun 10, 2011 10:09 pm

Jok\_Hae wrote:

please proceed with the tut-tutting...

I don't know, you've got kind of a big head start.  
Zenju  
Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Jok\_Hae** on Fri Jun 10, 2011 10:26 pm

Zenju wrote:  
 Jok\_Hae wrote:

please proceed with the tut-tutting...

I don't know, you've got kind of a big head start.

yeah, probably could have left that part out.

Let's go with "proceed however you wish..."

I just wanted to lay out some facts before all the conjecture begins.

Keith  
 You make, you get

Jok\_Hae

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Seigen** on Sat Jun 11, 2011 12:14 am

From Sweeping Zen:

This was an internal message to members of Chobo-Ji from Genjo Marinello Osho. He writes, "Here is an update to my Chobo-Ji Sangha about my take of recent events in NY. I don't usually make these internal Chobo-Ji updates available to the general public, but I thought in the interest of transparency, if you think it is worth posting in some fashion at Sweeping Zen, you may do so."

Dear Chobo-Ji Sangha,

Here is an update on my recent visit to New York.

June 5th the Board met with Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) monks, residents and often attending sangha from 2:30PM to 8:30PM with a dinner break.

We heard mostly how many wanted Eido Roshi (ER) to be able to do a limited teaching schedule over the next two years. We also heard from some how my recent Dharma Talks have felt offensive to them, "slandering the father in the father's house" sort of thing.

The Board made good arguments for why ER is retired and must stay retired, with little or no chance of any continued teaching at Zen Studies Society (ZSS) because of little understanding, remorse or any real redemptive efforts.

Shinge Roshi related that not enough people at DBZ were coming to dokusan with her. Most people responded that they either were still grieving and not ready for a new dokusan relationship or were still hoping for ER's return, or simply didn't want to offend ER by writing him that they no longer wanted him as their teacher (which has been a requirement up to now).

June 6th the Board met with DBZ monks and heard of ER's response (or really lack of it) to a proposed joint statement with the board that asked for many concessions in exchange for some limited access to former students requesting it. This response was relayed by Shinge Roshi, but not advocated by her. Because it was clear that ER was either not willing or not capable of coming close to the steps the board outlined as minimally necessary for some partial reconciliation, it was concluded that a new statement would be drafted that reiterated the Board's stance that ER is fully retired and will not be doing any teaching under ZSS auspices. The board also concluded that ER would not be invited to Obon ceremony, nor would the new DBZ front gate have any opening ceremony when completed. The Board also worked long and hard on a retirement agreement for ER, we are still feeling hemmed in by the unfunded 95 Deferred Compensation Agreements. A retirement proposal was developed that we hope to have ER sign at a meeting towards the end of the month, at this meeting he will also be informed that we will continue our policy of full retirement and no teaching under ZSS auspices.

I then went down with others for an all day sit, June 7th, at New York Zendo (NYZ) attended by 16 people. I gave the Teisho and tried to be a bit more PC, but still got complaints that I was too judgmental of ER. However, most of those at NYZ supported me and the efforts of the Board to keep ER fully retired.

After the all day sit, I had dinner with a former senior student of ER and heard some tales of further indiscretions that exceeded "consensual" sexual relations with students. Consequently, I have become even more convinced that we cannot have ER return to teaching in any way at ZSS.

In other ZSS news, we have finally gotten all documents, records and seals from ER. Our lawyer has gone over them and on first few there are many discrepancies, but no indication of fraud or gross mismanagement. We are now working with a couple of accountants to try and bring both NYZ and DBZ up to a level where an ordinary audit can be done. Our treasurer, is a volunteer, doing a great job, but is not an accountant himself. Once the books are ready for ordinary audits then we will begin work on a more detailed historical review of past years. The locks at NYZ have been changed, so now there should be no unannounced meetings or activities at NYZ that aren't part of scheduled events.

There will be a mediation meeting the weekend of August 27th for the ZSS Sangha at DBZ. This will be a chance for all students to speak from their hearts, and I hope many who have concerns about the future of ZSS will attend. We plan to include an envisioning method called Open Space, led by Shoshana Susanne Triner. There will be no overnight or conference fee, but dana will be gratefully accepted to help cover costs.



situation, the monk in question does not have a support system of other monks around him, so this is isn't very surprising. The monk and the female student apparently want to start their own group now.

The consensual relationships are always a little tricky and, for some reason, tend to be the most controversial. Is a consensual relationship between a student and teacher inappropriate and stupid? Yes. Immoral? Eh... I don't think I'd go that far. If they wished to engaged in a relationship, they should have disrobed BEFORE engaging in a relationship. Anyway, I'd prefer to pay more attention to the ones where there was some type of psychological manipulation and coercion going on. Other than that, I could care less whose pecker is going into whose who-who.

What is nearness if it fails to come about despite the reduction of the longest intervals? What is nearness if it is even repelled by the restless abolition of distances? What is nearness if remoteness also remains absent? -Martin Heidegger

thewhitesquirrel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **AlasdairGF** on Sat Jun 11, 2011 11:42 am

thewhitesquirrel wrote:

...Is a consensual relationship between a student and teacher inappropriate and stupid?  
Yes.

Nope, I must absolutely disagree (assuming your statement refers also to non-celibate teachers). My teacher met his partner when she came to our group - nothing was ever covert, they've now been together happily for some years. Given that most Zen teachers, esp in Japanese traditions, are not expected to be celibate, I think it's important to reiterate that sexual activity is not sexual misconduct per se.

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **moon face buddha** on Sat Jun 11, 2011 1:23 pm

What do we mean by teacher and student?  
Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **So-on Mann** on Sat Jun 11, 2011 7:41 pm

AlasdairGF wrote:

thewhitesquirrel wrote:

...Is a consensual relationship between a student and teacher inappropriate and stupid?  
Yes.

Nope, I must absolutely disagree (assuming your statement refers also to non-celibate teachers). My teacher met his partner when she came to our group - nothing was ever covert, they've now been together happily for some years. Given that most Zen teachers, esp in Japanese traditions, are not expected to be celibate, I think it's important to reiterate that sexual activity is not sexual misconduct per se.

Agreed- sexual activity is not necessarily sexual misconduct. BUT, the vows of celibacy (just as the vows of poverty and humility) are one of the ways a monk embodies the tradition and teachings of the Buddha. If someone who has taken these vows (whether lifelong, or for a period of training as in the Japanese tradition) then it is a serious matter which must be addressed.

Facing a precious mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it, but in truth it is you.

So-on Mann

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **fukasetsu** on Sat Jun 11, 2011 10:23 pm

So-on Mann wrote:

Agreed- sexual activity is not necessarily sexual misconduct.

In the objective world with its systems and religions there are rules and conducts, and suddenly there is a relative differentiation between proper conduct and misconduct. If by such standards which are only valid in a particular system it becomes alright, then that view itself might be misconduct of one's own mind. Truth be told, what is misconduct is any misuse of the body-mind, and any use of the body-mind which binds one to any thing or event, is misconduct.

Taking pleasure in practise, a sunrise, an ice cream, sex, praying and chanting is very much misconduct, only one who stand aloof from the body-mind, because he no longer imagines to be the body-mind, such a one does any activities from ice creams to chanting or whatever. However, sex is not a part of it. Sure, these rare 'awakened' cases are no standard for the objective world and its various cultures, yet forgetting this and speaking of "misconduct" instead of misconduct in the relative sense, very much misuses its function. So mental convictions on the acts of others serve little purpose.

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Zenju** on Sat Jun 11, 2011 10:54 pm

fukasetsu wrote:  
sexual activity is not necessarily sexual misconduct.

It is when it's good. Oh, behave!

Zenju  
Banned

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **fukasetsu** on Sat Jun 11, 2011 11:28 pm

fukasetsu did not wrote:  
sexual activity is not necessarily sexual misconduct.

Zenju wrote:  
It is when it's good. Oh, behave!

What about the act of misquoting?!  
Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid,  
without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily  
life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **thewhitesquirel** on Sun Jun 12, 2011 12:02 am

No, Alasdair, I didn't have non-celibate monks on my mind when I said that. But, it's still  
probably not a good idea to get involved with a student. Professors in college dating their  
students, for example... BIG mistake. Especially for the professor.

fukasetsu wrote:sexual activity is not necessarily sexual misconduct.

It is when it's good. Oh, behave!

What is nearness if it fails to come about despite the reduction of the longest intervals?  
What is nearness if it is even repelled by the restless abolition of distances? What is  
nearness if remoteness also remains absent? -Martin Heidegger



thewhitesquirel

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **fukasetsu** on Sun Jun 12, 2011 12:15 am

fukasetsu wrote:sexual activity is not necessarily sexual misconduct.

Sigh....

Awareness is unattached and unshaken. It is lucid, silent, peaceful, alert and unafraid, without desire and fear. Meditate on it as your true being and try to be it in your daily life, and you shall realize it in its fullness. ~shri niz.

fukasetsu

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **AlasdairGF** on Sun Jun 12, 2011 2:56 pm

Mod Hat on...  
On this of all threads, let's not stray.

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Wed Jun 15, 2011 12:53 am

I just want to say KUDOS and a BIG Thank you to Sensei Genjo.  
You stuck to your guns, and for that I am very glad. There is hope for ZSS with folks like you on their board.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.  
The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Ryunin** on Mon Jun 20, 2011 3:11 pm

I haven't read the whole thread, far from it. I have been thinking about this issue, sexual misconducts done by Zen teachers and sexual misconduct in general, lately.

My ten cents:

There is a few problems.

Number One. Zen and the way we learn about it and practice it, it comes from Japan. In Japan, not only in Zen, but in Japan in general, sex is perceived as some kind of fun activity, not something that is basically sinful. When you bring that Japanese attitude toward sex to countires with strong Christian traditions, like the US, of course, a huge problem arises. In Japan, if the Zen master Ikkyu went to a brothel or had a young lover when he was an old master, it was no scandal in Japan. In Japan, they might have called him crazy, but not immoral. IN Japan, if you act what others do, you are ok, if you do something unusual, you are crazy, no matter if you harm or protect others.

Number two. Lots of people imagine that a Zen master is a superhuman who makes no mistaeks, has no desires, is not interested in sex anymore etc. There may be such people, I doubt that. Some cannot put up with the pressure, give up and have sex with someone that is not tolerated as a sexual partner in the community, typically they sleep with their student. Some masters hide their interest in sex successfully and only have a wife or husband and are faithful. Especially if they strongly believe sex is basically something sinful.

Number three. People will disagree with me here, most of you, but I can't understand the concept of power in Zen. What kind of power does my teacher have over me? IF he wanted to sleep with me, I could choose freely. If he acts like he has power and can punish me or reject me if I don't please him, then he is not a real Buddhist teacher so it doesn't matter if I sleep with him or not. A real BUddhist teacher will use no power over his or her students and will not force them to do anything. Hence, I believe, he or she can start a sexual relationship with anyone in the group. It is nobodys's business. But if you understand Buddhism as some kind of hierarchy where super powerful, superwise people are on the top, of course ,they must not touch the subordinates, at all. That is clearly dirty. On the other hand, I don't believe such hierarchy of people has its place in true Buddhism. Some of us learn, some of us teach, but we are all equal sentient beings with the same human weaknesses and the same Buddha nature.

Ryunin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **moon face buddha** on Mon Jun 20, 2011 5:12 pm

Ryunin wrote:

Number three. People will disagree with me here, most of you, but I can't understand the concept of power in Zen. What kind of power does my teacher have over me? IF he wanted to sleep with me, I could choose freely. If he acts like he has power and can punish me or reject me if I don't please him, then he is not a real Buddhist teacher so it doesn't matter if I sleep with him or not. A real BUddhist teacher will use no power over

his or her students and will not force them to do anything. Hence, I believe, he or she can start a sexual relationship with anyone in the group. It is nobodys's business. But if you understand Buddhism as some kind of hierarchy where super powerful, superwise people are on the top, of course ,they must not touch the subordinates, at all. That is clearly dirty. On the other hand, I don't believe such hierarchy of people has its place in true Buddhism. Some of us learn, some of us teach, but we are all equal sentient beings with the same human weaknesses and the same Buddha nature.

Which hits the nail firmly on the head.

It seems that a lot of people are only too happy to give up their power to a guru/zen master/self help group leader/cult etc.

Unfortunately some zen masters have decided to play the role of the wolf amongst the sheep.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Shodo** on Mon Jun 27, 2011 7:32 pm

Ugh.... looks like Eido Shimano WAS coming on to ZSS property - The board had to change the locks...

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... himano.pdf>

It looks like he is really REALLY working hard to get back into the ZSS to teach in some fashion... please don't let him do this.

The sad thing is, it looks like he is more than willing to bleed dry his own organization in order to teach, since he won't renegotiate his retirement without it.

It's a terrible rock and hard place - bring him back, and ZSS loses all credibility and stays above water financially...

Or don't bring him back, the ZSS keeps its credibility, but breaks it's spine trying to pay for his retirement.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... inello.pdf>

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi

by **Shodo** on Tue Jun 28, 2011 3:44 am

And this...

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... cement.pdf>

Anyone know what this is about...?

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Genjo** on Tue Jun 28, 2011 5:26 am

Shodo wrote:

Ugh.... looks like Eido Shimano WAS coming on to ZSS property - The board had to change the locks...

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... himano.pdf>

And this...

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... cement.pdf>

Anyone know what this is about...?

We shall see.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **christopher:::** on Tue Jun 28, 2011 6:10 am

Genjo wrote:

Shodo wrote:

Ugh.... looks like Eido Shimano WAS coming on to ZSS property - The board had to change the locks...

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... himano.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...himano.pdf)

And this...

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... cement.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...cement.pdf)

Anyone know what this is about...?

We shall see.

Genjo

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by christopher:::** on Tue Jun 28, 2011 6:12 am

For anyone interested in this topic who has not yet done so I highly recommend one of Genjo's recent talks below...

Sun, 29 May 2011

Boulders stuck in the Stream of Dharma

This Teisho by Genjo Marinello Osho was given at the May 29th half-day sit at Chobo-Ji. It examines the fourth case of Ascending the High Seat in The Book of Rinzai. This talk explores how boulders can be stuck in the middle of a clear stream.

<http://genjo.libsyn.com/>

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Ryunin** on Tue Jun 28, 2011 3:24 pm

I have just been to hospital, plenty of time for a week so I read a lot about the issue, Shimano roshi and his life and I have to add something a bit different to the whole thing. My previous post was quite general about sex and its meaning and expectations students

have etc. But this time, after reading about Shimano roshi, I have to say something much more specific.

The whole discussion seems to be about some general moral rules and codes, not so much about people themselves.

I have the impression that Shimano has never been very sincere, wholehearted person and I have doubts about his Zen teaching qualities. I would not trust someone whose Zen experience is not authentic and I doubt his experience was authentic, plus his incredibly rude attitude towards communication with Robert Aitken at the beginning of his American career. It has nothing to do with Japanese culture. I wrote to a Japanese roshi a few years ago and instead of rude, vague, evasive, formal reply I got a very specific, very polite and very sincere and direct reply from him, so it has nothing to do with Japan. Shimano as a person, arghhh, I would not like to meet him. Plus his escapades with students, totally crazy. One of his first victims was a crazy woman herself, so he absolutely didn't care who he had sex with, let alone why. He should have been kick out from the US at the very beginning as a Zen fraud. When Aitken complained about the problems to some Japanese authorities, their responses were as pretentious and useless as Shimano's.

The whole problem is not whether a Zen teacher has sex with a Zen student. But why and how and how it develops, how secret it is, how decent it is, how serious is the relationship, how happy the couple is and how it is accepted by the community. The way Shimano did it was all totally wrong. I see no reason why an adult Zen teacher cannot start a serious, committed, adult relationship with an adult, mature, independent Zen student, when the two treat each other with mutual respect and caring and don't disturb the community with some sexual shows and hysterical fights etc. A non-celibate, divorced or single Zen teacher should have the freedom to choose and start a committed relationship with a non-celibate, divorced or single Zen student. Especially if the Zen student shows no mark of "devotion" to the teacher and is more of a "drop-by", occasional practitioner.

Ryunin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **ed blanco** on Wed Jun 29, 2011 8:41 pm

I am a dirty old man. This is almost true, I also am not a teacher or a debaucher..... but reading on Trungpa (through Trycicle palying this CRAZY WISDOM movie) and the excuses he used to vindicate himself for his abusive behavior after the harm he caused and then his sucessor whatshisname, who had aids and went aroudn giving it to unsuspecting partners two of whom dies from it and then saying he was doing some "practice" that shoul've avoided giving to others. this makes me sick. He does that to my daughter and I asure all that I'd cut his wangus off and then really hurt him. Hey, I just skipped over some precepts...is all.

It is inexcusable! and Old Gempo and his stupid mortocycle too.

Zen buddhism is highly moral. Not Beat or Disembodied or any of that shit. The Precepts are not a suggestion but a road map to the Truth, to God or whatever you wanna think is beyond the Anteroom. It is our responsibility as Suzuki roshi said, to make sure people in zendos understand whats going on. We are there to follow an old and venerable tradition of Liberation of the inner Self away from the samsaric world which Yes it is one and the same thing but we have to realize it and betrayal and abuse are not part of it.

Also, their Zen teachings and Buddhist teachings were spot on. It is as if they had become snake oil salemen that knew exactly what buttons to push to make the \$\$ and get the young things. They were pilagers and abusers no matter how much doctrine a "clever words" they knew and used.

Dogen went to China to re vitalize the Buddhism of Japan because he was surrounded by the same debouchery. Zen priests and top monks were chopping heads and burning monasteries and stealing land and banging young women all over Kyoto and probaly Japan.

When he came back he moved far away into Echizen mountanns far fro the whole mess. Buddham saranam gacchami Dhamaan saranam gacchami Sangham saranam gacchami

ed blanco

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **moon face buddha** on Wed Jun 29, 2011 9:25 pm

ed blanco wrote:

and the excuses he used to vindicate himself for his abusive behavior after the harm he caused

One day a neighbour asked Nasreddin Hodja if he could borrow Hodja's donkey.

`Hodja Effendi, we need a donkey for a few hours. Could I take yours?'

`I would gladly lend you my donkey, my neighbour,' the Hodja started his excuse, `but he is not here.' Just at that moment the donkey's loud and long bray is heard from the shed.

`Shame on you Hodja Effendi,' said the neighbour, `you are caught in a lie, your donkey is braying in the shed.'

`My dear fellow,' Nasreddin Hodja was unrepentant, `are you going to believe the word of a Hodja or are you going to believe a donkey?'

Zen students could learn a lot from this old sufi fool.

Life is like Sanskrit read to a pony. - Lou Reed

moon face buddha

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **ed blanco** on Thu Jun 30, 2011 1:47 pm

Yes, we all could, it's an old story....

Buddham saranam gacchami Dhaman saranam gacchami Sangham saranam gacchami

ed blanco

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **AlasdairGF** on Mon Jul 04, 2011 5:46 pm

ed blanco wrote:

It is inexcusable! and Old Gempo [sic] and his stupid mortocycle too.

Did you seriously just rank 'owning a motorcycle' and 'passing on AIDS' equally?

I think it's all too possible to lose a sense of proportion here... this is just an egregious example of a tendency that we should look out for, I think, and for the most part it's been maintained in this thread... the Genpo example, for instance: he has reprimanded for his sexual misdemeanour, which consisted of having a (fairly long-term I think) affair. I'm not excusing him, and I don't know him... but the vitriol poured upon him has at times seemed disproportionate. Even Brad Warner seemed to think so in a post I haven't the link for. The reason for the vitriol, it seems to me, is that his head was already above the parapet because of Big Mind. By conflating sexual misconduct with other issues, I think no-one is well served.

Btw, it's Genpo, not Gempo.

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **ed blanco** on Tue Jul 05, 2011 6:36 pm

No! Of course not. There is nothing on that statement even close to hinting at that monstrous thought.



I was just venting.

His Big Mind just seemed ridiculous from the beginning, but that's just me. It influences not my feelings about the abuse.

It is Genpo but I called Gempo just fooling around, venting you know.

Sorry.

In peace, Ed

Buddham saranam gacchami Dhaman saranam gacchami Sangham saranam gacchami

ed blanco

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by AlasdairGF** on Wed Jul 06, 2011 10:11 am

Cool, no worries.

New blog: StoneWater Notes

AlasdairGF

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by rick** on Fri Jul 08, 2011 9:59 pm

it seems to me that the media makes thing a lot more scandalous BUT it is still wrong. I am not sure though how someone could be dragged down "the garden path" this way but i know i have done stupid things and it is all in the mind.

i don't really know the story all that well except from what is written here and i have to ask why it went on without question for any time at all.

anyone who had seen something "not quite right" should have asked.

it is hard to decide in any way whether a person should have authority and it comes down to the fact that power corrupts and absolute .. well you know.

it is a difficult thing though to admit you too are at fault and some never accept it while others take it far to much to heart.

the number of people in "religious" positions of authority abusing thier positions is troubling and always leave question whilch is why i try not to get caught up with it.

peace all and sorry for the ramble.

I know that I know nothing- Socrates.

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong- Mahatma Gandhi.  
If you cannot find truth right where you are, where else do you expect to find it? Dogen Zenji

rick

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Genjo** on Wed Jul 13, 2011 6:45 am

Genjo wrote:

Shodo wrote:

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... cement.pdf>

Anyone know what this is about...?

We shall see.

Genjo

Dear Dharma Friends,

On July 2, 2011, Eido Shimano Roshi, the retired Founding Abbot of Shobo-ji and Kongo-ji, and his successor Shinge Roko Chayat Roshi made a "Special Announcement." A transcription of the substance of the announcement made during a public forum at Dai Bosatsu Zendo can be found at:

<http://www.daibosatsu.org/images/meeting.pdf>

In this announcement, Eido Roshi acknowledged that he would no longer hold out the possibility of continuing a dokusan relationship with senior students, about sixty of whom have asked that he continue to teach and give dokusan. Furthermore, he strongly encouraged all these students to become Shinge Roshi's students and to fully support her leadership. He also acknowledged that there will be no exceptions and that he will not attend sesshin, or give Teisho or dokusan when visiting Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji (DBZ) from time to time. These steps may appear to be the natural consequence of the retirement of a teacher, new and current students are transferred to the new teacher, but it is also true that many students have been holding out the hope that Eido Roshi might become like a professor emeritus and occasionally attend sesshin, give Teisho and dokusan for students. So, I believe this announcement represents a major hurdle for the healing of the ZSS Sangha.

However, even though Eido Roshi in his remarks acknowledged that "we all suffered" particularly in the last six months since his retirement, and Shinge Roshi acknowledged

that we all have faced pain and difficulties during this transition, neither of them mentioned the reasons for his precipitous retirement. There was no direct acknowledgement of the harm that was done to this sangha because of decades of ethical breaches by the founding abbot, not to mention the harm done to the many female students that had to suffer his advances or his requests to keep affairs secret.

I was not in attendance, but it was reported to me that Eido Roshi put the five members of the ZSS board who were present for the announcement on the spot by asking that he be given a key to the New York Zendo Shobo-ji (NYZ) a couple of blocks from his condo on the upper East Side of New York City. The purpose of wanting a key became very clear when the board received a letter dated July 5th requesting that he be allowed to continue to lead zazen, teach Zen classics, lead Japanese Dharma classes, and offered to nurture the next generation of students. The ZSS Board promptly said no thank you.

Since his retirement December 8th, 2010, Eido Roshi has resisted clearing his rooms at both DBZ and NYZ, this resistance comes from his natural desire to be a grandfatherly figure and presence at both locations that he was so instrumental in founding. Eido Roshi's desire to let True Dharma continue is very genuine, and naturally he wants to help all he can. And if this were a normal retirement his efforts would be more than welcomed, they would be treasured. However, given the real dilemma created by his ethical breaches, the need for the ZSS sangha to heal in peace and for new leadership to have the opportunity to grow and develop it seems obvious to me that he must clear out his rooms and be restricted from being a grandfatherly presence or holding a professor emeritus status or function.

Yes, he will always be the founding abbot, and I won't hesitate to call him my Dharma Father, or give him deep thanks and gratitude for being a clear vessel of the Dharma. However, one of the beauties of Buddhism is that we are all primarily Buddhas, there is nothing to attain, and we are all vessels of the Dharma. As Eido Roshi has also taught me we are also all "bumpkins." I believe all of us have a crazy hot core that when not healthfully managed and channeled can cause symptoms that harm others and ourselves. This has certainly been true in my life. In my view, the ZSS needs a break from Eido Roshi's presence. It is abundantly and tragically clear that he does not yet have a clear understanding of how much damage he has done to the ZSS and American Zen. Without this understanding, which even a long break may not provide, I believe his continued presence, all be it highly limited and restricted, will hinder the deep healing needed to attract new students or generate a genuine opportunity for former students to return.

On this point the ZSS Board disagrees with me, and because I can no longer be harmonious with their course, I have decided after deep reflection, that I must withdraw as a sitting member of this board. Therefore, I submitted my resignation this evening. Overall, it has been a great blessing in my life to work with such a dedicated and determined group of people. I pray that any hard feelings generated by my departure, will quickly dissipate. It is my intention to attend two sesshins a year at Dai Bosatsu Zendo and I will be at the upcoming DBZ All August Sangha meeting. If a committee is convened at the August meeting to assist with the development of new bylaws, I will

volunteer to join it, as I am still committed to assisting the ZSS becoming a membership-based organization, where at least the majority of the board is elected by the membership. May True Dharma grow and flourish at both DBZ and NYZ.

With palms together,

Genjo Marinello

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Jundo Cohen** on Wed Jul 13, 2011 9:49 am

Genjo wrote:

...I believe his continued presence, all be it highly limited and restricted, will hinder the deep healing needed to attract new students or generate a genuine opportunity for former students to return.

On this point the ZSS Board disagrees with me, and because I can no longer be harmonious with their course, I have decided after deep reflection, that I must withdraw as a sitting member of this board.

Hi Genjo,

The letter made sense until this part, which I do not follow. On what do you and the board disagree? It seems like he still has some "continued presence" despite your description. What is the "continued presence"?

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Genjo** on Wed Jul 13, 2011 6:45 pm

Jundo Cohen wrote:

Genjo wrote:

...I believe his continued presence, all be it highly limited and restricted, will hinder the deep healing needed to attract new students or generate a genuine opportunity for former students to return.

On this point the ZSS Board disagrees with me, and because I can no longer be harmonious with their course, I have decided after deep reflection, that I must withdraw as a sitting member of this board.

Hi Genjo,

The letter made sense until this part, which I do not follow. On what do you and the board disagree? It seems like he still has some "continued presence" despite your description. What is the "continued presence"?

Gassho, Jundo

It is my thinking that for the organization to have time to heal and recover, Eido Roshi should stay away from both properties for some extended period. As I see it, the ZSS board does not want to lock him out, it simply wants him not to teach. He has been welcomed to DBZ many times since his retirement, and he has insisted to have access to his rooms and belongings at NYZ many times. I think there needs to be an extended break of contact, the rest of the board does not.

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Wed Jul 13, 2011 10:14 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Seigen** on Wed Jul 13, 2011 7:42 pm

about sixty of whom have asked that he continue to teach and give dokusan

This is pretty astonishing for those of us who are outside of the culture. Given that there was no public reference to the reasons for him to no longer teach, and that there is this much of a demand for him to do just that, the room for continued denial is way too great. His continued presence, at his own whim, has been granted in the offering of the key. Even though it has been publicly stated that he not teach, given the circumstances it appears as though there is an implied permission, this is how denial works. It's a perfect set-up for "discrete teachings." I'm sure this must have come up in the board meeting, and

everyone has done some work through all of this, to hold responsibility and break patterns of denial, even so this is truly baffling.

All of this has been painful, but it must be a very very difficult decision for you to cut the strings, to know when to say when. Thank you, Genjo, for everything you have done, for your own teachings and for making this as transparent as you could to the rest of us.

Let true Dharma continue.

With palms together, Seigen  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by christopher:::** on Thu Jul 14, 2011 1:27 am

Deep denial, indeed. I also found that quite surprising, that sixty wanted him to continue teaching and to give dokusan, as it was the dokusan rooms of ZSS and DBZ where many of these inappropriate seductions actually occurred, no? There's something very primal going on here, sounds almost like a wolf who refuses to leave his hunting territory...

Last edited by christopher::: on Thu Jul 14, 2011 8:22 am, edited 1 time in total.

~~\* Buddhist Global Relief :::: Keys of Zen Mind :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork\*~~

christopher:::

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Thu Jul 14, 2011 6:22 am

Sigh... Thank you for all that you did Genjo.

I know that you really tried.

I am sorry if I came off as hard on you - because I was.

I don't know what to make of all this anymore... I had hope for a moment... a hot, fleeting moment.

On June 2nd, Eido Roshi acknowledged that he would no longer hold out the possibility of continuing a dokusan relationship with senior students, about sixty of whom have asked that he continue to teach and give dokusan. He also acknowledged that there will be no exceptions and that he will not attend sesshin, or give Teisho or dokusan when visiting Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji (DBZ) from time to time.

And 3 days later on the 5th...

...the ZSS board received a letter from Eido dated July 5th requesting that he be allowed to continue to lead zazen, teach Zen classics, lead Japanese Dharma classes, and offered to nurture the next generation of students.

No end to Eido's lies.

For myself, I believe the "Brahma Punishment" for the remaining ZSS is now in order...

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Genjo** on Thu Jul 14, 2011 6:54 am

Seigen wrote:

about sixty of whom have asked that he continue to teach and give dokusan

This is pretty astonishing for those of us who are outside of the culture. Given that there was no public reference to the reasons for him to no longer teach, and that there is this much of a demand for him to do just that, the room for continued denial is way too great. His continued presence, at his own whim, has been granted in the offering of the key. Even though it has been publicly stated that he not teach, given the circumstances it appears as though there is an implied permission, this is how denial works. It's a perfect set-up for "discrete teachings." I'm sure this must have come up in the board meeting, and everyone has done some work through all of this, to hold responsibility and break patterns of denial, even so this is truly baffling.

All of this has been painful, but it must be a very very difficult decision for you to cut the strings, to know when to say when. Thank you, Genjo, for everything you have done, for your own teachings and for making this as transparent as you could to the rest of us.

Let true Dharma continue.

With palms together, Seigen

I need to clarify something in my previous post, as there has been some confusion. As I said earlier, Eido Roshi, at the July 2nd DBZ public forum, after making many major concessions, did make an inappropriate pitch for a key to the New York Zendo a couple of blocks from his NYC condo.

However, the president of the ZSS Board stood up to him and said there would be no impromptu board meeting to decide the matter. However, as I mentioned in my

resignation letter to the ZSS Board, they are considering installing an electronic lock at NYZ with security camera that would allow Eido Roshi restricted access at times when the zendo is not publicly in use. In my mind, still not a good idea. I strongly believe a break from his presence is needed to assure the cultivation of membership and the establishment of new leadership.

Genjo

PS: To all those who have criticized me in the past or who are inclined to criticize me today, I believe everyone is doing the best they can, and there is always room for improvement.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Shodo** on Thu Jul 14, 2011 7:04 am

You won't hear any criticism from me Genjo...

In fact, I feel I owe you an apology for some of the things I have said - I am sorry.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Ikko\_Ikkaku** on Thu Jul 14, 2011 3:27 pm

Genjo wrote:

PS: To all those who have criticized me in the past or who are inclined to criticize me today, I believe everyone is doing the best they can, and there is always room for improvement.

Glad you've woke up to the truth about Shimano.

Now, how about a public apologizing to the young woman who made the announcement about her relationship with Shimano a year ago next month. The way many of us read it, you tried to trash her.



How about a public apology or an expression of gratitude from you to archivist Reverend Kobutsu Malone?

How about an apology for spearheading the removing the correct and true references to a history of misconduct from Shimano's Wikipedia page?

Ikko\_Ikkaku

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Ikko\_Ikkaku** on Thu Jul 14, 2011 3:43 pm

Genjo wrote:

Dear Dharma Friends,

On July 2, 2011, Eido Shimano Roshi, the retired Founding Abbot of Shobo-ji and Kongo-ji, and his successor Shinge Roko Chayat Roshi made a "Special Announcement." A transcription of the substance of the announcement made during a public forum at Dai Bosatsu Zendo can be found at:

<http://www.daibosatsu.org/images/meeting.pdf>

In this announcement, Eido Roshi acknowledged that he would no longer hold out the possibility of continuing a dokusan relationship with senior students, about sixty of whom have asked that he continue to teach and give dokusan.

Were there in fact 60 letters?

Did this represent 60 practicing English speaking students, or did a substantial number come from the Japanese speaking students who, don't forget, rarely share much information with much less associate with the English speaking students. (Why this has been continuing for decades merits examination.)

To the point: Given Shimano's history of lying, why would anyone accept this statement without question?

Ikko\_Ikkaku

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Genjo** on Thu Jul 14, 2011 6:00 pm

Ikko\_Ikkaku wrote:

Now, how about a public apologizing to the young woman who made the announcement about her relationship with Shimano a year ago next month. The way many of us read it, you tried to trash her.

How about a public apology or an expression of gratitude from you to archivist Reverend Kobutsu Malone?

How about an apology for spearheading the removing the correct and true references to a history of misconduct from Shimano's Wikipedia page?

From my perspective, I did not at all try and trash her, I think she was courageous to out herself and Eido Roshi. I am sorry that even though she made her statement at a group meal at DBZ, I once used her first name at a NYZ public meeting. For this slip I have deep regrets.

I have always maintained that publication of the Shimano Archives is overall a good thing. History should not be hidden. I often believe transparency should trump confidentiality, but I also believe it is very difficult to find the right balance. I have in the past questioned Kobutsu's motives and thought that some of what he has posted on the archive is either not germane or hearsay. After getting to know Kobutsu's history better my opinions of his motives have changed.

When I was involved with the Eido Shimano's Wikipedia entry, I was working for a proper balance, never the elimination of criticism. In fact when all criticism was removed from time to time, I would spearhead returning it. Many strong and dedicated Wikipedia editors have since been involved, and I leave it to them to discern the right balance.

Sincerely,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Kobutsu** on Fri Jul 15, 2011 2:37 am

I would like to offer a brief observation... Genjo Marinello has demonstrated, throughout this tribulation, beyond any doubt, that he has the ability and willingness to change in a substantial manner. In this, he has transcended his own teacher's ability by orders of magnitude and set an example for others.

Of course, there is more work to be done; we are all "works in progress." Nevertheless, Genjo has emerged from the Shimano storm front in remarkable form and deserves to be recognized for his initiative. I offer him gratitude for his forthrightness and his skill in being able to demonstrate clearly the path of Buddhadharma.

Thank you Genjo, Roshi...

法 座下

Kobutsu

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Carol** on Fri Jul 15, 2011 3:25 am

Kobutsu wrote:

I would like to offer a brief observation... Genjo Marinello has demonstrated, throughout this tribulation, beyond any doubt, that he has the ability and willingness to change in a substantial manner. In this, he has transcended his own teacher's ability by orders of magnitude and set an example for others.

Of course, there is more work to be done; we are all "works in progress." Nevertheless, Genjo has emerged from the Shimano storm front in remarkable form and deserves to be recognized for his initiative. I offer him gratitude for his forthrightness and his skill in being able to demonstrate clearly the path of Buddhadharma.

Thank you Genjo, Roshi...

法 座下

Well and admirably said. Thank you, too, Kobutso.

~Carol

It is time to sit down and be still,  
for you are drunk,  
and we are at the edge of the roof.

~Rumi

Carol

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Seigen** on Fri Jul 15, 2011 12:49 pm

I need to clarify something in my previous post, as there has been some confusion. As I said earlier, Eido Roshi, at the July 2nd DBZ public forum, after making many major concessions, did make an inappropriate pitch for a key to the New York Zendo a couple of blocks from his NYC condo.

However, the president of the ZSS Board stood up to him and said there would be no impromptu board meeting to decide the matter. However, as I mentioned in my resignation letter to the ZSS Board, they are considering installing an electronic lock at NYZ with security camera that would allow Eido Roshi restricted access at times when the zendo is not publicly in use. In my mind, still not a good idea. I strongly believe a break from his presence is needed to assure the cultivation of membership and the establishment of new leadership.

Thank you for providing clear information, Genjo. This is an important matter to all of us, and your communications have been a strong compass, a great service to your own communities and to sangha at large.

With palms together, Seigen  
Sweetcake Enso

Seigen

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Nonin** on Fri Jul 15, 2011 3:47 pm

Genjo,

You have consistently shown remarkable clarity and fortitude during this whole debacle, and I salute you for it. I'm very sorry that you've resigned from the ZSS board. Your voice is much needed there.

Nine bows,

Nonin  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Genjo** on Fri Jul 15, 2011 4:28 pm

Genjo wrote:

Ikko\_Ikkaku wrote:

Now, how about a public apologizing to the young woman who made the announcement about her relationship with Shimano a year ago next month. The way many of us read it, you tried to trash her.

From my perspective, I did not at all try and trash her, I think she was courageous to out herself and Eido Roshi. I am sorry that even though she made her statement at a group meal at DBZ, I once used her first name at a NYZ public meeting. For this slip I have deep regrets.

I would like to add the following quote from a letter I sent to Eido Roshi on 12/12/10, just four days after attending Rohatsu Sesshin with him at DBZ, and couple of days before I saw a copy Eido Roshi's letter to the NYT that severely diminished his public apology to the Sangha.

"As I mentioned before, after the first couple of days of Rohatsu I could feel my body relax, and this then became one of the smoothest sesshins ever for my body and mind. During a period of samadhi, the following insight bubbled up concerning the events of this summer. At one time, I thought of your sexual encounters with female students to be problematic but not terribly destructive, something on the order of President Clinton's affair with a White House intern. It was complicated, inappropriate, detrimental to them both and distressful to the nation, but, in my mind, not as serious a matter as many made it. However, it has become plain to me that sexual encounters between an abbot and a kessei student are much more serious than this. Consider that if I had sexual relations with a psychotherapy client who I saw only once a month, my license to practice could be revoked and likely my malpractice insurance would have to offer a substantial financial settlement. However, if I had sexual relations with a client I saw more than once a week, the ethical breach would be much more serious and damaging. Seeing a client more than once a week increases the 'transference' substantially, which means that if this trusted psychotherapeutic intimacy is betrayed with physical intimacy, there is a far greater likelihood of serious psychological damage. Such damage can take decades to heal. As we both know, a five-minute dokusan can be a very intimate and intense experience, every bit as powerful as a fifty-minute psychotherapy session. Therefore, the fact that you often see kessei students for dokusan every day creates a deep psychological and spiritual intimacy that increases the same kind of transference that is found in psychotherapy. This likewise means that a sexualizing of a student relationship will have the same damaging results, not to speak of the trauma suffered by the Sangha having to deal with these breaches."

This whole ordeal has been quite an education for me, but it is through facing such ordeals that we have an opportunity to grow.

Sincerely,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Ikko\_Ikkaku** on Fri Jul 15, 2011 11:25 pm

Genjo wrote:

At one time, I thought of your sexual encounters with female students to be problematic but not terribly destructive, something on the order of President Clinton's affair with a White House intern. It was complicated, inappropriate, detrimental to them both and distressful to the nation, but, in my mind, not as serious a matter as many made it. However, it has become plain to me that sexual encounters between an abbot and a kessei student are much more serious than this. Consider that if I had sexual relations with a psychotherapy client who I saw only once a month, my license to practice could be revoked and likely my malpractice insurance would have to offer a substantial financial settlement. However, if I had sexual relations with a client I saw more than once a week, the ethical breach would be much more serious and damaging. Seeing a client more than once a week increases the 'transference' substantially, which means that if this trusted psychotherapeutic intimacy is betrayed with physical intimacy, there is a far greater likelihood of serious psychological damage. Such damage can take decades to heal. As we both know, a five-minute dokusan can be a very intimate and intense experience, every bit as powerful as a fifty-minute psychotherapy session. Therefore, the fact that you often see kessei students for dokusan every day creates a deep psychological and spiritual intimacy that increases the same kind of transference that is found in psychotherapy. This likewise means that a sexualizing of a student relationship will have the same damaging results, not to speak of the trauma suffered by the Sangha having to deal with these breaches."

Genjo

Genjo,

Thank you for sharing your thought processes and correspondence with Rev. Shimano.

I am glad to see that your training as a therapist kicked in. Also at some point along the way your essential sense of ethics and compassion came out as well and you overcame the defensiveness.

It would be equally interesting to learn how Shimano responded to your comments. Clearly, morally he remains the dead rock that Soen Roshi called him some 30 years ago.

Nevertheless, while it is understandable and forgivable for you to have been defensive on a personal level, your early comments were in fact not professional (in both your professional roles) or particularly compassionate towards the woman involved with Shimano. Given Shimano's 50 year history of inappropriate sexual behavior, it was completely inappropriate to state in your newsletter that that the woman pursued Shimano perhaps attempting to lead the readers to believe he merely innocently acceded to her advances.

Reference: See <http://home.comcast.net/~zenquaker/PMN102.pdf>  
(Thanks to posters on <http://genkaku-again.blogspot.com/>)

I do want to thank you for trying to to do as much as you claim to finally institute measures that will give the organization to some measure of psychological health which I believe it has not had since Shimano took over the organization and, perhaps may never attain.

Getting back to your early defensive and vindictive responses to Rev. Kobutsu Malone, Genkaku Adam Fisher, Stuart Lachs, and Roshi Robert Aitken as men having "it out" for Shimano, now that you have seen the problem, why not clearly address your error in judgement and misspoken words and apologize to them publicly?

Finally, regarding the Shimano Wikipedia entry is my understanding correct? You initially attempted to remove the negative references to Shimano from his Wikipedia entry and succeeded but now that you now want them restored for balance? Perhaps you can one day help supply the needed published references to correct the imbalance you mistakenly initiated.

Ikko\_Ikkaku

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
**by Genjo** on Sat Jul 16, 2011 1:40 am

Ikko\_Ikkaku wrote:

It would be equally interesting to learn how Shimano responded to your comments. ...

it was completely inappropriate to state in your newsletter that that the woman pursued Shimano perhaps attempting to lead the readers to believe he merely innocently acceded to her advances....

Getting back to your early defensive and vindictive responses to Rev. Kobutsu Malone, Genkaku Adam Fisher, Stuart Lachs, and Roshi Robert Aitken as men having "it out" for Shimano, now that you have seen the problem, why not clearly address your error in judgement and misspoken words and apologize to them publicly?

Finally, regarding the Shimano Wikipedia entry is my understanding correct? You initially attempted to remove the negative references to Shimano from his Wikipedia

entry and succeeded but now that you now want them restored for balance? Perhaps you can one day help supply the needed published references to correct the imbalance you mistakenly initiated.

Eido Roshi never responded to this letter, or a second letter I sent suggesting that he enter deep investigation, into what I believe to be his sexual addiction, through psychotherapy.

I believe that if there are two consenting adults having sexual activity then they both are responsible for the trouble they may get in. However, it can be argued that there cannot be consensual sexual relations between a student and a teacher, a client and a therapist, a parishioner and a priest. I disagree, but I also think it is a major ethical lapse on the part of the "professional" and that the professional is 100% responsible for this ethical breach. Age difference, depth of professional relationship, who pursues whom, and recidivism does matter in determining the severity of the ethical breach. The more serious the ethical breach the greater the psychological damage will likely be. Hence, considering these factors is important. Nevertheless, I agree I said too much publicly about this most recent case, and regret this.

I never named names as far as I recall, but regardless I don't think any of these men had purely altruistic motives, then again I have never met anyone who has. In any case, I am abundantly glad they conspired together to accomplish this service of revealing a much deeper history than I was ever aware of, leading to a revelation that Eido Roshi's dismal record in this area was not in the distant past, as I once believed.

Early on I did not try and remove all negative references from the Shimano Wikipedia entry, I tried to keep it balanced. When all negative references were removed, I was one of many who added them back in. For a long time now I have stayed away from doing anything about this entry, and leave it to the more experienced Wikipedia editors to work it out.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi  
by **Jundo Cohen** on Sat Jul 16, 2011 11:19 am

If Rev. Kobutsu offers such high praise, it is deserved. Kobutsu is not someone to say what he does not mean.



Kobutsu is also perhaps the most conversant on the facts and issues here of anyone out there, and has been pushing these issues for years that they were ignored by the wider community, me and everyone else.

Thank you Kobutsu, thank you Genjo.

Gassho, Jundo

Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/](http://www.treeleaf.org/sit-a-long/with-jundo-and-taigu/)) & all of a Soto Sangha ([www.treeleaf.org](http://www.treeleaf.org)). Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by fragrant herbs on Mon Jul 18, 2011 8:10 pm**

ReturningToTheSource wrote:

Jundo Cohen wrote:

All human beings, from 'Great Bodhisattvas' right on down to the rest of us, are human beings ... and that means rough edges, cracks and ugly spots, flesh, fallings down and flaws. At least, of course, until we eventually become Perfect Golden Buddhas ...

Generally in Buddhism, abiding by the five precepts is for laypeople. It is not considered something so difficult.

Generally, the immoral teacher has sexual relations with the immoral student.

The immoral teacher cannot have sexual relations with a moral student and visa versa. That is impossible.

If we are waiting until we become a Buddha so we can develop right view about sexuality...brother...our journey will be very long.

I had to answer this, and maybe others have already. Sometimes that is very true, that it is an immoral students that is having sex with the teacher, but as I have learned from women who were in Tibetan Buddhism, the teacher tells them that in order to become enlightened, they need to have sex with him, and what can get worse is downright rape. A teacher because of his power can talk a student into things that they would not ordinarily do, and with younger women, those who have been in abusive relationships, especially by parents, it is easier to manipulate these women into having sex. So it is not an easy answer of "morals," and if anyone has read, The Guru Papers, Masks of Authoritarian Power, you will see how easy it is, and how these teachers prey on this type of women. Plus, the women that the lamas desires, providing he is immoral, are slowly brought to the point where they respect and trust the teacher, and probably consider him Buddha

since they tell you to think of them as Buddha, and so being naive and perhaps young, the lama can gradually bring the disciple to the place where they will accept.

fragrant herbs

**by 1handclapping on Mon Jul 18, 2011 8:24 pm**

I'm sorry, I don't mean to derail the trajectory of the conversation at this point, but I'm new here, I'd like to make a few comments. I haven't read all 63 pages of this discussion, but I've read a few, along with the link to the main document.

Disclosure: I began my dharma study in the Tibetan tradition. As I'm sure you're aware, there have been many similar misconduct issues in that tradition. I left the tradition after witnessing attempts by teachers to involve students in sexual affairs, and hearing students complain, seeing one quit the sangha. So I'm in limbo at the moment, exploring different traditions, checking out forums, and beginning to study the basic Pali sutras, which aren't covered at all in TB. Very eye-opening, those sutras. I admire the Zen community for acknowledging the problem (there's still so much denial in TB, even after lawsuits, numerous media articles over decades, and so forth) and grappling with it.

I admire Jack Kornfield, Stephen Batchelor and other Western dharma leaders for voicing their concerns to the Dalai Lama, and for instituting strict ethical standards and rules of conduct for teachers at their centers. It appears that the only way to introduce accountability is at the local level. The Dalai Lama advocates taking misconduct cases to the media, and if necessary, to the police. That's one way to introduce transparency and accountability, but when it comes to that, it means the system has already failed. But he's right, that to maintain silence out of a false understanding of "right speech", or not wanting to sow discord in the sangha, is a mistaken, and potentially damaging approach. Such a mistaken approach puts others at risk.

Another thing the Dalai Lama says is to thoroughly research your teacher before making a commitment to him or her. Why do people so easily put their trust in what basically is a complete stranger? This is one thing I don't understand. A teacher has to earn my trust, they don't get it automatically, just because of the title "Roshi", "Rinpoche", or whatever. Viewing the teacher as Buddha, as Enlightened, I've been told after investigating the question, is only for very advanced practice, for Guru Yoga. It's not for beginning, nor intermediate students. I can't speak knowledgeably about the Zen tradition, but it's clear that in the Tibetan tradition this Guru Yoga reverence is being misrepresented as something required of the rank-and-file. It is being deliberately misapplied by unscrupulous teachers. Is it similar with Zen?

One more observation. I noticed in the papers provided in the link, that Shimano's teacher in Japan said he didn't recognize his own student, when shown photos of Shimano in Hawaii. The Dalai Lama has said something similar; that he's seen some of his colleagues

whom he knew to be humble and modest, go through a radical transformation after going to the West, where there is easy money and a fascination with the exotic. I've read of cases where someone would donate a sumptuous estate to a lama, after being somehow immediately enthralled by him after a couple of meetings, or a few teachings. Is it possible that some of these are monsters of our own creation? Can people really abandon humility, modesty, all the Buddhist values, so easily? And if so, what can we do on our part to prevent this?

I try to look for solutions to these painful problems that keep cropping up. How to approach this constructively? How to introduce accountability, transparency, professional ethical norms into ancient Eastern traditions meeting the 21st-Century West (or East, in the case of Taiwan, where a slew of abuse cases have cropped up after the Dalai Lama introduced Tantric Buddhism there)? I appreciate the opportunity to share experiences and search for solutions in a Buddhist ecumenical spirit.

1handclapping

**by fragrant herbs on Mon Jul 18, 2011 8:31 pm**

Nonin wrote:

genkaku,

The sting that you feel is yours, no one else's, and you alone are responsible for what you are carrying. Eido Shimano is no longer stinging you. Take responsibility for your pain and own it. If you still are carrying the sting of events fifteen years old, you need to work them out, either on your own -- through zazen and other spiritual practices such as metta meditation -- or with the help of a mental health professional.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Some wounds never heal and even Thich Nhat Hanh said that. Peoples make up are different. I remember when I was in the Vedanta Society someone told a disciple to get over it, and the guru told the other student this very same thing. I never tell people to get over what I myself can't get over and it has been 40 years.

I carry Genkaku's pain with me too, because I feel the hurt of others who have been hurt in the name of religion. I always think how religion was supposed to bring me peace, but no matter where I turned there was pain, so much so that I have given up on religion. I have been betrayed by Christianity, by gurus, and by a lama and lied to by other Tibetan Buddhists.

fragrant herbs

**by 1handclapping on Mon Jul 18, 2011 8:44 pm**

fragrant herbs wrote:

ReturningToTheSource wrote:

Generally, the immoral teacher has sexual relations with the immoral student.

The immoral teacher cannot have sexual relations with a moral student and visa versa. That is impossible.

I had to answer this, and maybe others have already. Sometimes that is very true, that it is an immoral students that is having sex with the teacher, but as I have learned from women who were in Tibetan Buddhism, the teacher tells them that in order to become enlightened, they need to have sex with him, and what can get worse is downright rape. A teacher because of his power can talk a student into things that they would not ordinarily do, and with younger women, those who have been in abusive relationships, especially by parents, it is easier to manipulate these women into having sex. So it is not an easy answer of "morals," and if anyone has read, The Guru Papers, Masks of Authoritarian Power, you will see how easy it is, and how these teachers prey on this type of women. Plus, the women that the lamas desires, providing he is immoral, are slowly brought to the point where they respect and trust the teacher, and probably consider him Buddha since they tell you to think of them as Buddha, and so being naive and perhaps young, the lama can gradually bring the disciple to the place where they will accept.

This is a very good point. This is why there is a law in the US about clergy and fiduciary trust. Clergy are in a power position, and a position of trust. They are not to abuse these elements. Some members of the "flock" can come from unfortunate family circumstances; they may have a history of abuse, and so are vulnerable. They may view the clergy member as a surrogate parent. Compassion requires that we try to understand the psychology of the victim. There is a reason why the responsibility lies with the clergy member to observe proper ethics. There's an unequal power dynamic there. Let us not be quick to judge and dismiss victims of clergy manipulation, even coercion, as "immoral". Life is far from that black-and-white, it is not at all so simplistic.

1handclapping

**by Genjo on Tue Jul 19, 2011 5:38 pm**

fragrant herbs wrote:

Sometimes that is very true, that it is an immoral students that is having sex with the teacher, but as I have learned from women who were in Tibetan Buddhism, the teacher

tells them that in order to become enlightened, they need to have sex with him, and what can get worse is downright rape. A teacher because of his power can talk a student into things that they would not ordinarily do, and with younger women, those who have been in abusive relationships, especially by parents, it is easier to manipulate these women into having sex.

I completely agree that the power dynamic can sometimes be so great between a spiritual teacher and their students, that if it is the case that the teacher is pursuing aggressively a much younger vulnerable student, such actions are so lopsided as to border on rape. I wish I had not heard stories like this and worse concerning Eido Roshi, but I have. If they are true, and I personally believe they are, then indeed the scars from such encounters can easily last a lifetime. I and many others defended Eido Roshi believing that his history of sexual encounters with students ended long ago; I believed, or was it deeply wished, they had. I certainly had no first or second hand knowledge of any continuing violations in the time that I trained with him before last June, but I now believe he was very good at keeping these things secret. To say I am disappointed is a vast understatement, and some of that disappointment is directed at my own gullibility.

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Wed Jul 20, 2011 5:32 am, edited 1 time in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by christopher::: on Wed Jul 20, 2011 2:39 am**

Thank you for your openness and reflectiveness, Genjo-san. In my opinion, the abuse of power by some teachers will continue to be a problem until all the roles, expectations, training settings and activities of traditional Buddhism that were imported from Asia are considered carefully. We live in a different time, there is much more mixing of the sexes. Those conditions and settings that hide and "enable" abuse have to be dismantled, dropped or transformed in some way.

Looking at what happened with Shimano what do you see as key "enabling" factors? The fact that things happened around you but you were unaware shows something. He was able to hide his behaviors and then had someone like yourself there who could confirm what was in fact a lie. Like many others I have great respect for what you are doing now, your position is very difficult, but also very important.

Deep bows,

Christopher

P.S. Handclapping and fragrant herbs, thank you for sharing what you observed of similar problems in Tibetan Buddhism.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma ::::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork :::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Genjo on Wed Jul 20, 2011 7:20 am**

christopher::: wrote:

... Those conditions and settings that hide and "enable" abuse have to be dismantled, dropped or transformed in some way.

Looking at what happened with Shimano what do you see as key "enabling" factors? The fact that things happened around you but you were unaware shows something. He was able to hide his behaviors and then had someone like yourself there who could confirm what was in fact a lie.

I certainly agree that the conditions that enable abuse have to be dismantled. I think Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) is making progress under the leadership of Shinge Roshi and monastics that won't put up with the old ways. It is clear now that Eido Roshi was never able to provide adequate leadership around sexual boundaries at the monastery, because he had such poor boundaries himself. However, there is still a long way to go before the organization as a whole can recover from this long sordid history. There are still some residents or senior students who, believe it or not, don't think radical change to old mores are needed.

I think outside facilitators should be invited to lead seminars and workshops on both ZSS campuses outlining warning signs, educating the sangha, senior monks and teachers about how to improve awareness. These workshops should review the destructiveness of lopsided relationships and the healthy advantages to strong boundaries in a spiritual practice setting. I would love to see the Zen Studies Society become a mecca for such workshops. One day I hope people who have been wounded will feel safe enough to come and tell their stories and know they are being heard, but this will only become a possibility after they first see deep changes in the culture that assure no sexual exploitation by monks or teachers will be enabled or tolerated.

I imagine it sounds like a pipe dream, but why couldn't we turn our own history into a great lesson of what can go wrong and a greater lesson on how to make real and lasting changes.

However, before any of this can become a possibility I think Eido Roshi must be told to stay away from ZSS campuses. The organization needs time to heal. I don't see how that is going to happen with regular visits from the founding abbot, no matter how supervised or restricted. In addition, new bylaws must be given top priority and I think a committee of sangha members should be formed to work out the draft of the new bylaws. In the current ZSS bylaws the board mainly serves the abbot, and the abbot mainly picks who is to be on the board. I think membership criteria must be soon established, and then the membership given a way to regularly vote on board members with limited terms. In addition, the abbot must serve at the pleasure of the board not the other way around, and ethical oversight should be built into the bylaws that relies on outside assessment, review and consequences. In addition, I believe the abbot should not run board meetings and only have a vote in the case of a tie. One way to facilitate transparency is to make all past, current and future board minutes public (redacted where necessary to protect privacy) along with yearly financial statements.

As to confirming a lie, we were certainly lied to by Eido Roshi, and all of us on the ZSS board, in hindsight naively, believed him. None of the board members last June resided at DBZ; therefore, none of us really had the first hand knowledge or presence that would have been needed to detect Eido Roshi's lies. However, it is still surprising to me that the monks and nuns that did live there say they had no knowledge of what was going on under their noses. I actually believe them, because I know how exhausted they all were running the place and how selective and secretive Eido Roshi had become given his long history of ethical breaches.

These are just some of my thoughts,

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Wed Jul 20, 2011 5:16 pm, edited 2 times in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by christopher::: on Wed Jul 20, 2011 7:38 am**

Thanks for responding so quickly and sharing your thoughts publicly, Genjo san. Sounds like there is still a very long road ahead.

I know very little of the details but the San Francisco Zen Center went through some similar difficulties. It might be helpful to look carefully at what they did and see how that

went. Perhaps you've already done that? (There are so many pages of this discussion its probably come up before).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San\\_Francisco\\_Zen\\_Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Francisco_Zen_Center)

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Linda Anderson on Wed Jul 20, 2011 8:07 am**

oh my, so painful to watch. I don't put any faith in setting boundaries, having workshops, or prescribing psychotherapy for the offenders. To me, these are external rules and regulations.... amd offer no resolution from a structural point of view.

As long as the bare truth is not seen and felt deeply, that relationships based on power, manipulation and false motives are CONTRARY to spiritual development and awakening, unethical behavior will continue. I no longer know what is meant by unethical, beyond not following rules. AND, if all that zen practice can produce is more rules, then I'm not too much interested. It has not given us a life to live by.

So long as everybody, teachers and students alike, have their priorities upside down, boundaries will be crossed and people will be hurt. Personally, I think it is more than ridiculous to think that sentencing the offender to psychotherapy will accomplish anything.

I think that in the end, we are robbed of our awakening by such behavior.... but rules will not make it so.

Linda

ps From the outside looking in, and hearing from those who were there.... my impression: sfzc does not have much to teach regarding ethical resolutions beyond rules, some people are still suffering, and no teacher points the way.

Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Bassho

Linda Anderson



**by Mike on Wed Jul 20, 2011 5:50 pm**

This is my first post.

Genjo once told me that one of the purposes of being in community is to wear away at the rough edges of self.

A round boulder rolls. Another, not yet tumbled end for end, does not.

Gassho, Genjo.

Mike

Mike

**by Ikko\_Ikkaku on Wed Jul 20, 2011 6:40 pm**

Genjo wrote:

In the current ZSS bylaws the board mainly serves the abbot, and the abbot mainly picks who is to be on the board.

Genjo

Genjo,

I join others posting on this blog expressing gratitude for your honesty regarding your relationship with Shimano and Zen Studies Society.

Would you answer the follow questions?

Sherry Roko Shinge Chayat's continued silence on two matters is of great concern: She has never publicly denounced Shimano's behavior, and she has never publicly pointed out that there are enablers on the current board and among the senior students.

Given what you have written and from what I know of the current by laws, Chayat should be the abbot, however is she in fact or is she there just executing Shimano's agenda? If she actually is the abbot, and if she agrees with the sensible governance reforms you propose why doesn't she do so? I suspect that there is more going on, and would like to learn your take at this point.

Another related question:

Do you know when the terms of the enablers and the members of the pro-Shimano faction on the board are up? That date (dates) could become the real turning point for her and the organization. Or is there more to it?

Ikko\_Ikkaku

**by Genjo on Thu Jul 21, 2011 6:38 am**

Ikko\_Ikkaku wrote:

Would you answer the follow questions?

Sherry Roko Shinge Chayat's continued silence on two matters is of great concern: She has never publicly denounced Shimano's behavior, and she has never publicly pointed out that there are enablers on the current board and among the senior students.

Given what you have written and from what I know of the current by laws, Chayat should be the abbot, however is she in fact or is she there just executing Shimano's agenda? If she actually is the abbot, and if she agrees with the sensible governance reforms you propose why doesn't she do so? I suspect that there is more going on, and would like to learn your take at this point.

Do you know when the terms of the enablers and the members of the pro-Shimano faction on the board are up? That date (dates) could become the real turning point for her and the organization. Or is there more to it?

Shinge Roko Roshi has been in a much more delicate position than I have been. She is responsible for trying to turn the Zen Studies Society around without having it collapse. This is a very difficult path to walk; no matter what steps she takes, she is going to alienate some of the sangha. However, I have always seen her put the safety of the sangha first, and her loyalty to Eido Roshi second. She is a very strong individual, and if anyone can turn the organization around in a healthy way without it first collapsing it will be Shinge Roshi. She certainly is abbot, and is no puppet of Eido Shimano Roshi. However, she and I have very different styles and paces, and this naturally led to a certain amount of tension between us. For the sake of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, I hope with time we find ourselves again firmly aligned.

Your portrayal of the ZSS board as full of enablers is just wrong. In the past, because the ZSS board could never reach full consensus (required by the bylaws) about removing the abbot from power when previous ethical breaches came to light, those frustrated would leave, and those few remaining would start over, often with new promises from Eido Roshi that "this will never happen again." This time there was a very strong majority that firmly suggested that Eido Roshi resign from the board while the most recent incident was investigated, which he did on July 4, 2010. Of course this led to the Faith Trust Institute's investigation which concluded that Eido Roshi should step down as abbot as

soon as possible, which became Dec. 8, 2010. Finally, this same board was able to convince Eido Roshi that doing more teaching would hinder not help his legacy. Of course this account is a vast simplification, but there is no doubt this board has done more to investigate, change course, and protect the sangha than any other ZSS board in history. Board members serve a three year term and are usually consecutively re-elected, there are no term limits. I hope how members are elected/appointed becomes much more democratic in the near future.

Recently, it became clear that the majority of the board does not want to exclude Eido Roshi from the properties, only from teaching on the properties. I don't see how his continued presence, however limited, supervised or restricted will allow for deep healing within our sangha. On a board some confidentiality is important, but for this board I think much more transparency is needed. At this point, I feel I have been as instrumental as possible with my fellow Dharma brothers and sisters in accomplishing all I can from within the board. Now it is my hope that my voice can be much more direct and clear off the board. I do hope my comrades will soon openly join me in the reforms I've been suggesting.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Ikko\_Ikkaku on Fri Jul 22, 2011 5:11 am**

Genjo wrote:

Shinge Roko Roshi has been in a much more delicate position than I have been. ... However, she and I have very different styles and paces, and this naturally led to a certain amount of tension between us. For the sake of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, I hope with time we find ourselves again firmly aligned.

Sorry, Sherry Roko Shinge Chayat has had decades to express concern and to act regarding 50 years of inappropriate behavior.

Recently I read that when Shimano's action are questioned in her presence that she responds that "anyone who questions him is angry and hateful."

I remain concerned that the current abbot is actually among those who are intractably dependent on Shimano.

Moving on....

Please clarify this apparent contradiction:

Genjo wrote:

Your portrayal of the ZSS board as full of enablers is just wrong.

...

Recently, it became clear that the majority of the board does not want to exclude Eido Roshi from the properties, only from teaching on the properties.

Even if I accept that it is only 51% of the board wants to see Shimano on the premises that is not good.

I think that on some emotional level these don't really care about the hurt and even emotional damage Shimano has done to many, many others, how destructive he has been and is to the long term viability of the Society. On that emotional level they are somehow strongly dependent upon him for something, or devoted loyalty to him is symbolic of something deeply emotional going on in them.

If you haven't already read this article, please try to find some time to do so:

Why People Stick By Scandal-Plagued Pastors

By John Blake, CNN

May 27, 2011

[http://edition.cnn.com/2011/US/05/27/church.scandal/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+delicious%2Fgqlf+\(Christian+Headlines+Top+Headlines\)](http://edition.cnn.com/2011/US/05/27/church.scandal/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+delicious%2Fgqlf+(Christian+Headlines+Top+Headlines))

It may offer some insight as to what may be going on with the majority of the board and with most of the senior members of the ZSS sangha -- those who remain scandal after scandal for years.

Ikko\_Ikkaku

**by Linda Anderson on Fri Jul 22, 2011 5:40 am**

Until we understand the consequences of the complete annihilation of our spiritual values, we won't understand how goodness and common sense can be overlooked so blatantly and how misconduct can be so thorough denied. It is even more mysterious to see it happen in a collective where the practice seems to promise clarity. There are many examples beyond zss

Not last night,  
not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Genjo on Fri Jul 22, 2011 6:43 am**

Ikko\_Ikkaku wrote:

If you haven't already read this article, please try to find some time to do so:

Why People Stick By Scandal-Plagued Pastors

By John Blake, CNN

May 27, 2011

[http://edition.cnn.com/2011/US/05/27/church.scandal/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+delicious%2Fgqlf+\(Christian+Headlines+Top+Headlines\)](http://edition.cnn.com/2011/US/05/27/church.scandal/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+delicious%2Fgqlf+(Christian+Headlines+Top+Headlines))

Yes, I've already read it. It is a good read, and there is obviously relevance.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Ihandclapping on Fri Jul 22, 2011 4:46 pm**

I have been following events in the Canberra sangha, whose lama not only was discovered to be having multiple affairs with disciples, it was discovered after the sangha put up a website about it, that in the Tibetan community at large, this "lama" was known to have received very little proper education in the dharma, and was not respected by Tibetans in India and Nepal. When a member of the sangha board went to Dharamsala, she found out that their "lama" had a lifelong history of illicit sex, in other words, their lama was a playboy, and had never completed the course of studies to become a qualified teacher.

The latest news from the Canberra group is even more surprising. The majority of the board governing the sangha has voted to keep the (false) lama, even though they now

know that he isn't qualified to teach, and that it is likely that his sexual misconduct will continue, since it's been a lifelong "root downfall", as they say.

I've been trying to support the victims in the messy and painful story, but it only rubs salt into their wounds to see this completely unscrupulous person get reinstated to his former position. I'm nonplussed!

Any insights as to why people do stick with scandalous pastors would be appreciated, thank you. I think this does more harm than good. Starting fresh, with a new, qualified, and ethical teacher would let everyone heal, and would create a healing atmosphere in the sangha, rather than one in which old wounds fester, and new disciples might be at risk.  
Ihandclapping

**by Shonin on Fri Jul 22, 2011 5:04 pm**

Ihandclapping wrote:

Any insights as to why people do stick with scandalous pastors would be appreciated, thank you.

Attachment. People become emotionally wedded to their pastor/teacher/lama/guru - their self-esteem and sense of meaning and purpose become dependent on the pastor/teacher/lama and the esteem that he or she is held in. If that esteem is challenged, they experience uncomfortable insecurity and cognitive dissonance. It's less painful to rewrite the truth, rationalise any issues away and otherwise deceive oneself than face up to the mismatch between cherished ideas and reality.

Shonin

**by christopher::: on Fri Jul 22, 2011 5:35 pm**

I agree. What the CNN article describes in terms of a "spiritual firewall" ties into this...

"While most church scandals revolve around the conduct of a pastor, there's another question lurking behind the headlines that onlookers often ask: Why do some people stick by their pastor even when everyone else in the church seems to be leaving?"

Building a firewall

Some do it because they've placed a "spiritual firewall" around their pastor, and in their own mind, said Sue Thompson, a professional speaker who attended a church that disintegrated after a pastor's extramarital affair was exposed.

She said some parishioners cannot leave a pastor because they credit him or her with a life-changing event, such as inspiring them to overcome drug addiction or turning around a disastrous marriage.

To accept such a pastor's guilt, she said, would lead them to contemplate another possibility: Is my life-changing event just as fraudulent as the pastor who inspired it?

"There is a suspension of common sense, a refusal to put two and two together," Thompson said. "For a lot of people, this is the man who gave them the keys to a whole new way of living. They can't separate the good they received from the man himself, so they feel it would be a betrayal to turn on him now." When outsiders ratchet up criticism against an embattled pastor, members often go into battle mode, said Thompson..

"They circle the wagons to protect their guy," Thompson said. "They don't want to see, and they don't want to be made to see what 'the world' sees. They believe the world's view is false, so they form the firewall."

:::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork :::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher::  
 Founding Member

**by Nonin on Fri Jul 22, 2011 6:09 pm**

Linda said:

From the outside looking in, and hearing from those who were there.... my impression: sfzc does not have much to teach regarding ethical resolutions beyond rules, some people are still suffering, and no teacher points the way.

Oh, I would disagree, Linda. San Francisco Zen Center has gone through a myriad sangha meetings discussing ethical guidelines, standards, and proper procedures to resolve disputes over misconduct over the past few years. They have had many, many open sangha meetings where members' individual concerns have been aired and individual suffering has been addressed. They have also revamped many of their procedures, including grievance procedures. All the teachers there, such as Ryushin Paul Haller, Myogen Steve Stucky, Eijun Linda Ruth Cutts, Zenkei Blanche Hartman, Sojun Mel Weitsman, Zoketsu Norman Fischer, and many others constantly point the way to healthy sangha relationships and strict adherence to ethical guidelines that are based on the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts but are much more detailed than them.

My connections with San Francisco Zen Center started shortly after Richard Baker's misconduct became public (in 1984) and has continued to the present day. I practiced at both City Center and at Tassajara and have visited both places, as well as Green Gulch,

over the years. I've seen SFZC and the people who make it up go through an incredible amount of pain and suffering over the years. Fortunately, the organization and its members have recovered well, and SFZC has grown into a vibrant, vital, and caring organization that serves its many members and the larger community with integrity.

My students have practiced at both City Center and at Tassajara Monastery. They've all said that they treasure their time at both places. No practice place is perfect, however, and there are always things that we don't like and wish they would be changed.

Also, as you say, some people wounded deeply during the Baker years and after the explosion caused by his misconduct haven't completely healed. Perhaps they never will. And, the reverberations from the explosion greatly harmed the mahasangha at large. On balance, however, SFZC has recovered as well as and probably better than any other organization that has gone through the kind of turmoil it went through. It took a long time and a lot of hard work by a lot of people for it to do so, however. Hopefully, the organization will continue to grow in a positive direction.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by fragrant herbs on Fri Jul 22, 2011 6:27 pm**

Genjo wrote:

fragrant herbs wrote:

I wish I had not heard stories like this and worse concerning Eido Roshi, but I have.

Genjo

I wish that I had not heard anything either. When I was a Jehovah's Witness I was very happy, and I considered the people to be loving and forgiving. They shun others that do wrong or leave, and I agreed with this, thinking that those that leave are not suffering, they chose to leave, and those that did wrong and were kicked out were not repentant, and they too did not suffer. I would have liked to have stayed in that family-like cocoon. And



then when I confessed and was told that I was not repentant and then lost them and God, I suffered greatly. Now since we have computers, I have come into contact with so many that suffer due to losing family members because they are shunned by them, and this because they have only lost faith in the religion. But the innocence in believing what I first believed was so much easier.

When I joined Hinduism I thought that because these masters meditated they were always kind and loving, and I learned that they are mostly scoundrels, and then I thought that Buddhism would be better, after all they really teach peace and compassion. I have met some wonderful masters though; not that I trust any completely because you never know what really goes on.

I seem to be spending a lot of my years helping those who have been harmed by religion and suffering along with them. One thing I have found is that women who have been harmed by lamas are really afraid to speak out and say that they feel that the lama has used his powers to harm them and will do so if they really speak out. I have no idea whether that is even possible. One mentioned the touch of a lama messed up her kundalini, and I had a friend who was in Siddha Yoga who went for Shakti Pad, and I believe they touch you, but her body was beginning to feel as if it were on fire. My thoughts went to Gopi Krishna's book, *Living with Kundalini* and how he felt that he was literally burning up. I couldn't help my friend because she wouldn't listen.

It seems when it comes to desiring to become a better person, to wanting the spiritual life, it is always fraught with danger. And yet there are some people who grow up in the little church on the corner, or is that the church in the dale, who seem to be happy all their lives and who have what the Bible calls the "fruit-age of the spirit," unless i am just dreaming.

fragrant herbs

**by Linda Anderson on Fri Jul 22, 2011 6:43 pm**

Thanks Nonin, for adding balance. I am on the outside looking in, as I said. I too agree there are many wonderful teachers and programs who sincerely want the best. Apologies for leaning too far over to one side. Perhaps some people will never heal. Yet, I wonder if the ethical issue has in part been dealt with by reorganizing as a collective of good teachers. So wonder whether there can ever be personal responsibility for ethical behavior, whether it is possible, or if the wounding still influences behavior and the ability to trust. Yes, of course, many people/teachers are able to live ethically by nature.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by 1handclapping on Fri Jul 22, 2011 8:24 pm**

What were the results in those centers, SF Zen Center, and others who had such unethical roshis? Were the teachers, in the end, expelled, and were other centers internationally forewarned, so as not to pass the problem on to others? Is there anything we can do to prevent such people from just moving on to the next trusting sangha? There doesn't seem to be a hierarchy in the lineage (in Japan, or in the case of Vajrayana, India) that concerns itself with disciplinary action. Short of filing criminal charges in the (hopefully) rare instances of rape, what can be done?

On another topic, if a sangha member attaches his or her sense of healing, or of finding a precious and liberating path in life to any one teacher, such a person has not understood the Dharma. It is, after all, about non-attachment, impermanence, independent inquiry, the company of "virtuous friends", as the Buddha said, emphasis on the "virtuous". Isn't one job of the teacher to watch out for dependent personalities, and encourage them to apply Buddhist principles to further their path toward Liberation?

By the way, spiritual teachers guilty of grave misconduct may be sued for breach of fiduciary trust as counselors and members of clergy. This approach was successful in the case of Sogyal Lakar (aka: Sogyal Rinpoche) in a lawsuit against him in the 1990's. This may seem like "tough love", but in the absence of any accountability, other than possibly now at the local level, tough love seems to be the only recourse for protecting future sanghas and future victims. I would think, after seeing so many cases in two different dharma traditions, better to apply "tough love" than the "idiot compassion" that often enables these predators for years, even decades. We learn from experience.  
1handclapping

**by Nonin on Fri Jul 22, 2011 9:57 pm**

1handclapping,

Zentatsu Richard Baker was expelled from San Francisco Zen Center for his misconduct. He eventually began a small temple in California and then re-located to Europe, where he established a practice place in Germany. I believe that it is still functioning. He also established Crestone Zen Mountain Center in Colorado, which is still functioning under his guidance.

After Richard Baker was expelled from SFZC, my master, Dainin Katagiri, was asked to be interim abbot, and he was, for a year. At the end of that year, Tenshin Reb Anderson, Richard Baker's only dharma heir, was selected by the SFZC Board of Directors to be abbot. As time went on, SFZC instituted a dual abbacy, and the priests that I mentioned in my previous posts all eventually filled one of those positions. Zenkei Blanche Hartman was the first female abbot, and Eijin Linda Ruth Cutts subsequently served as a co-abbot. Currently, Ryushin Paul Haller and Myogen Steve Stucky are Co-Abbots.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

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Nonin

Global Moderator

**by christopher::: on Sat Jul 23, 2011 12:16 am**

Can anyone recommend any specific books, dharma talks or programs that offer insights into these situations, or teachers who work specifically with women (or men) who have been in an abusive relationship so as to help them to heal?

I thought i read somewhere that Joan Halifax Roshi had experienced difficulties with a teacher herself and that she frequently gets students who had suffered abuse in some way.  
 :::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by 1handclapping on Sat Jul 23, 2011 5:07 am**

This is a great question, Christopher. I've heard a number of personal stories of abuse from religious teachers (Buddhist), and in some cases, people did get therapy, but others never have, which is sad to see, because unresolved trauma continues to influence their behavior and life choices. It's been at the back of my mind that someone should start a practice or treatment center geared specifically to this unique demographic. And I

suppose there's no reason why the clientele should be limited to students of Buddhism; such a facility could clergy abuse from the whole religious spectrum. It sounds like a project that might be eligible for grants, like the centers for victims of torture.

1handclapping

**by christopher::: on Sat Jul 23, 2011 5:55 am**

Hi. I found Joan Halifax's open letter on the topic, over at Facebook. She might be a good person to contact, as many people have come to her directly over the years.

Excerpts:

"I am Founding Abbot of Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a woman, a Zen practitioner since 1965, and someone who was sexually assaulted by one of her Buddhist teachers years ago. I have been following the discussion on the AZTA listserv for many months about the Eido Shimano "case". I use the term "case" not to mean koan, but in a legalistic sense. For just as the former Israeli president has just been convicted in a court of law of rape and sexual harassment, so also is Eido Shimano vulnerable to such an indictment.

For many years, I have heard about the sexual behavior of Eido Shimano toward his female students; there has long been talk about many of the Buddhist teachers who have violated sexual boundaries with their students. Sadly, the list of Buddhist teachers who have had intercourse with their students is not short. We have also been aware of not only of teachers having sex in the dokusan room but of teachers engaging in sexual violence toward their students as well.

For those of us who are not only teachers but women, the misogyny that we have encountered when we have brought these violations to the attention of others has been often concerning. For like many rape victims, we have been seen as somehow culpable, have been ignored, criticized, or shunned.

I want to say that I am grateful and am relieved that Eido Shimano has resigned from his abbacy and the Zen Center Board, and that you have identified good, strong leaders to take over your center. We live in a time when there should be zero tolerance of the violation of professional boundaries, and most particularly sexual abuse on the part of leaders, whether they be a president of a country, a prime minister, or a minister, whether psychologist or social worker, whether monk or manager."

~~~~~

"Many of us have experienced being under the spell of a teacher or person of authority. Some of us have seen our own students caught in the trance of positive projections. But

our practice is about waking up and ending suffering, being real and being courageous in dealing with mara, and actualizing compassion, even a compassion that might seem ruthless. We have to realize that the three-fold training is clear on the matter of sex and ethics, physical abuse and sangha relationships, and the role of wisdom and compassion in relation to the three jewels. And we have to see our teachers in a totally realistic light, including their feet of clay.

I also want to say that it is not that Eido Shimano is a scapegoat for all other spiritual teachers who have violated sexual boundaries and engaging in sexually abusive (and probably addictive) behavior. I hope that by bringing this situation to the world's attention through Aitken's now-public archive, the NYTimes article, and the increasing storm of emails, blogposts, and communiques (including facebook), the sexual abuse of women by Buddhist teachers will diminish, if not end, through strong negative sanctions of those who have engaged in activities such as this."

~~~~~

"The sexual abuse of women is no small matter globally. It takes profound commitment to deal with this issue. Humbly, i feel that we as Buddhists need to clean up the scene in our own backyard, and clean it up now. We all share this karma, and we must share the correction process as well. Compassion tells us that, and we have to not only listen but as well to act. Thus these letters you are currently receiving..... Please heed them, and heed them well.

I do feel deeply about this issue since so many women have passed through my zendo diminished and damaged as a result of having been subjected to sexual boundary violations by their teachers; some have been physically abused; others have been psychologically intimidated and then forced into sex. Some women were plainly deluded and hungry for acknowledgment, and in some way, power; others were coerced, shamed, and some were threatened; others were entranced and tricked. In the end, after all is said and done, most have wanted to abandon their Buddhist practice, finding Buddhism too passive and uncaring, if not dangerous.

As a result of what I have borne witness to in others and myself, as well as bearing witness to women who have been raped in the context of war or extreme family abuse, I would suggest here that we need to actualize a compassion that is more skillful and much braver at this time. I hope you will consider that standing aside might not be the best route in terms of this situation with Eido Shimano. I hope you will be courageous and forthright and not take the road of compromise. For it has been compromise, I believe, and lack of ethical resolve that has given rise to our collective suffering in this situation, the individual suffering of the women who have been subjected to this abuse, and to the deep suffering in your sangha."

Joan Halifax  
 Founding Abbot  
 Upaya Zen Center

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by 1handclapping on Sat Jul 23, 2011 9:02 pm**

Christopher, you've performed a precious public service by finding and posting this statement. On a couple of forums where I've raised this issue, rage, denial, and verbal abuse have been the response. (this was on Buddhist forums, where I expected a compassionate response. Oh the irony!) I'm grateful to this forum for conducting a very thoughtful, civil and compassionate conversation on this topic.

Halifax says that "strong negative sanctions" are needed. What sanctions? There is no accountability in the system, we've discussed this before. The only way to impose "strong negative sanctions", aside from firing a teacher (who is free to establish a new center elsewhere and continue his predatory behavior in the new locale), the only strong negative sanctions that can be brought to bear are criminal charges. This is more clear-cut in rape cases, but in the intimidation and manipulation cases it's a little trickier. Although the lawsuit against Sogyal Lakar (aka: Sogyal Rinpoche), one of the charges was breach of fiduciary trust, and that worked. My point is not to rehash earlier posts but to say that it's easy to talk about the need for sanctions. It's another matter entirely to actually follow through, to come up with a workable strategy for achieving that. Awareness-raising is the first step, as many Buddhists still aren't aware of the problem. And supporting victims, guiding them toward therapy, but also supporting them in filing charges is key, but not easy, as some victims only want to put the incident behind them. A support network is urgently needed, and on an international scale.

A "more skillful and braver compassion" is, indeed called for. I would call it a more activist compassion with regard to this matter. But where and how do we start? I had thought that the Buddhist forums would be an ideal place to organize some sort of effort, but the issue is not tolerated on many of the forums. Ideas, anyone?

1handclapping

**by Nonin on Sat Jul 23, 2011 11:33 pm**

Rev. Kyoki Roberts, abbot of Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple and my dharma heir, is a skilled and experienced mediator and facilitator. She has founded an organization called An Olive Branch, which is dedicated to the resolution of disputes

within spiritual and non-profit communities. Here is their website home page:  
<http://www.an-olive-branch.org/about>

If you're interested, please check out the website. If you know of a Buddhist temple, monastery, or group that is having internal problems of any sort, or any other church group or non-profit organization, you might refer them to An Olive Branch.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by 1handclapping on Sun Jul 24, 2011 1:31 am**

Thank you, Nonin. The site looks interesting, I'll post it around the internet. Could you tell me what is this "three-fold training" Halifax Roshi refers to, which she says is very clear as to ethics, sangha relationships, etc.? I have often wondered if Buddhist teachers, especially those from other cultures, like the Japanese and Tibetans, go through the same ethics training as Western clergy. Could you elaborate?

1handclapping

**by Nonin on Sun Jul 24, 2011 1:59 am**

1handclapping,

I have no idea what Joan Halifax is referring to. Our Soto Zen ethical standards are rooted in the Eightfold path, and are expressed in full fruition in the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts. Copies of our temple Ethics Statement, which I'll post below, are kept on a table near our entrance with our temple brochures. All newcomers are directed to it. We have a Precept Ceremony once a month, during which we recite the Precepts and vow to take them into our lives and live according to them. We also formally vow to live according to them during Lay Initiation and Priest Ordination Ceremonies. I also talk about them and refer to them during Dharma Talks from time to time.

Here's our Ethics Statement. It's a bit long to post here, but the way that this topic thread has unfolded, I think that it's good to post it. Most all monasteries and larger temples and many small ones (such as ours) have similar statements on hand, and all who attend are encouraged to read them:

## STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

Nebraska Zen Center/Heartland Temple

### PREFACE

The intent of this statement is to nourish and protect the treasure of Sangha and to promote harmonious relationships among all its members and participants.

A compassionate standard of behavior is expected from everyone who participates in NZC activities. This standard is based on respect for each person as a unique expression of Buddha nature regardless of age, race, gender, ethnic background, appearance, sexual orientation, physical abilities, political beliefs, social class, or occupation.

### ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The principles that guide our actions as Zen Buddhist practitioners are the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts. They are:

The Three Refuges:

We take refuge in Buddha  
 We take refuge in Dharma  
 We take refuge in Sangha

The Three Pure Precepts:

To do no harm  
 To do good  
 To live to benefit all beings

The Ten Prohibitory Precepts:

A follower of the Way does not kill but rather cultivates and encourages life.

A follower of the Way does not take what is not given but rather cultivates and encourages generosity.



A follower of the Way does not misuse sexuality but rather cultivates and encourages open, honest, and acceptable relationships.

A follower of the Way does not lie but rather cultivates and encourages truthful communication.

A follower of the Way does not intoxicate self or others but rather cultivates and encourages clarity.

A follower of the Way does not slander but rather cultivates and encourages respectful speech.

A follower of the Way neither extols self nor demeans others but rather cultivates awareness of the interdependent nature of self.

A follower of the Way does not attach to anything, even the teaching, but rather cultivates mutual support and shares the dharma with all beings.

A follower of the Way does not harbor ill will but rather cultivates loving-kindness, understanding, and forgiveness.

A follower of the Way does not turn away from the Three Treasures but rather cultivates and encourages taking refuge in them.

It is our sincere intention to realign our lives continually in accord with these precepts.

Appropriate action. We aspire to relationships that are characterized by appropriate action, relationships based on trust, cooperation, openness to differences, good communication, fairness, kindness, and respect. The Sangha cultivates these qualities as the practice of keeping the precepts and developing good dharma friendships.

Inappropriate action. Inappropriate action is harmful to ourselves and others. It may include physical violence, sexual misconduct or harassment, drug and substance abuse, malicious gossip, extreme or regular displays of anger, insults or demeaning comments, and manipulative or duplicitous speech or action. Persons who encounter inappropriate actions from any member of the NZC Sangha -- including its teachers and senior instructors -- or who themselves practice such conduct, should be aware that these actions violate the spirit of the precepts and the practice of appropriate action.

Student/teacher relationships. A teacher at NZC is anyone involved in an instructional capacity. This includes the Head Priest and anyone designated by the Head Priest to serve as an instructor or mentor for newer students. This includes those giving zazen instruction, teaching Intro to Zen workshops, and leading study groups. Student/teacher relationships should be based on mutual respect, compassion, and kindness. We acknowledge the inequality inherent in such a relationship and the power issues involved.

We specifically acknowledge the great harm, both psychological and spiritual, that results from teachers becoming sexually involved with their students, both for the teacher and student involved and for the community as a whole. We, therefore, consider it unethical for a teacher to engage in sexual behavior with her or his student.

We furthermore expect all who participate at NZC to follow these guidelines:

- 1) If a teacher and/or student feel at risk of violating the above ethical principle, they should suspend their teacher-student relationship at least until they have sought counsel with a senior teacher.
- 2) It is considered a misuse of sexuality for a teacher to form a sexual relationship with a former student within three months of the termination of the student-teacher relationship.
- 3) Any teacher considering forming a sexual relationship with another NZC participant should discuss the appropriateness of the relationship with a senior teacher.

Procedures for addressing inappropriate action. We are committed to solving problems and resolving differences that may arise from inappropriate action. If a person believes that they have been inappropriately treated and seeks resolution, the following steps may be taken:

Informal Resolution. 1) The aggrieved person should directly contact the person (s) who has (have) allegedly acted inappropriately and make an effort to reach an understanding and to resolve differences. 2) If the grievance is not resolved under step 1), the aggrieved person may request a meeting with the most senior priest not included in the grievance, the President of the Board of Directors (or Vice-President, if the President is involved in the grievance), and the person who has allegedly acted inappropriately to resolve the grievance.

If the parties are unable to reconcile under steps 1) and 2), the aggrieved person may proceed to step 3):

Informal Meeting. 3) The person filing the grievance should contact the Board President or Secretary. If the President and Secretary are named in the grievance, the most senior Nebraska Zen Center Priest not named may be contacted. The person filing the grievance will provide the contact person with a written description of the alleged inappropriate action and the effort to resolve the matter informally in steps 1) and 2) above. The person who allegedly acted inappropriately shall respond to the allegation in writing to the contact person within one week. The contact person shall request a meeting with a third party trained in mediation practices to be held within four weeks of receipt of response, and shall include the person alleging the grievance and the person (s) who allegedly acted inappropriately. The mediator may contact and seek information from others who have knowledge relevant to the case under discussion. The meeting shall consist of an attempted mediation led by the mediator, and may be supplemented, if the parties agree, by a meeting with others who have knowledge relevant to the case under discussion. The mediation meeting shall result in a written statement of the position reached by the parties

in the mediation process, and this statement will be given to the contact person who originally received the grievance.

If step 3) results in a statement resolving the grievance, a copy of the statement will be kept in NZC files.

If step 3) results in a statement that resolution has not been reached, the aggrieved person may proceed to step 4).

Reconciliation Council. 4) The person filing the grievance may notify the Board of Directors that they wish to proceed with the unresolved grievance. Thereupon, the Board will form a Reconciliation Council consisting of the President and Secretary of the Board (or two other Board members if these Officers are named in the grievance), the most senior priest not named in the grievance, one person chosen by the person filing the grievance, and one person chosen by the person (s) who has allegedly acted inappropriately. After formation, The Council shall notify the concerned parties in writing, and all written records of actions heretofore filed shall be provided to the Council within two weeks of notification that they are needed. The Council shall set an appropriate date for a hearing within four weeks of receipt of the written records.

At the hearing, the Council shall hear the presentation of the person filing the grievance and the response of the person (s) who has allegedly acted inappropriately. The Council may also solicit views of other persons where that is deemed appropriate. Additional meetings may be called and may include the entire sangha, should the Council deem them necessary.

The Council shall make a finding based on the above process. The finding shall be written and shall be communicated to the person filing the grievance and the person (s) allegedly behaving inappropriately within four weeks of the completion of the reconciliation process.

The Reconciliation Council will keep written records of all meetings and findings. These shall be kept on file at Nebraska Zen Center.

Atonement. Any person who acts inappropriately is expected to make every effort to realign their conduct in accord with the precepts and to take the actions necessary to restore the harmony of the Sangha and to mitigate harm done. Such atonement is an integral part of our spiritual practice.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Each student should feel free to explore the Dharma and study the self in an environment of trust and confidentiality.

Conversations with Priests or Dharma Teachers during Dokusan and Practice Discussion are privileged under the Law, but only when made privately without the intent of further disclosure, except to other persons present in furtherance of the purpose of the communication. Personal information offered at meetings, practice events, or Sangha gatherings are not confidential.

## CONCLUSION

This statement was first issued on April 20, 1998 after being endorsed by the Board of Directors on April 19, 1998. It was amended to its present form by the Board of Directors on June 28, 1998 and re-issued on August 28, 1998. It applies to all who practice, study, and teach at NZC and shall be kept on file at the temple and freely distributed to all.  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin  
Global Moderator

**by christopher::: on Sun Jul 24, 2011 3:12 am**

Nonin wrote:

Rev. Kyoki Roberts, abbot of Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple and my dharma heir, is a skilled and experienced mediator and facilitator. She has founded an organization called An Olive Branch, which is dedicated to the resolution of disputes within spiritual and non-profit communities. Here is their website home page:  
<http://www.an-olive-branch.org/about>

If you're interested, please check out the website. If you know of a Buddhist temple, monastery, or group that is having internal problems of any sort, or any other church group or non-profit organization, you might refer them to An Olive Branch.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Really excellent.

1handclapping wrote:

Could you tell me what is this "three-fold training" Halifax Roshi refers to, which she says is very clear as to ethics, sangha relationships, etc.? I have often wondered if Buddhist teachers, especially those from other cultures, like the Japanese and Tibetans, go through the same ethics training as Western clergy. Could you elaborate?

I think the term is used more by Theravadan Buddhists. What it refers to though is common to all schools of Buddhism. It's another way of thinking about the 8 fold path.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Threefold\\_Training](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Threefold_Training)

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Ikko\_Ikkaku on Sun Jul 24, 2011 4:35 am**

christopher::: wrote:

Hi. I found Joan Halifax's open letter on the topic, over at Facebook. She might be a good person to contact, as many people have come to her directly over the years.

Nice statement by Halifax.

Has anyone really been able to reform a group or has seen a group reformed , Zen Buddhist or otherwise, where the neither the majority of the group nor the majority of the board of that group does not want to force the founding dysfunctional leader out of the picture completely?

Yes, more than ever there seem to be people within American Zen who have the desire, and the training, if not the actual experience to help a group move forward if the group is healthy enough to want to do so.

If the overwhelming majority of the practitioners of ZSS agreed that Shimano needs to be kept off the premises then they should not be afraid even if there was some doubt about proceeding without him. But that's not the problem; and it has never really been the problem. It has always been the number of dysfunction members of the sangha being placed in positions of power who support him through each misdeed small or great. Historically, the majority of the board has been unyielding to completely removing Shimano and it continues.

That's has been one of the the important problems that still seem not be well understood on these online discussions.

At least many have moved beyond public denial and privately ignoring the problems, (it used to be called "hiding the dirty underwear"). It pretty much has moved beyond blaming the messengers (it was said they have an agenda and it was one of complete self-interest), and, at long last beyond blaming the victims (the women who portrayed as evil, lustful temptresses, or that they should have known better).

So, with Eido's apparently forced retirement, purging the organization of its dysfunctional board members is the next big problem facing Zen Studies Society and anyone who has compassion and a sense of ethics who is currently is or is considering practicing in one of it's temples.

I've yet seen a solution being offered to accomplish that other than leaving or not getting involved with the group in the first place.

Some think it can be done by public embarrassment and group pressure.

I don't know if it is even possible with the support of the blindly loyal and emotionally troubled in positions of power (and I make no distinction between Shimano's Western and Japanese supporters).

Since the problem has persisted for well near 50 years, it should finally be clear that the problem has never been just about Shimano's inappropriate behaviors.

Ikko\_Ikkaku

**by christopher::: on Sun Jul 24, 2011 5:22 am**

Unfortunately (and this is just my opinion) i think only the death or permanent removal of such a strong and influential leader in a situation like this can lead to real healing. Has anyone looked into challenging his American citizenship? If he lied about any of the questions asked when he applied for naturalization that citizenship could be revoked.

#### REVOCATION OF CITIZENSHIP

"The Immigration and Naturalization Service has authority to institute either administrative or judicial proceedings to denaturalize citizens whose criminal convictions disqualified them from citizenship as a matter of law. Whether the proceedings are administrative or judicial, the INS must establish the allegations in its complaint by clear, unequivocal, and convincing evidence.

The INS has no authority to seek denaturalization if the INS examiner had discretion to find that an applicant was of good moral character, and in fact did exercise that discretion so as to find that the applicant was of good moral character, unless the INS establishes in

its complaint by clear, unequivocal, and convincing evidence either that the applicant gave false testimony with the intention of obtaining an immigration benefit or that the examiner's decision resulted from the applicant's willful misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact.

The INS may seek denaturalization if the applicant made a false oral statement under oath (regardless of whether the testimony is material) with the subjective intent of obtaining immigration benefits. Alternatively, the INS may seek denaturalization if the applicant procured naturalization by concealment or willful misrepresentation of a material fact. In either case, the INS must prove its complaint by clear, unequivocal, and convincing evidence..."

While the statutes of limitations has run out for many of Shimano's actions there may be a stronger legal case with the INS, with the large body of evidence that he may not be of "good moral character" and might have "procured naturalization by concealment or willful misrepresentation of a material fact."

I think in this case some legal movement is needed, and could be a win/win - both for the Sangha and Shimano. If his citizenship were revoked Eido Shimano would no longer be living in the vicinity of both ZSS and DBZ. This would make healing easier, like a thorn being removed from a wound. Shimano and his wife would be able to go back to Japan, get away from the scandal and properly care for their parents and ancestors' graves, which could actually be therapeutic for them both, in my opinion.

Note: If they had their ancestor's remains moved to the United States and these graves are located on the ZSS or DBZ premises this might be a key reason Shimano is so intent on having continuous access.

see: [http://blog.alientimes.org/2008/03/in-1 ... -far-side/](http://blog.alientimes.org/2008/03/in-1...-far-side/)

Some Japanese who have moved far from their natal homes have actually had their ancestors remains transferred to more conveniently located cemeteries in order to be better able to care for them during ohigan, obon (in August), New Years, and memorial days (命日).

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

by Ikko\_Ikkaku on Sun Jul 24, 2011 6:47 pm

christopher::: wrote:

Unfortunately (and this is just my opinion) i think only the death or permanent removal of such a strong and influential leader in a situation like this can lead to real healing. Has anyone looked into challenging his American citizenship? If he lied about any of the questions asked when he applied for naturalization that citizenship could be revoked.

Christopher, I used to think that change would only come with his death or incapacity, I am no longer certain.

If the organization does not really adopt new by-laws that actually change the governance (and has develops the desire and will to change for the better) the organization will never become healthy. The reigns will just be passed on from one dysfunctional group to the next (i. e. abbot, officers, and board) and just keep attracting ignorant, uninformed new sangha members and only those who are ready willing and able to live with the group's particular dysfunctions will stay. Who know if and when it will finally dies out even if really become a full blown cult which it is already being labelled by some.

Regarding citizenship, I doubt the odds would be good for re-opening that issue some 40 plus years after the fact and there isn't a political agenda of benefit to the government in doing so.

Still, you may want to ask around regarding the citizenship issue.

see: [http://blog.alientimes.org/2008/03/in-1 ... -far-side/](http://blog.alientimes.org/2008/03/in-1...-far-side/)

Some Japanese who have moved far from their natal homes have actually had their ancestors remains transferred to more conveniently located cemeteries in order to be better able to care for them during ohigan, obon (in August), New Years, and memorial days (命日).

Christopher, we know that there is a considerable number of Japanese buried at DBZ. If there is a really significant number of people who have buried their dead there, that may account for the number Japanese who with Shimano's help have self-segregated into their own sub-sangha and will in part explain why think they need to support Shimano and will never support Americans.

Of course the need to support Shimano to continue the burial grounds is nonsense; however death and respect of the dead are highly charged emotional are never rational, and are rarely amenable to rational approaches except, possibly over extended periods of time. Any effective leader in ZSS would understand these cultural needs to would need to be skilled in communications with the Japanese members of the sangha. This should not be unsurmountable for an effective, well trained abbot. Which bring up some questions



such as : Did Shimano clue Chayat in? Did he provide the inroads into the Japanese community for her? Is Chayat even attempting to establish her own channels with the Japanese members of the sangha?

With what scant evidence we have it still seems that Chayat is still seems to be unconditionally supporting Shimano and just giving lip service to things like "retirement" to the media and to those in the local and mahasangha who hold that he needs to be removed from the Zen Studies Society altogether.

As I said above, Chayat has had decades to express concern and to act regarding 50 years of Shimano's inappropriate behavior.

We should not be expressing a pollyanna-ish optimism in her and instead remain concerned that she is actually among those who are intractably dependent on Shimano, and is therefore still unconditionally support Shimano.

Ikko\_Ikkaku

**by christopher::: on Sun Jul 24, 2011 11:27 pm**

The presence of burial grounds for Japanese members at DBZ would help to explain Shimano's "attachment" to the physical locations as well as the reasons he's being supported by a small group, especially if his parents and his wife parents are buried there as well.

(I'm surprised this issue hasn't been discussed before in over 60 pages of this thread, it puts the whole situation in context.)

::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork :::  
"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
Founding Member

**by Ikko\_Ikkaku on Mon Jul 25, 2011 2:47 am**

christopher::: wrote:

The presence of burial grounds for Japanese members at DBZ would help to explain Shimano's "attachment" to the physical locations as well as the reasons he's being supported by a small group, especially if his parents and his wife parents are buried there as well.

(I'm surprised this issue hasn't been discussed before in over 60 pages of this thread, it puts the whole situation in context.)

It probably has not been raised here or elsewhere because none of the practitioners or former practitioners who spent time with him and write in the blogs never got the sense that the DBZ burial grounds were personally important to him outside the contributions they generated, and the support such activity gives him.

Again, ask around if you think you are onto something.  
Ikko\_Ikkaku

**by christopher::: on Mon Jul 25, 2011 4:49 am**

Hi. Well, I'm a complete outsider in regards to DBZ and ZSS. I live in Japan however, so I know how incredibly important this is to \*all\* Japanese Buddhists.

There has been an ongoing rift between Japan and China due to the insistence of the Japanese to pray for deceased ancestors (including war criminals) and the "Kami" of all their wars at the Yasukuni Shrine outside Tokyo. For Japanese the karma of ancestors who have "sinned" in some way can be purified by prayers and metta from the living, so they are very quick to forgive family, leaders and ancestors who they feel close to.

What you said here, if accurate, may help to explain a lot. It could also give the ZSS board a powerful bargaining tool, with the Shimanos and their Japanese supporters.

Ikko\_Ikkaku wrote:

Christopher, we know that there is a considerable number of Japanese buried at DBZ. If there is a really significant number of people who have buried their dead there, that may account for the number Japanese who with Shimano's help have self-segregated into their own sub-sangha and will in part explain why think they need to support Shimano and will never support Americans.

Of course the need to support Shimano to continue the burial grounds is nonsense; however death and respect of the dead are highly charged emotional are never rational, and are rarely amenable to rational approaches except, possibly over extended periods of time. Any effective leader in ZSS would understand these cultural needs to would need to be skilled in communications with the Japanese members of the sangha. This should not be unsurmountable for an effective, well trained abbot. Which bring up some questions such as : Did Shimano clue Chayat in? Did he provide the inroads into the Japanese community for her? Is Chayat even attempting to establish her own channels with the Japanese members of the sangha?

Not knowing what's going on I can't add much except that it's essential that the Japanese with ancestors buried at DBZ know 1) they will always have access to the grounds and 2) that essential Buddhist ceremonies will always be performed. There should be no need for Shimano to have keys or access to any location \*unless\* he has made promises to the Japanese members to pray for their ancestors on a more regular basis.

I wouldn't be surprised if there are some small Buddhist shrines tucked away in corners on the ZSS grounds as well, possibly including the parents and ancestors of the Shimanos. If there are, he will continuously feel the need to come on the grounds regularly, to pray.

Most Japanese of his generation pray for their ancestors daily, they view this as their responsibility and duty. If indeed this is the case then it could be helpful to deal with this issue separately. He can regularly conduct zazen, meet with and teach people at his apartment, but he needs to be kneeling directly in front of the grave or altar to pray for ancestors.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher::  
 Founding Member

**by Genjo on Thu Aug 11, 2011 2:09 am**

Dear all,

I want to pass on a link to an announcement from Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi, Abbot of the Zen Studies Society (ZSS) and Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ).

[http://www.daibosatsu.org/pdf/ZSSMediation\\_Site.pdf](http://www.daibosatsu.org/pdf/ZSSMediation_Site.pdf)

In this announcement she speaks of the upcoming all Sangha meeting to be held at DBZ August 26-28. This meeting will be moderated by facilitators from An Olive Branch (see: <http://www.an-olive-branch.org/about>) with the intention of providing a safe place to be heard, to heal and to express hopes for the future. One of the primary facilitators will be Barbara Gray, PhD. <b9g@smeal.psu.edu>. I spent a couple of hours with her on the phone going over events since last May, and found her to be highly intelligent, motivated, and compassionate. If you are reading this and feel you have something to offer to process of healing and recovery at ZSS, please email her with your thoughts prior to the meeting, or better yet, please consider attending yourself.

I wish I could say that I had high hopes for this meeting in NY, where all view points could be heard and the focus could be on a positive healthy future for the organization, but given the fact that Eido Roshi is still welcome on ZSS property during this time of transition (all be it highly restricted access with no teaching), I fear the organization as a whole is still too attached to the past. I fear no one who has been abused or injured by that past will be willing to participate in this upcoming meeting. We shall see.

In order to really turn a corner for a healthy future, I wish Eido Roshi would volunteer to stay away from both ZSS properties for a year or more. As he is far from willing to do so, I think it falls to the ZSS Board to insist on at least some moderate hiatus. It was because the majority of this Board would not insist on taking this step that I could no longer continue to participate as a ZSS Board member myself.

In the course of investigating Eido Roshi's ethical breaches over the years it became clear to me that in addition to having many "affairs" with students, he at times actively and aggressively pursued some of the most psychologically vulnerable and vastly younger female students.

As I have said in a previous post, "given that the power dynamic can often be great between a spiritual teacher and their students, and if it is the case that the teacher is pursuing aggressively a much younger vulnerable student, such actions are so lopsided as to border on rape. I wish I had not heard stories like this and worse concerning Eido Roshi, but I have. If they are true, and I personally believe they are, then indeed the scars from such encounters can easily last a lifetime."

As I see it, the organization bears some responsibility to address these wounds directly. Even though I suspect Eido Roshi greatly assisted many more people than he harmed; nevertheless, to move forward, I believe the ZSS administration must do more than restrict his presence on campus for healing and growth to be possible.

At the upcoming ZSS Sangha meeting, I will try to put forward the following ideas: I believe it would be wonderful if the organization one day becomes a Mecca not only for serious Zen practice and training, but a safe refuge for those who have been harmed by such abuse of authority and power. To get there, I think, 1) The Board should insist on at least a moderate hiatus of contact with Eido Roshi, 2) the organization must quickly enact more democratic bylaws, where the board is directly accountable to the practicing membership, 3) The Board should issue an open organizational apology for the ineptness of previous administrations to adequately address serial problems, 4) I would love to see ZSS actively organize workshops and seminars on and off campus to help restore and heal the sangha, especially those who have suffered the most.

Even with my expressed doubts, those who will attend this upcoming meeting will be serious about setting a positive course for the future of ZSS. Please support us as we make our best efforts in this direction. May the restorative power of True Dharma flower throughout American Zen because of our efforts.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Shusan on Thu Aug 11, 2011 5:33 pm**

Dear Genjo-

I have appreciated your developing reaction to the Shimano situation. I think you continue to show a lot of courage in your statements and actions.

One thing catches my attention in your latest note though. You say "1) The Board should insist on at least a moderate hiatus of contact with Eido Roshi."

If, as even you say, Shimano's behavior has been so completely egregious as to "border on rape" (and many would say maybe it's crossed that border - perhaps that's a completely needless distinction anyway, often used by those who would minimize all kinds of violence against women) - then why need the "hiatus" with Shimano be "moderate"? Why must it be equivocal? It is important that most of the time we shouldn't be carried away on waves of negative emotion or clinging. But if ever a situation called for some "righteous indignation" maybe this is it.

Thinking of nations that undergo revolutions, there is a long process of reconciliation by the victims of war on both sides of a conflict. This does not include those at the top who perpetrated the worst crimes. Authoritarian leaders are thrown out and even prosecuted. There is a clean break. The decks have to be cleared, so new leadership can establish a new chapter. New rules have to be written, totally new ways of relating and being.

I think Shimano should be cut off. Pay him his pension, but cut him off. It is clear that he has no ability to admit what he's done, or even recognize it. He is like a creeping vine, just looking for any nook or crevice where he can start to spread again. In time I'm sure he thinks he can work his way back in, lurking around and biding his time, and be right back where he was - as you've said, the "kindly old grandfather", loved and respected. The roots need to be cut off. There simply is no real future for the ZSS if this doesn't happen, in my opinion.

One problem is that there is no parent organization here - it would be better if the Rinza school was in some position to just say "Right! We are taking this temple over, installing

an impeccable teacher, and reorganizing the whole business, whether everyone likes it or not." Of course this is an impossibility, for numbers of reasons. Without a parent (and Shimano's hand-picked heir can't be that), these Dharma children are left wandering around squabbling and equivocating and whining and whimpering. The best are surely just leaving to lick wounds and find better alternatives. Or not coming in the first place.

There isn't another kind of organization in the world today that would find out their head has a 40+ year history of sexual dysfunction and abuse of members and still be playing footsy with him.

I don't know how, after everything that has been revealed, this situation continues to limp along with half measures and politic statements, still always thanking Shimano and hoping for reconciliation. Yank the tooth already!

With respect.  
Shusan

**by Genjo on Fri Aug 12, 2011 2:48 am**

Shusan wrote:

...

If, as even you say, Shimano's behavior has been so completely egregious as to "border on rape" (and many would say maybe it's crossed that border - perhaps that's a completely needless distinction anyway, often used by those who would minimize all kinds of violence against women) - then why need the "hiatus" with Shimano be "moderate"? Why must it be equivocal? It is important that most of the time we shouldn't be carried away on waves of negative emotion or clinging. But if ever a situation called for some "righteous indignation" maybe this is it.

....

I believe we all are changing and nothing is constant, least of all our outward nature; our true nature remains forever untarnished. Even if seeing a change in one's outward nature is highly unlikely in this lifetime, we are all on the path of evolution and growing maturity. I don't believe that punishment leads to growth, but I do believe in saying "No" and I do believe in a "safe" place to practice and train. To exclude Eido Roshi from the premises will be a bit like putting him in prison; however, I don't believe in life imprisonment nor the death penalty. Frankly, I don't think much of anything that includes the word "righteous." It is clear to me that Eido Roshi will never teach again; it is also clear that he will always be the founding abbot, and that I will always owe him a debt of gratitude. I do hold out the hope that the day will come when we can freely celebrate the gifts he has given on ZSS property, never ignoring or covering up the harm he has done. At the moment, we are a long way from this day. So much work must first be done.

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Fri Aug 12, 2011 3:27 am, edited 1 time in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Carol on Fri Aug 12, 2011 3:16 am**

Genjo wrote:

Shusan wrote:

...

If, as even you say, Shimano's behavior has been so completely egregious as to "border on rape" (and many would say maybe it's crossed that border - perhaps that's a completely needless distinction anyway, often used by those who would minimize all kinds of violence against women) - then why need the "hiatus" with Shimano be "moderate"? Why must it be equivocal? It is important that most of the time we shouldn't be carried away on waves of negative emotion or clinging. But if ever a situation called for some "righteous indignation" maybe this is it.

....

I believe we all are changing and nothing is constant, least of all our outward nature; our true nature remains forever untarnished. Even if seeing a change in one's outward nature is highly unlikely in this lifetime, we are all on the path of evolution and growing maturity. I don't believe that punishment leads to growth, but I do believe in saying "No" and I do believe in a "safe" place to practice and train. To exclude Eido Roshi from the premises will be like putting him in prison; however, I don't believe in life imprisonment nor the death penalty. Frankly, I don't think much of anything that includes the word "righteous." It is clear to me that Eido Roshi will never teach again; it is also clear that he will always be the founding abbot, and that I will always owe him a debt of gratitude. I do hold out the hope that the day will come when we can freely celebrate the gifts he has given on ZSS property, never ignoring or covering up the harm he has done. At the moment, we are a long way from this day. So much work must first be done.

Genjo

Thank you, Genjo, for all you have done and continue to do, and for speaking up so forthrightly. Also, I agree with you ... about the word righteous, and about punishment,

and about safe practice places, and about gratitude even for those who have erred mightily (as I have), and about the possibility of redemption/growth which I never will write off for anyone.

I'm grateful for the large container that you are and allow in others.  
Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by Shusan on Fri Aug 12, 2011 8:24 pm**

I think the point in my post that is perhaps being missed, the thing I was trying to emphasize, is it appears from the outside, from all the information being disseminated and discussed by Genjo first and foremost, that Eido Shimano hasn't yet fully acknowledged, much less atoned for, abusive acts toward many, many different women over many, many years, and how dysfunctional this made the lives of many people, not just said women. So the posture of Genjo - so critical of the ZSS at this point that he's left the organization from pressure apparently internal and external - this stance that the answer to the situation is to have simply a "moderate hiatus" is frankly, to my mind, confounding.

I am sorry if my use of the word "righteous", which I used provisionally saying that this is not normally a productive mind state, caused the rest of my words to otherwise be misconstrued. To reiterate: Genjo himself said that not only is there substantial evidence that has been made public about Shimano's abuses, but that he is privy to even more, private accounts of not one, not two, but numbers more actions he likens to rape.

For an organization to move forward with it's formative leader so compromised, and merely enter a "moderate" waiting period where there is the expectation of his eventual return, is to me counterproductive - psychologically, practically, politically, and institutionally. And quite possibly legally (another issue I know Genjo has warned the ZSS about himself.)

Nonin at the top of this page mentions the SFZC situation, and how Richard Baker was unequivocally turned out. [I would just correct him to say I believe Baker had a sangha in New Mexico briefly, not California.] While this was painful, ugly at times, and not as gracefully handled as maybe possible, it actually cleared a path for a radical restructuring of the organization that I think led to a much stronger institution in the long run, and eventually there was reconciliation.

I only speak for myself - thinking that there might be many out here in the larger Mahasangha and beyond who would concur - thinking that the best thing for the ZSS as simply a human organization, Dharmic issues notwithstanding, is to break from Shimano and rebuild, without his "return" looming over everything. The kind of equivocating that



"he's done more good than bad" is just another kind of denial, or deferral. I don't think the ZSS should act out of any idea of "punishment." I think they should act like a professional organization with the thought of what is best for its members and integrity as an institution. As I said, I can't imagine any other organization in America TODAY (not historically) whose leader is found to be a basically unrepentant (by Genjo's account) apparently totally compulsive serial abuser of women, who would be talking about having a brief "hiatus" before he was allowed back to participate in the leadership of that organization (and one can't imagine him acting in any other capacity than authoritative). But, hey, this might just be me.

Finally, just to reiterate, it's not about forgiveness or basic compassion; it's about institutional responsibility and integrity. I think the conflating of these kinds of issues that's leading to a lot of this confusion. I just feel thankful that I am simply here observing, and not in the midst of it. It seems like a very painful and difficult period, and I wish everyone well. Including Eido Shimano.

Shusan

**Page 66**

**by Genjo on Fri Aug 12, 2011 10:20 pm**

Shusan wrote:

As I said, I can't imagine any other organization in America TODAY (not historically) whose leader is found to be a basically unrepentant (by Genjo's account) apparently totally compulsive serial abuser of women, who would be talking about having a brief "hiatus" before he was allowed back to participate in the leadership of that organization (and one can't imagine him acting in any other capacity than authoritative). But, hey, this might just be me.

Dear Shusan,

I didn't say Eido Roshi should take a "brief hiatus" from coming on campus, I said AT LEAST a moderate hiatus, and I certainly never implied any kind of return to leadership or teaching. Eido Roshi is fully retired and must remain retired from all leadership or teaching for me to have anything to do with the organization. I have not left the organization precisely because the Board is united that Eido Roshi will never again have leadership or teaching responsibilities at ZSS. However, it is my position deep healing will not be possible and that new growth will be severely hindered if Eido Roshi isn't prohibited from being on campus entirely, and here the majority of the board and I disagree. It would be simplest to say that he would be forever banned. However, forever is a long time and I can at least imagine sufficient change in the organization and Eido

Roshi that some future rapprochement becomes possible. For example, if the other goals I outlined above were all accomplished and there was a believable shift in Eido Roshi's position and understanding about his history, then the possibility of some minimal rapprochement should not be excluded.

The important point that I don't think you are hearing is that I too think Eido Roshi's exclusion from coming on campus is necessary. I don't see how the organization will do anything but limp along without this step. I felt so strongly and so estranged from the majority of the board on this point, that the only recourse left to me was to leave the board and publicly make a case for this position. Despite Eido Roshi's September 2010 apology, "I would like to acknowledge the pain and unnecessary suffering you went through in your hearts due to my faults. I have a profound feeling of remorse for my actions." he has since implied that this apology was forced and said in my presence that "if I did not accept the advances of these women, worse karma would be created than by accepting their overtures." First of all, there is a mountain of evidence that more often than not he made the first advances, secondly his overall lack of understanding of the harm he has done is nearly inconceivable. Furthermore, one of the believable stories I've heard, includes a woman who says in the 80's she was plied with alcohol and then forced into having sexual relations with him. Given known facts and mountains of circumstantial evidence that have piled up over decades, there is no way to justify the fact that Eido Roshi still has rooms reserved for his use on both properties, and in my mind he should be excluded from setting foot on either campus. I hope with his exclusion and other good efforts of the organization that the women who were manipulated or abused one day soon feel safe enough to give their first person accounts. I want to hear them, I want the organization to hear them, I want them to have a chance to find some closure and be fully affirmed that it was not their fault.

With a grieving heart,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Pedestrian on Fri Aug 12, 2011 10:29 pm**

Gassho, Genjo, for this and other posts in this topic. In sharing so openly your grieving heart, this newcomer to Zen is learning some unexpected lessons from this sordid, disappointing situation. Again, gassho.

Pedestrian

Chris Amirault

Pedestrian

**by christopher::: on Sat Aug 13, 2011 1:01 am**

I also wish to extend deep gratitude and encouragement for all your efforts, Genjo. It takes courage, compassion, equanimity and wisdom to really listen to people who have suffered, to face cruel realities and then work together to transform and heal "our grieving hearts" - to find something deeper and beneficial there.

A recent exchange between Ted and Bob in the discussion "Superstition" vs "realism" that seems to relate to what we're discussing here (which may very well be the primary work of bodhisattvas)...

Ted Biringer wrote:

Bob Skank wrote:

Hindu and Buddhist adepts, it is said, awakened, fully realized, and enlightened beings, master the "siddhi," the magical powers and mystical gifts of invisibility, clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, telekinesis, teleportation, metamorphosis, levitation, flight, divination, prophecy, immunization, invincibility, reincarnation, rejuvenation, and immortality.

Even more.

By their wisdom, knowledge, skill, faith, renunciation, selflessness, aspiration, austerity, discipline, devotion, compassion, practice, and prayer they become supermen. It is said that in unknown realms there are untold trillions of them, Buddhist angels, Heavenly hosts faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound.

They did not and could not prevent WW1.

Nor Nanking.

They did not and could not prevent WW2.

Nor Auschwitz.

Nor Hiroshima.

They did not and could not enlighten Pol Pot.

Nor save Tibet.

They did not and could not prevent my neighbor in his driveway one summer from drenching his wife with gasoline.

From igniting her.

Fire.

How she burned!

"How does it feel, bitch?" he yelled.

Mysticism—

The siddhi—

Eh—

Not interested.

Hello Bob,

Thank you for your comment.

Perhaps your understanding of enlightenment and siddhi and Buddha, etc. has its source in a different language than the one I am familiar with.

For instance, here is what I understand the Heart Sutra to be saying:

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, practicing deep Prajna Paramita

“Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva” is an Old Grandmother that has become intensely aware of how newborn babies convulse when their limbs are hacked off with machetes.

“Practicing deep Prajna Paramita” is personally resolving to make certain that not one single being will ever again be forced to watch his children raped and murdered.

clearly saw that all five skandhas are empty, transforming anguish and distress.

“Clearly saw that all five skandhas are empty” means seeing that each of the five skandhas (form, sensation, perception, mental reaction, and consciousness) is Real Existence.

“Transforming anguish and distress” means that anguish and distress are transformed from temporal abstract ideas into Real Existence.

Shariputra, form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form;

“Shariputra” is the person that this teaching is addressed to, i.e. Old Grandmothers who are personally resolved to abolishing cluster bombs.

“Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form” points out the fact that cancer is no other than Real Existence, Real Existence no other than multiple sclerosis.

form is exactly emptiness, emptiness exactly form;

“Form is exactly emptiness, emptiness exactly form” says that a bayonet through the lung is exactly Real Existence, Real Existence is exactly a baby in a garbage can.

sensation, perception, mental reaction, consciousness are also like this.

“Sensation, perception, mental reaction, consciousness are also like this” explains that the other four, of the five skandhas, are also like form. That is, the sensation of being skinned alive is exactly Real Existence. The perception of a head crushed in a vice is exactly Real Existence. The mental reaction of terror while undergoing water torture is exactly Real Existence. The consciousness that the mutilated body parts on the ground are your family is exactly Real Existence.

... As this may be a bit off topic, you can read the rest here  
<http://flatbedsutra.com/flatbedsutrazenblogger/?p=395> if you like - but perhaps this is enough to get the gist of it.

Peace,  
 Ted.

Bob Skank wrote:  
 Very nice, Ted, thank you! Peace—

Metta Sutta

This is what should be done by one who is skilled in goodness  
 And who knows the path of peace:

Let them be able and upright, straightforward and gentle in speech,  
 Humble and not conceited, contented and easily satisfied.  
 Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.  
 Peaceful and calm, and wise and skilful,  
 not proud and demanding in nature.

Let them not do the slightest thing that the wise would later reprove.

They should wish:

In gladness and in safety  
 May all beings be at ease.  
 Whatever living beings there may be,  
 Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,  
 The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,  
 The seen and the unseen,  
 Those living near and far away,  
 Those born and to-be-born,  
 May all beings be at ease!

Let none deceive another, or despise any being in any state,  
 Let none through anger or ill-will wish harm upon another.

Even as a mother protects with her life her child, her only child,  
 So with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings,  
 Radiating kindness over the entire world,  
 Spreading upwards to the skies, and downwards to the depths,  
 Outwards and unbounded, freed from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down,  
 Free from drowsiness, one should sustain this recollection.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma ::::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork :::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Kobutsu on Sat Aug 13, 2011 4:53 am**

I wrote an essay back in September 2003 and shared it in confidence with Roko Sherry Chayat who advised me not to publish it, warning me that if I published it, it would damage my reputation. I had lost the document until this afternoon when I found a copy on an archive disk made from a hard drive of an old computer that crashed six years ago. I have put it up in html format and it has been added it to the archive in pdf format.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/html/inkastinkadoo.html>

Kobutsu

by Gregory Wonderwheel on Sat Aug 13, 2011 7:27 am

Genjo wrote:

Dear all,

<snipped>

As I have said in a previous post, "given that the power dynamic can often be great between a spiritual teacher and their students, and if it is the case that the teacher is pursuing aggressively a much younger vulnerable student, such actions are so lopsided as to border on rape. I wish I had not heard stories like this and worse concerning Eido Roshi, but I have. If they are true, and I personally believe they are, then indeed the scars from such encounters can easily last a lifetime."

<snipped>

Genjo, I have great admiration and respect for how you walk the razor's edge on this issue. Your communications have always expressed the primary stance on sunyata in the context of immanent humanity. It is so hard for us to remember that people are not just either one of "the good guys" or one of "the bad guys," but just one of us. This is extremely difficult for many people to accept and understand and especially for those who are outside the way of Zen; which reminds me of the koan "One Outside the Way Asks Buddha," Case 32 of the Gateless Checkpoint (Wumen Guan, Mumonkan). As Wumen wrote in the ode to this case:

Walk on the edge of a sword;

Run on silky ice;

Do not stroll up the stair steps.

When hanging from the precipice, let go your hands.

Sometimes we're walking on the edge of the sword and sometimes we're running on the slippery ice. Who hasn't felt like that?

For those who don't know, "going up the stair steps" is a reference to seeing the Emperor and walking up the stairs to the throne. Its not such a good idea to stroll up those stairs with a lacksidical inattentive attitude or you might lose your head literally. On the other hand when hanging from the precipice there's no reason to hold back either.

I think by sharing your personal experience and insights of your journey with Eido Roshi so honestly that no one can argue that you haven't fully lived up to Wumen's admonition in this verse.

Many bows.

\_/\\_

Gregory Tenryo

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel  
Global Moderator

**by Gregory Wonderwheel on Sat Aug 13, 2011 8:26 am**

Shonin wrote:

Ihandclapping wrote:

Any insights as to why people do stick with scandalous pastors would be appreciated, thank you.

Attachment. People become emotionally wedded to their pastor/teacher/lama/guru - their self-esteem and sense of meaning and purpose become dependent on the pastor/teacher/lama and the esteem that he or she is held in. If that esteem is challenged, they experience uncomfortable insecurity and cognitive dissonance. It's less painful to rewrite the truth, rationalise any issues away and otherwise deceive oneself than face up to the mismatch between cherished ideas and reality.

"Emotionally wedded" is also known by the more technical terms "projection" and "rapport." It is a very profound question that points in all the 10 directions and the very complexity of it makes people recoil with simplistic conclusions.

Our "self esteem and sense of meaning" is, horizontally speaking, connected to all our social networks of identity from family, to friends, community, and nation, and, vertically speaking, connected to the deepest currents in the ocean of mind known as bodhisattvas or archetypes.

All these horizontal and vertical dimensions of our karma are as complex as the dna sequence or the interconnectedness of the trillions of neurons of our brains.

In the horizontal dimension the "why" has to do with all the dependencies of our self-image and identity that we grasp at to give our selves definition. In many ways it is better to have a very painful identity than confront the fear of having a worthless identity. Here the image of the "scandalous" pastor is in the eyes of those who would judge but for those who are loyal to the person to whom they experienced the rapture of rapport, the scandal only makes the bond firmer as the pastor is transformed and becomes a transformational image.



In the vertical dimension it is not the self-esteem that is at issue as much as self-existence, the very fear of non existing as an identity at all. In this context any identity, even a self-image built upon the sense of worthlessness becomes worthwhile as an alternative to the fear of having no self-image. We fear falling into emptiness as the great void of nothingness in which we no longer exist. Here the scandalous pastor reinforces the belief that "falling" is survivable. Though this belief is distorted about what it means to really "fall" because that fall is not the fall of the koans that say "he fell into great awakening." No this is a fall that is caught before it drops body and drops mind, before the person discovers the true freedom of falling through the bottom of the bucket. But in that brief fall is the intimation of the great fall that is there for all of us. and in the image of the fallen pastor we can comiserate with feeling that we are together in the bottom of the bucket with the dregs and have at least saved ourselves from falling through the bottom while being satisfied at having had a little taste of what the free fall is like.

The glory of Zen is in the teaching that it is okay to fall through the bottom of the bucket, to fall into emptiness and nothingness, because that is how we fall into great realization and great love.

The "fallen pastor" is actually a demon who is really a bodhisattva in demonic disguise encouraging us to let go with both hands and truly fall all the way. Not by taking up a new "scandalous" identity, but by falling into no-identity to realize our true identity. It is only by seeing the humanity of the fallen pastor that we can disengage our projection (whether positive or negative projection) and then we can see that the demon we projected onto the fallen pastor is our own inner demon and in that recognition the demon is transformed or revealed to be our own inner bodhisattva leading us on to confront our own delusions of "good and evil," "profane and holy," "right and wrong," "holding and renouncing," etc..

At best I can only sketch like a charicature a little of this process that in the details is entirely unique for each of us.

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel  
Global Moderator

**by christopher::: on Sat Aug 13, 2011 8:56 am**

Gregory Wonderwheel wrote:

The glory of Zen is in the teaching that it is okay to fall through the bottom of the bucket, to fall into emptiness and nothingness, because that is how we fall into great realization and great love.

The "fallen pastor" is actually a demon who is really a bodhisattva in demonic disguise encouraging us to let go with both hands and truly fall all the way. Not by taking up a new "scandalous" identity, but by falling into no-identity to realize our true identity. It is only by seeing the humanity of the fallen pastor that we can disengage our projection (whether positive or negative projection) and then we can see that the demon we projected onto the fallen pastor is our own inner demon and in that recognition the demon is transformed or revealed to be our own inner bodhisattva leading us on to confront our own delusions of "good and evil," "profane and holy," "right and wrong," "holding and renouncing," etc..

At best I can only sketch like a caricature a little of this process that in the details is entirely unique for each of us.

Hi Gregory. I agree that at some level demons may actually be bodhisattvas in demonic disguise. But in many cases this is not something people are going to realize until they first experience a great deal of suffering and then out of that begin to heal and forgive. This can take a lifetime (or more) to unravel. In the case of Eido Shimano for decades the greatest challenge was not seeing thru his demonic disguise, but the one of "enlightened" Zen master that the demon has been hiding behind.

Still now he clings to that. It's going to be the very rare individual who can see past those two layers.

Kobutsu wrote:

I wrote an essay back in September 2003 and shared it in confidence with Roko Sherry Chayat who advised me not to publish it, warning me that if I published it, it would damage my reputation. I had lost the document until this afternoon when I found a copy on an archive disk made from a hard drive of an old computer that crashed six years ago. I have put it up in html format and it has been added to the archive in pdf format.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/html/inkastinkadoo.html>

Thank for posting this, Kobutsu. We hear so much from Westerners at ZSS, but not much from Japanese members. I think a deeper understanding of what is going on with the Shimanos and their Japanese supporters might be helpful. I haven't looked at everything in your archive, but have any Japanese Sangha members stepped forward at any time to complain about Shimano and share their perspective on what has unfolded-- or are they a tight-knit group that backs the Shimano's without questioning?

Are all the accusations of sexual harrassment from Western women?

It could well be that the intolerance, cultural elitism and racism that you noticed has indeed served to enable and embolden Shimano roshi. I've lived in Japan for about 20 years and while my wife and her family are Japanese, and I have Japanese friends, I still feel its difficult to get really open communication going across the two cultures, unless you forge one-to-one relationships that span years and go deep.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by Shodo on Sat Aug 13, 2011 2:32 pm**

I am copy/pasting this on behalf of Olivia - from genkaku's blog.

Genjo said

"I hope with his exclusion and other good efforts of the organization that the women who were manipulated or abused one day soon feel safe enough to give their first person accounts. I want to hear them, I want the organization to hear them, I want them to have a chance to find some closure and be fully affirmed that it was not their fault."

Dear Genjo,

I have known for a long time that "it's not my fault". The person who needs to know "it's not my fault" is Eido Shimano and board members that support him in stunningly unhealthy ways. This would put many issues to rest within the Sangha and remove from them emotional burdens they should not have to carry - which may happen in this upcoming meeting at DBZ. I don't mean to make it sound as if they are children but it's the responsibility of leadership to create a reasonably safe place of practice.

Actually, it's for Shimano's own sake as well. In an ironic twist I might say "for the sake of the Dharma" which was the line given to me when he asked me to lie for him. As I once wrote in a letter, I hope that some day Shimano will explain to us what that Dharma is that requires the dishonesty and manipulation of others.

I once heard a story that in Samoa (I think) when a person has been harmed there is an option for the person impacted by the harm to be served by the offender until the offender genuinely feels the unique and personal suffering they inflicted. (yes, inflicted). Then and only then are they free to end that bondage.

I believe that the spirit of this is what you are trying to say. It's an interesting concept and approach to healing, and one worth thinking about more fully. Eido Shimano's removal is

based on the tangible reasons of his own denial and continued deceitful manipulations AND also the lack of genuine empathy and compassion. Clear and Clean.

I'm right now imagining the line that would be forming if the Samoan form of restorative justice were put in place for Shimano. Then again my present community of friends may be different from yours. Nevertheless it's an interesting concept for deciding why he leaves without visitations, what he is to do in the meantime, and when on the mysterious timeline he is invited back to ZSS.

As Genkaku has said on his blog ... just noodling ... but I do like it.

Olivia

ps - I've never been able to get an account on ZFI, so if someone would please copy this in over there I would appreciate it.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides nowhere.

The Stranger: The Dude abides nowhere... I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Genjo on Sat Aug 13, 2011 5:55 pm**

Shodo wrote:

I am copy/pasting this on behalf of Olivia - from genkaku's blog.

Genjo said

"I hope with his exclusion and other good efforts of the organization that the women who were manipulated or abused one day soon feel safe enough to give their first person accounts. I want to hear them, I want the organization to hear them, I want them to have a chance to find some closure and be fully affirmed that it was not their fault."

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Actually, it's for Shimano's own sake as well. In an ironic twist I might say "for the sake of the Dharma" which was the line given to me when he asked me to lie for him. As I

once wrote in a letter, I hope that some day Shimano will explain to us what that Dharma is that requires the dishonesty and manipulation of others.

....

Olivia

ps - I've never been able to get an account on ZFI, so if someone would please copy this in over there I would appreciate it.

Hello Olivia,

Hopefully, whatever trouble you are having signing on to ZFI will soon be resolved and at the very least you can read my response as a guest.

I couldn't agree with you more, and indeed when I said, "fully affirmed" that being approached, taken advantage of, manipulated or abused by Eido Roshi was not your fault, I meant being fully affirmed by the ZSS Board and wider ZSS sangha (and ideally perhaps one day by Eido Roshi himself).

I don't know if you gave a first person account of your experience to the ZSS Ethics Committee or the Faith Trust Institute, but if you did not feel well heard or affirmed by the experience I would definitely like to know about it. If you have not given a first person account of your experience and wish to share it with me, I would be honored to receive it, by email, phone, or video Skype. If you wish to talk further, please send me a private message here at ZFI and we can work out the details of further communication.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Gregory Wonderwheel on Sat Aug 13, 2011 7:39 pm**

Kobutsu wrote:

I wrote an essay back in September 2003 and shared it in confidence with Roko Sherry Chayat who advised me not to publish it, warning me that if I published it, it would damage my reputation. I had lost the document until this afternoon when I found a copy on an archive disk made from a hard drive of an old computer that crashed six years ago. I have put it up in html format and it has been added to the archive in pdf format.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/html/inkastinkadoo.html>

I enjoyed reading that. Very touching and heart-felt. From Columbus the Conquistador to Columbus the great discoverer is quite a journey in myth making. It is amazing how this man who brought the old world with him and transplanted it with such violent vengeance is now called the discoverer of the new world. Not even in his dreams.

Also it is touching to hear your poignant story about being caught unawares and losing your "cool." That's exactly how it goes, and we defend our self-image by telling ourselves that our detractors are "completely out of their minds" while we are concerned about how we look in front of others and what they are thinking of us.

On a lighter note and in remembrance of the social glue of my mom playing these records as I grew up, and since there is great emphasis in the article about admitting one's errors, would you admit that it was an error not to give credit to the inspiration of Jimmy Durante (February 10, 1893 -- January 29, 1980) for the great pun in the title "Inka-Stinka-Doo"? I fear only those of us crusty enough with age would get the reference to the Great Schnozzola with the Great Schnozzle.

There is a subtle relevance of this song to this topic, but it is probably in my own mind so I won't trumpet it. Or as Jimmy said, "Who wants to find a 1000 stockings in the bathroom?"

To return to a serious note,  
Kobutsu Malone wrote:

What Eido has dreamed of as the flowering of Rinzai Zen in the West will soon fade away. His arrogance in thinking that he can somehow magically transform Americans into pseudo-Japanese will bear bitter fruit for it lacks what he desires most from his students but is most unwilling to give -- respect.

All dreams fade away, but Zen of course will not fade away. The robes and hats of Eido Roshi's particular dream will be replaced by other robes and hats as we dream along together row-row-rowing down the stream.

\_/\\_  
Gregory  
天驢

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (一乘) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel  
Global Moderator

**by Gregory Wonderwheel on Sat Aug 13, 2011 8:01 pm**

christopher::: wrote:

Hi Gregory. I agree that at some level demons may actually be bodhisattvas in demonic disguise. But in many cases this is not something people are going to realize until they first experience a great deal of suffering and then out of that begin to heal and forgive. This can take a lifetime (or more) to unravel. In the case of Eido Shimano for decades the greatest challenge was not seeing thru his demonic disguise, but the one of "enlightened" Zen master that the demon has been hiding behind.

Still now he clings to that. It's going to be the very rare individual who can see past those two layers.

Hi Christopher:::,

My point is not about "seeing thru his demonic disguise" because the disguise is entirely ours, not his. The effective core of the disguise is in our projecting it onto a "him" or "her." Likewise, the demon "hiding behind" the image of "enlightened Zen master" is also our own projection hiding behind our own projection, and the hiding is exactly able to continue hiding because we continue to project it onto another when both "the Zen master" and "the demon" are self-images of our own mind.

For example, when we bow going into the sanzen room for dokusan, to whom are we bowing? If we think that there is someone else there who is not our own mind to whom we are bowing, then something remains hidden. And if we think we are bowing to ourself, then something is hidden. But still, if we were not to bow, what about that? Again, something remains hidden. An open mind is easy to come by as we are all born that way, but not so easy to live by.

\_/|\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel  
Global Moderator

**by christopher::: on Sun Aug 14, 2011 1:17 am**

Hi Gregory. I do think i understand your point, and have had glimpses of this sort. But also disagree that "the disguise is entirely ours, not his. The effective core of the disguise is in our projecting it onto a "him" or "her." Likewise, the demon "hiding behind" the

image of "enlightened Zen master" is also our own projection hiding behind our own projection, and the hiding is exactly able to continue hiding because we continue to project it onto another when both "the Zen master" and "the demon" are self-images of our own mind."

In the case of Eido Shimano it seems that he has believed (or wishes to believe) a certain mythology about "himself" and actively seeks to share that myth (illusion) with others. The story after story shared here seems to point to a central deluded character who has conned hundreds, seduced them into believing his personal delusions and then participating in his decades long charade.

Maybe blaming Shimano alone goes too far but at the very least the whole thing seems to be a co-created projection with Eido's delusions, deceits and motivations residing at the core, not something "entirely ours, not his."

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
Founding Member

**by Tenshin on Sun Aug 14, 2011 6:40 am**

#### REVOCAION OF CITIZENSHIP

"The Immigration and Naturalization Service has authority to institute either administrative or judicial proceedings to denaturalize citizens whose criminal convictions disqualified them from citizenship as a matter of law. Whether the proceedings are administrative or judicial, the INS must establish the allegations in its complaint by clear, unequivocal, and convincing evidence.

The INS has no authority to seek denaturalization if the INS examiner had discretion to find that an applicant was of good moral character, and in fact did exercise that discretion so as to find that the applicant was of good moral character, unless the INS establishes in its complaint by clear, unequivocal, and convincing evidence either that the applicant gave false testimony with the intention of obtaining an immigration benefit or that the examiner's decision resulted from the applicant's willful misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact.

The INS may seek denaturalization if the applicant made a false oral statement under oath (regardless of whether the testimony is material) with the subjective intent of obtaining immigration benefits. Alternatively, the INS may seek denaturalization if the applicant procured naturalization by concealment or willful misrepresentation of a material fact. In either case, the INS must prove its complaint by clear, unequivocal, and convincing evidence..."



Given the attention this case is generating with certain authorities, I would not be surprised to see this as being the outcome. Unfortunately, ZSS, by its continued inability to hold Tai Shimano responsible for his actions, brings this possibility closer to reality by the day. As such, by their own actions they are effectively making his future in the United States quite tenuous.

peace.

Tenshin

**by Genjo on Sun Aug 14, 2011 8:33 pm**

christopher::: wrote:

Hi Gregory. I do think i understand your point, and have had glimpses of this sort. But also disagree that "the disguise is entirely ours, not his. The effective core of the disguise is in our projecting it onto a "him" or "her." Likewise, the demon "hiding behind" the image of "enlightened Zen master" is also our own projection hiding behind our own projection, and the hiding is exactly able to continue hiding because we continue to project it onto another when both "the Zen master" and "the demon" are self-images of our own mind."

In the case of Eido Shimano it seems that he has believed (or wishes to believe) a certain mythology about "himself" and actively seeks to share that myth (illusion) with others. ...

Christopher, I think you and Gregory are both "right." I also think Kobutsu's analysis in <http://www.shimanoarchive.com/html/inkastinkadoo.html> on the whole is pretty darn good. However, I like the word "debt," as in a debt to my teachers and training that goes beyond respect and gratitude. For example, as I see it, Rinzai and the best that has come through the teachers I have associated with, exhort me "not to be deluded by others," not even them. To requite my debt to them I must be as true as I can to this dictate. Fortunately, my teachers would not settle for less and insisted that through practice and training that we learn to have faith in our own insight, while always doubting and diving deeper.

Perhaps this is the real reason why four out of the five of Eido Roshi's "Dharma Heirs" are no longer closely associated with him. However, I suspect he thinks all of us are "Dharma Errors." I would like to think I have no attachment to either designation, but that's probably not completely true; let's just say, "not yet."

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Mon Aug 15, 2011 6:52 am, edited 1 time in total.  
Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist  
and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Olivia on Mon Aug 15, 2011 3:10 am**

The login problem appears to be solved.

Genjo,

For now lets keep our communications open and above board. It may be more useful that way. However, thank you for the offer to talk privately.

Being “fully affirmed” would certainly mean to me being heard and receiving apologies but ONLY if they are accompanied by paths of action that have removed the potentials for more abuse. ZSS is just not there yet – from my perspective, and apparently many others.

To answer your question, I talked directly to Rev. Marie Fortune for close to one hour and gave her permission to give a summary of my story but not my name. I choose that, rather than going to the ethics committee, because there were unresolved issues regarding Eido Shimano’s resignation, a very distressing result for a female “victim” who made a sincere attempt to communicate with the ethics committee (it included being invited to meet with Shimano at DBZ), and members of the board who have a long history of enabling Eido Shimano and generally writing people out of history. This did not bode well.

Genjo, I would like to step over this mode of communication that offers exhaustingly familiar litanies to you. It must be tremendously difficult. My part is difficult too. I have a long-term view of seeing exhaustingly familiar patterns replay again and again and I see them in the makings of the upcoming meeting with The Olive Branch. It’s simply not the responsibility of students to resolve the burdens that ZSS leadership has abdicated in the past – for 40 years - or the present. The ramifications are way too serious and way too complicated, and the students present will not include direct victims like me or all the people who threw up their hands and walked away.

So what to do? I’ve written a part of my story along with some comments that I have considered being read at this upcoming meeting either by you or by (preferably) Roko. I

don't know enough about the format or the questions coming from the inner Samoan Circle to have a good feel for it. I'm also not terribly thrilled to put myself "out there" but it may be time and it may be my responsibility to offer that.

Olivia

**by Genjo on Mon Aug 15, 2011 4:36 am**

Olivia wrote:

The login problem appears to be solved.

Genjo,

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So what to do? I've written a part of my story along with some comments that I have considered being read at this upcoming meeting either by you or by (preferably) Roko. I don't know enough about the format or the questions coming from the inner Samoan Circle to have a good feel for it. I'm also not terribly thrilled to put myself "out there" but it may be time and it may be my responsibility to offer that.

Okay, I'll try and follow your lead. I too don't know if the format for the August meeting will accommodate your desires, but if you choose to send me your first person account to read at the meeting, I will try and make that happen. In any case, I would like to read it when you feel it is ready to share.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Olivia on Mon Aug 15, 2011 6:44 pm**

Christopher,

I was thinking about your question (I think it was Christopher's) of how to help “victims” of clergy sexual abuse. In my area, one of best places is specifically for women and men who are in or have been affected by domestic abuse or rape. (Interesting side here – after telling my story about Eido Shimano they welcomed me wholeheartedly.) A strength for them is that they also offer educational programs. These are geared to our western society and they are helpful. However, it doesn't touch the combination of east meets west.

One of the better things I've been done with my life is to become a trained facilitator for an international symposium called “Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream”. It's a combination of video and experiential exercises that are designed to help bring us back to a connection between the earth, each other, and a more authentic part of ourselves – environmental, social, and spiritual. Here's a link - [www.awakeningthedreamer.org](http://www.awakeningthedreamer.org).

The most powerful exercise is what's called “unexamined assumptions”. For example, when a forest is called a corporate “resource”, it sets the ground for disregarding it as a living biodiversity. Or, when we say we are “going to throw something away”, where is “away”? The people attending take over by giving their own examples and then place them in one of the three categories – environmental, social, spiritual fulfillment. All examples inevitably end up in all three categories.

Part of an education on clergy abuse would be to take a look at the assumptions about adult “victims. Example; adults are always in consensual relationships unless it's blood and gut rape. Women (or men) like that are either “nuts or sluts” or “weak”.

What I cherish about Zazen practice is that it can open doors to closed worlds and help keep them open through practice. Given that one experience of that open door is the profound connection of all living things, I've often wondered how Shimano and ZSS board who were aware of the extent of his history could have such a disconnect between on the cushion and off the cushion practice. I have some answers and some clues, but not the full picture.

A friend of mine once summed up being a victim of clergy abuse that was not in the consensual category rather simply – “I was a vulnerable women in the wrong place at the wrong time with a sexual predator”. Sometimes it's that simple. However, to the degree that I had not and have not healed or looked deeply enough at my own vulnerable aspect that disabled me from saying “no” and running fast and far, I offer a deep apology for being at all an involved party leading to a level 4 Shimano disaster that has affected so many people.

Olivia

**by Olivia on Mon Aug 15, 2011 7:11 pm**

One last comment about "Awakening the dreamer, changing the dream". It's happens in 3 modules -

1. Where we are now?
2. How did we get here?
3. Where do we go from here?

It very carefully explains that if we go forward without understanding the past we'll just repeat the same mistakes.

Olivia  
Olivia

**by Carol on Mon Aug 15, 2011 7:20 pm**

Olivia wrote:

What I cherish about Zazen practice is that it can open doors to closed worlds and help keep them open through practice. Given that one experience of that open door is the profound connection of all living things, I've often wondered how Shimano and ZSS board who were aware of the extent of his history could have such a disconnect between on the cushion and off the cushion practice. I have some answers and some clues, but not the full picture.

Thanks for joining us here, Olivia, and sharing your insights and experiences.

The disconnect between on the cushion and off the cushion practice has long been a puzzle to me, too. I've seen it in another Zen sangha where there was no sexual abuse, but there were other misuses of power that I found so disturbing that I left and went to another sangha where, thankfully, those issues were not present.

Also, years ago in another non-zen spiritual community that was closely connected to insight meditation teachers, I saw it there too, and was in fact pretty deeply injured by it. So much so that I did not return to regular spiritual practice for about 30 years!

But, I do think in "spiritual communities" the conditions are always present for the power differential to get way out of balance all too easily. In part, I believe it is because those of us who come to spiritual practice as students are "needy" in a very deep way. Speaking for myself, anyway, I wanted a way out of the suffering and ignorance of life. I also had my "issues" -- I wanted to be recognized as someone who "got it", who was a "good student", who could become a "leader" in the community.

I've noticed over the years in so many settings the "in-group"/"out-group" dynamic that just seems to almost inevitably be part of group process. Teachers, if they are not wise and alert to these dynamics, can easily contribute to them in how they treat different students differently and in how they bestow their approval on "good students." This plays into competitiveness for standing in the group. And yet, of course, there are some students who do advance and become good teachers themselves. That is the nature of things. But, I think many teachers are not as sophisticated as they need to be in handling these group dynamics. And it can blind them. Especially, when students project so much of their longing for approval onto the teacher.

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by Olivia on Wed Aug 17, 2011 4:22 am**

Carol Said,

"Also, years ago in another non-zen spiritual community that was closely connected to insight meditation teachers, I saw it there too, and was in fact pretty deeply injured by it. So much so that I did not return to regular spiritual practice for about 30 years!"

Thanks for responding, Carol. Each paragraph could be a long discussion, but I'm picking up on this one. I'm very sorry that you had that experience.

Since discovering Aitken's call-out to Eido Shimano a little more than a year ago, the archives, and blogs as far away as NellaLou in Nepal, I've become keenly aware of the impact on others. It's staggering. Being a direct "victim" (a word I don't like but will tolerate for now) can be very isolating. Many individuals have expressed real anguish. If you care to explain more about why you felt/were deeply injured I would be interested in a heart-felt manner.

Olivia  
Olivia

**Page 68**

**by Carol on Wed Aug 17, 2011 5:42 am**

Olivia wrote:  
Carol Said,

"Also, years ago in another non-zen spiritual community that was closely connected to insight meditation teachers, I saw it there too, and was in fact pretty deeply injured by it. So much so that I did not return to regular spiritual practice for about 30 years!"

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Olivia

I probably should have said that I was so "put-off" by it that I did not return to regular spiritual practice for about 30 years. The injury was mainly the diversion from deeper guided spiritual inquiry and practice, not so much injury to my emotional/mental well-being, I would say.

Looking back on it now with many years' perspective, I think it was just one of those experiments in spiritual community in the '70s that didn't work, mainly due to lack of deep traditional roots, and lack of real psychological insight (which I think is necessary for Western spiritual communities). There were many such experiments that didn't work - a lot of pop psychology with spiritual veneer, both then and now -- and some that came through their growing pains and did work.

~Carol

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol

Global Moderator

**by Bob Skank on Thu Aug 25, 2011 3:36 pm**

At a ZFI member's suggestion I started reading from the beginning of this thread; and in many hours spread over several days I worked my way forward to its end. Many posts I skimmed, reading them hardly at all, others I read carefully more than once. It was a wearying experience. There is certainly a diversity of views about what is and is not proper conduct. No one condones molestation or rape. But exploitation is another matter. Few if any sexual relationships are ever between persons exactly equal in every respect.

Though I hesitate to call all such inequality a matter of "power," I do understand why it is often assessed and evaluated that way. A college English teacher, I was married and a father of two when I fell in love with a student eleven years younger than I. I divorced my wife so I could marry my student. In thirty-four years of marriage even she sometimes questioned the circumstances of our romance and relationship. So did I. It caused terrible pain to my first wife and to our children. There were times my second marriage seemed it would not survive, but it did. I practiced Buddhism on my own for ten years before a friend told me of the tragedy caused by his teacher Osel Tendzin. It was another ten years before I learned of Chogyam Trungpa's sexual promiscuity. I did not learn of the affair involving Richard Baker until a friend asked me to read the book about it. It was he who told me also of the relationship between a student and Dainin Katagiri and later of an incident in Minnesota involving one of Katagiri's dharma heirs. The sexual histories of other Zen clergy I learned only from recent posts on Sweeping Zen and Zen Forum. Sex between consenting competent adults is nobody's business but their own, we liberals used to say in the '60s. But clearly it is not that simple. Competent adults may consent to sex because they have been seduced—to use an old-fashioned term—and seduction is complex. I am reminded of the song "Sweet Dreams" by Annie Lennox. My thanks to those who contributed to this thread. I learned from them.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by Shusan on Sat Aug 27, 2011 2:34 pm**

Oh Bob - maybe because you are new to this issue, we can just forgive the regression to the "consenting adults" thing. Maybe rather than hours on this thread, hours on the [shimanoarchive.com](http://shimanoarchive.com) would be more elucidating. We are not talking about one or two affairs between consenting adults here. Period. That is not this. It has nothing to do with you having married a student and stayed married for over 30 years to her. Absolutely nothing at all. You have to get yourself out of this picture, though the impulse toward personal empathy or understanding is a noble one.

This situation is only perhaps distantly related to Richard Baker's or Chogyam Trungpa, both of whose cases are quite distinct, from each other and from Shimano. Shimano clearly has pathologically stalked and abused women from his first arrival on American soil over 40 years ago. After millenniums of patriarchy and abuse of power, the women's lib movement didn't suddenly transform the psychological, political, or economic universe and make all things equal in 1970, or "consensual." Women said 'yes' to sex with Shimano. This did not make it right, equal, consensual, or excusable, any more than a child being coerced into inappropriate contact can be said to make it ok. And saying yes is no longer even always an excuse in our legal system in cases of defined rape. Shimano wasn't care-full with these women (only moderately careful not to get caught.) He didn't love them. He didn't marry them. He used them, many, many of them, and cast them off without an apparent second thought.



Let's not re-muddy the waters with this kind of confusion. We are way past this.  
Last edited by Shusan on Sat Aug 27, 2011 8:04 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
Shusan

**by Bob Skank on Sat Aug 27, 2011 3:14 pm**

Shusan wrote:

Women said 'yes' to sex with Shimano. This did not make it right, equal, consensual, or excusable, any more than a child being coerced into inappropriate contact can be said to make it ok. And saying yes is no longer even always an excuse in our legal system in cases of defined rape.

Thank you, Shusan. I certainly did not intend to imply that it was "right" or "equal" or "excusable" or in any sense "ok." I hoped and tried to make clear by my words "competent consenting adults" that I would never condone the molestation of children under any circumstances nor statutory rape nor so-called "date rape." Nor do I—let me be clear—condone the behavior of Shimano. It was sexual misconduct. Was it illegal? I'm not clear about that. Were his acts crimes? If so, can he be charged? Regarding your analogy to a child, is there any sense in which the women were like children? I could not find answers to these questions in the thread.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by christopher::: on Sat Aug 27, 2011 4:09 pm**

Hi Bob.

There's never been a clear case where charges were brought against Shimano but a lot didn't come to light until Robert Aitken opened his files to the public in 2008. By that time with statutes of limitations and differences in laws it was too late. I think Shusan is right, if you want a clearer picture you should spend a little time with the archives.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/>

There you will find that from his first months in America, Shimano was sexually pursuing female Zen students. The fact that some were hospitalized in psychiatric wards, possibly in response to these incidents, didn't stop him from aggressively pursuing them further in those hospitals, leading to a number of letters from doctors, such as this:

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1964 ... Aitken.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/1964...Aitken.pdf)

I've made the suggestion a few times that it might be possible to have his citizenship revoked if the INS became interested in the case and it could be shown that he lied on his American citizenship applications. But otherwise, it's doubtful that anything can be done now, imo.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Bob Skank on Sat Aug 27, 2011 4:12 pm**

christopher::: wrote:  
 I think Shusan is right, if you want a clearer picture you should spend a little time with the archives.

Thank you, Christopher, and Shusan, I have done so.  
 Bob

Bob Skank

**by Shusan on Sat Aug 27, 2011 4:59 pm**

I think "Olivia"'s recent account, published on shimanoarchive and responded to by Genjo (also published there) demonstrates how inequitable these encounters largely were. And these women are not "like children." The exploitation of them is similar to the exploitation of children; let's not forget how men also were exploited in the ZSS, in a completely different way, in a "mandala" of dysfunction. Shimano appealed to Dharmic impulses toward loyalty, surrender, respect, and devotion, and like all sociopaths, he was able to attract and manipulate individuals who had the precise psychological weaknesses and conditioning to allow him to abuse his position of authority and power. Every human organization is a sandbox of human fallibility. This doesn't mean we don't create organizations - precisely the "sangha jewel" emphasized by Buddha. Rather, we use our good common sense and basic ethics to curb tendencies toward blindness and cruelty, to protect each other and ourselves from the karmic impulses we are all, every one of us, subject to. Shimano not only systematically removed such institutional curbs, but instead created nothing less than a cult that shielded him from accountability in order to enact his predations. And they were nothing less than this, as is clear from many, many accounts that continue to surface.

I think the "legal issue" is a complete red herring. What difference does it make? While I feel it would be fitting if he could be prosecuted for something and had to do some time or pay restitution, I don't think this has anything to do with evaluating the nature of his activities as skillful, unskillful, in keeping with the teaching and his role as spiritual guide or not. I think it's clear that his breaches are about as heinous as possible, all conditions considered.

Shusan

**by Bob Skank on Sat Aug 27, 2011 6:45 pm**

Shusan wrote:

[T]hese women are not "like children." The exploitation of them is similar to the exploitation of children....

I don't quite follow here, Shusan.

One other question.

Does the fact that Shimano was these women's zen priest and zen teacher make his misconduct more heinous than it would have been had he not been their zen teacher and a priest?

I apologize if I seem to be splitting hairs here, Shusan. I appreciate your patience with me.

Some of the Critical Buddhists have suggested that an emphasis on authority, submission, and obedience in relations between zen priest and zen student can make the relationship like that between parent and child.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by Shusan on Sat Aug 27, 2011 7:39 pm**

We are all children of Buddha.

I think in spiritual discipline we become very vulnerable. We must become so. If your teacher takes advantage of that, well, yes, I do think that this is particularly serious - heavy duty karma. It's an extreme betrayal of trust, not unlike that between a parent and child. It's what makes a case like Olivia's both so revealing, and heartrending. I suggest

you read that account, if you haven't already, keeping in mind there are others not dissimilar.

To say that these women who were taken advantage of are "like children" feels demeaning, I think. To say the abuse they suffered is not unlike, or with similarities to that toward children is more accurate. These Shimano cases, like thousands of others, demonstrate how the wounds of childhood (and a violent history of exploitative patriarchy) haunt our adult psyches, track us and demand healing. The role of the spiritual friend is to help create a space for healing to happen - it expressly isn't to blindly perpetuate the circumstances of earlier wounding (especially with some twisted excuse that the perp will "make it better this time), taking advantage of these wounds to satisfy base lust, greed, or avarice. And Shimano seems to have often been largely subject to such base impulses, and completely unable to stop himself. This is the complicity of those in positions of responsibility within the organization, who should have acted more decisively, as they were encouraged to do many many times over decades from within and without - this didn't all just spring up over night. And they must do so now.

These ongoing hypothetical arguments that sometimes its ok for teachers to sleep with their students just miss the point. Of course it is possible for two adults who cross paths in any sphere to fall in love, to wish to have a relationship, sexual or otherwise. Just like in business or education or medicine or therapy, there are clear institutional guidelines and rules in every case how to handle and divulge such relationships, and most sanghas in America have likewise instituted rules, including now the ZSS. Rules are one thing. Enacting them is another. And an open, committed, transparent relationship between consenting adults is one thing. What Shimano did over and over and over is something else entirely.

Shusan

**by Bob Skank on Sat Aug 27, 2011 7:57 pm**

Shusan wrote:

Rules are one thing. Enacting them is another.

Yes.

Thank you.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by Shusan on Sat Aug 27, 2011 7:58 pm**

cheers Bob. gassho to you! Thanks for providing a chance to dialogue, and "come to terms."

Shusan

**by Genjo on Sat Aug 27, 2011 8:25 pm**

Bob Skank wrote:

... Does the fact that Shimano was these women's zen priest and zen teacher make his misconduct more heinous than it would have been had he not been their zen teacher and a priest? ...

Bob

Dear Bob,

For my take on this point see: [viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1254](http://viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1254)

As an update to others who are interested in the All Sangha Meeting being held right now at Dai Bosatsu Zendo (DBZ) I offer the following that I have just sent to Shinge Roshi (Eido Shimano Roshi's successor) and meeting participants...

Dear Shinge Roshi and meeting participants,

I was so glad to learn that almost everyone who planned to attend the All Sangha Meeting could make it, and that yesterday's meetings went so well. I hope today's meeting is really productive. Though I'm not physically present at the meeting, because of being turned around by Hurricane Irene while changing planes in Chicago, I am sending strong Nen (supportive thought energy). I was able to return to Seattle just before midnight. Not only were all flights into NYC canceled, I also learned that my return flight from JFK to Seattle on Monday was canceled. Today I'm catching up with packing and organizing the move to Chobo-Ji's new practice center, which will take place next weekend, so in one way it is fortuitous that I was not able to get to DBZ. As for my input, I believe I made my voice clear in my letter to the ZSS Board, which was mostly posted verbatim in the following ZFI post:

[viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1295](http://viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1295)

and my follow up to this post:

[viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1300](http://viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1300)

I further hope that your early deliberations today will set ground rules that will allow participants to report on the meeting to others who are not able to attend. I know very well there is a necessary tension between confidentiality and transparency, and of course I want the meeting to be a "safe" place for people to share heartfelt concerns, which will necessitate a measure of confidentiality, but I hope the ground rules are not so restrictive that the need for transparency is not also honored. I do think it will be very unfortunate if reporting on the meeting is somehow restricted to only official ZSS channels.

May everyone at DBZ and traveling home be safe and may your deliberations not be overly stormy and conclude with a positive collective vision for the future.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by moon face buddha on Sun Aug 28, 2011 9:16 am**

We must bare in mind that some folks who are attracted to a spiritual path are in a bad place. They are seeking answers, they are vulnerable, and so they are ripe for exploitation by the unethical and unscrupulous. This can be seen over and over again in the tales of Cults and Cult Leaders, and also in the more established religions.

Just take a look at the FWBO Files ( <http://www.fwbo-files.com/> ) as an example of how a person with dubious credentials can create a Buddhist-like organisation that has, in the past, had government funding to provide educational materials to schools and continues to get one of its followers on the BBC regularly. The organisation has deftly tried to keep one step ahead of its past by changing its name A sorry tale of exploitation of vulnerable male followers by a seemingly predatory guru figure, a suicide or two, some interesting financial dealings, and a national media organisation who does not bother to do enough research to tell the difference between a legitimate buddhist lineage from a psuedo-buddhist mess.

I should say that the local group are all very nice people. But one order-member in particular exhibits a rather unhealthy (in my opinion) leader worship which is what made me dig deeper.

Nullum Beneficium Est Impunitum

moon face buddha

**by genkaku on Sun Aug 28, 2011 12:38 pm**

Below, please find a group of individual letters addressed largely to the leadership of the meeting Aug. 26-28 at Dai Bosatsu. The meeting has been billed as an effort to heal many past and current difficulties at Zen Studies Society in the wake of Eido Shimano's activities. All documents are filed on the public site called the Shimanoarchive.

"OLIVIA'S" LETTER TO SHINGE

An Open Letter To: Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat, Abbot, and Board Members of Zen Studies Society.

From: Olivia

Date: August 22, 2011

I am writing this open letter in anticipation of your August 26-28, 2011 meeting at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Since I am unable to attend, this letter will serve as my contribution for sharing with the group as solicited in Rev. Shinge Sherry Chayat's letter to the Zen Studies Society Sangha on August 4, 2011. I received a Dharma name from Eido Shimano and served for some time as Tenzo.

One year and 2 months ago, I came across Robert Aitken Roshi's blog in which he called out Eido Shimano for the many reports of his abuse of women over a 40 year period. What followed has been a renewed and unprecedented outpouring of public statements. The overall intent has been to help Zen Studies Society disassociate completely from Eido Shimano while empathizing with complex and difficult loyalties. To date this clean and strong separation has not occurred for the benefit of all. As some letters have pointed out, such a separation could even lead to the benefit of Eido Shimano himself.

Largely missing from these public statements are first hand public letters from actual female victims of Eido Shimano. Many female victims have gone to great lengths and personal sacrifice to bring their experiences directly to the attention of the current board and previous boards, but have not gotten the response they hoped for: understanding of their experience and changes in policies that reflect that understanding. Perhaps this is because there remains some confusion about what constitutes a consensual "love affair" as opposed to sexual abuse and intentional deception (psychological abuse). Although I have a right to protect my privacy, as do Sangha members engaging in a healing weekend, I feel a responsibility to myself and others not to continue to hold in secrecy actions that damaged me and others. Until the past is fully acknowledged and the current board has taken fully appropriate actions as indicated by many people, the conditions for real, lasting, and deep healing are not in place.

To the extent that I was not healed enough from abuse prior to meeting Eido Shimano, that complicated my initial inability to say “no” to his sexual advances and run fast and far, I offer my deep apology to the Sangha and greater Zen world for being any part of the anguish and divisions that followed.

I ask that you accept this heart-felt letter and all that it contains (including this introduction) to be read by Rev. Shinge Sherry Chayat, or Rev. Genjo Joe Marinello during this upcoming meeting, and to include it in the minutes of your next board meeting.

While a new resident at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, I was sitting alone in the upstairs library room totally engaged in drawing a copy of a beautiful ceiling to floor Japanese sumi-e brush painting of Jizo Bodhisattva. Eido Shimano came into the room, sat next to me, and told me the very moving story behind the creation of that original brush painting. He then placed his arm around me and kissed me on the lips.

At the time I was young and very vulnerable. At the age of 16 I had been raped and sexually abused by a popular teacher at my high school for a period of one year. When I sought protection and help, the people I spoke with often responded with disbelief or with concern for the reputation of the school. Survival at that time often meant I had to pretend that nothing out of the ordinary was occurring. It wasn't until I learned that a friend had the same experience with this teacher that we found the mutual validation to reveal the teacher's abuse to the principal. Nothing changed in part because laws protecting students were not in place or made public as they are today.

When Eido Shimano made his sexual advance, he was aware of my history of being abused. My immediate thought was, “Oh please, not this again”. He told me that he felt he could help me have a “good experience” rather than a traumatic one. All I felt was incredible anxiety. Yet, even while my whole being shrank from him, I was unable to articulate for myself why his sentiment didn't seem sincere. I had no sexual desire for him and felt sickened by the complications of such a relationship with a prominent Zen teacher and a married man. When I asked about his wife, whom I had never met, he sighed and shook his head, then said she was mentally unwell and living in Japan. When I couldn't think of any other “reason” to say no to him, something in me froze, and I felt unable to stop him from continuing with his advances.

That night was the first of many sexual meetings over more than a year, always initiated by Eido Shimano. For example, he would signal me in a hallway or during Dokusan he would ask me to come up to his private apartment. While at home visiting my parents during a Christmas holiday, he called and asked me to meet him in NYC. He also insisted that I keep these meetings a secret because it could cause him difficulties. Only many years later was I able to understand why I was incapable of rejecting his sexual advances. It was far from a consensual relationship between equals. He exploited the spiritual trust I had placed in him and impeded my own innate ability for healing and personal strength. He exploited my isolation from my family and outside friends, and his knowledge that I had been abused previously. Our relationship was not “healing” for me and the ending



was very traumatic. That ending, as well as how I became a resident at DBZ, is a story in itself and too lengthy to include in this letter.

One important issue I have not seen in writings regarding Eido Shimano was the fact that he spread sexually transmitted diseases from his multiple relationships. While a resident at DBZ, I had absolutely no sexual contact with any other person anywhere. Eido Shimano, however, was simultaneously sexually active with at least two other female residents, as I later found out. I became aware of one of these relationships near the end of my stay, and learned about the other woman after leaving DBZ. I now know that it's possible he had other sexual liaisons as well, with residents, students at the NYC Zendo, or nonresident students. Eido Shimano led me to believe that our relationship was exclusive, though.

During a sesshin I developed symptoms of a sexually transmitted disease. When I told Eido Shimano, he said he was suffering from the same symptoms. I told him that I needed to go home immediately to a doctor who could diagnose and treat it. Eido Shimano gave me a glass jar containing a sample of his urine and asked me to take it to the doctor. He asked me to submit it anonymously because he needed to remain at DBZ to lead sesshin. I thought it highly unlikely that a doctor would test the sample under such circumstances, and I was right.

I found out that I had a fully treatable STD. Eido Shimano later told me that he had also received medical treatment. He said he would never forget the discomfort of that sesshin. However, that experience did not keep him from disregarding the health and safety of other female students – or himself – at that time or in the future. This experience caused me to begin to move toward leaving DBZ. Although I eventually gave my entire story to members of the board (this letter reflects my partial story), nothing was done to remove Eido Shimano for the safety of his female students and their present or future partners. His needs and self interests, and the reputation of Zen Studies Society, continued to be the primary concern of a complicit board, at the cost of common moral integrity, the precepts, and the well being of students. I was fortunate not to have been infected with any other STD, especially a life-threatening one. In 1990, Katy Butler published an article called “Encountering the Shadow in Buddhist America” that describes a community with a sexually promiscuous Abbot who gave AIDS to at least one of his followers.

I am a woman who knows the dynamic and beautiful practice of Zazen. I also had a strong affinity for the natural surroundings of DBZ. I loved the lake, the Buddha across the lake, the Jizo on the hill, the trees growing out of cracks in the rocks, the rain on the roof, and the color of everything. I became Tenzo and loved (most of the time) getting up before the sun to make oatmeal, start new batches of bread, and bring it all out to the tables to serve fellow students. I had wonderful help from the head monk. Most of what I learned about the practice of Zazen and the art of being Tenzo came from this monk. Although for obvious reasons I tended to keep myself apart from other residents, there are memories with Sangha students that I treasure. It was painful to leave all of that behind, as well as the possibilities that I imagined for the place as a whole. Unlike Eido

Shimano, I was essentially banished from the monastery. In the aftermath of one of his own scandals, Eido Shimano has written that he “bravely marches on”. Marching on over the lives of women and men he has directly impeded, slandered or thrown aside – with the overall support of the board - is hardly a form of courage.

The practice of Zazen is not in question here. Japanese culture is not in question here. Lineage is not my concern here. What Eido Shimano did was wrong. What the board failed to do to not safeguard the practice for everyone was wrong. The often cited “again and again and again” of covering up or whitewashing the facts caused by Eido Shimano’s destructive actions was wrong. That time and energy could have been used to encourage focus and creativity on a vibrant and life-giving practice that begins the moment we step off the cushion just as much as when we bow to it and begin sitting.

To this day, immense amounts of time and energy are consumed by this focus on Eido Shimano. That energy should belong mostly to supporting and guiding the healthy development of Zen students. Members who have withdrawn from the board of directors (some current members include; Banko Randy Phillips, Genjo Joe Marinello, Seigan Ed Glassing) large numbers of former ZSS students, and scores of Zen teachers have pointed out that Eido Shimano has caused inestimable harm to the Sangha, and to the future of Zen Studies Society. Students like me (and sometimes their families and friends) who were directly harmed have experienced immeasurable loss of potential, community, and even health.

Until Eido Shimano is asked to leave without visitation privileges, or until he has expressed genuine empathy and remorse – rather than shame at being exposed - to a substantial number of students, ordained monks and nuns, and heirs; a voting membership becomes a reality; and plans for restitution to injured parties in a restorative justice program are in place, students will continue to have to replay the wheel of sorting out what Zen Studies Society has yet to accomplish despite the leadership’s long-standing responsibility to act.

The word “victim” indicates real injury, but not a real identity. My identity comes from something that is irrepressible and unsullied. It opens unexpectedly, such as on a walk by the ocean or sharing time with a beloved while both are free of agendas. This is what causes me to feel awe and joy. Whatever that aliveness is that can re-emerge as constant and true despite what many of us have been through is what I bow to, and I bow to it in you.

In a recent online Dharma talk given by Norman Fischer called "When You Greet Me, I Bow", he eloquently summarizes the relational space between a Zen teacher of old and his student ... “ simply being together with warm-hearted kindness, dropping storylines, and appreciating each other’s profound human presence is the whole of teaching.”

If it is trust in this grace and life-affirming power of the Dharma that you wish to wholeheartedly uphold, rather than the floundering of an institution, and you believe Eido Shimano has important work to do to recognize and make amends for his past

harmful actions, then I truly believe that such a refuge will naturally unfold toward the benefit of all.

Olivia

(This pseudonym is for privacy to allow my own life to unfold without further trauma from either Eido Shimano or Zen Studies Society. It is not secrecy. At some point I may be willing to use my real name but until then I ask that you respect my anonymity. Relevant people know who I am. Some of my present activities include being clerk for a Committee on Peace and Social Concerns within the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting - Quaker)

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SHINGE'S RESPONSE TO "OLIVIA'S" LETTER:

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... Olivia.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...Olivia.pdf)

Dear "Olivia,"

I am beyond saddened by your devastating account, which is so courageous and clear, so profound in its insights.

Be assured that I will read it aloud this weekend, although I can't promise to read it without sobbing; that I am listening acutely to what you say, and that my heart is pierced by it.

You are right, the complex and difficult loyalties have not allowed a clean and strong separation. I hear you.

Thank you, dear Sister.

Gassho,  
Shinge

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"OLIVIA'S" RESPONSE TO SHINGE:

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... Chayat.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...Chayat.pdf)

Dear Shinge,

Thank you for your simple and touching words and your willingness to read my letter.

I look forward, as do many people, to seeing important changes that reflect your expressed sentiments.

I am beyond saddened when I hear the accounts of other women (and men) who have also been victimized. I am infuriated, and hope to act, wisely. I don't believe it is tears we need as much as direct and affirmative action.

Gassho,

"Olivia"

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DAI AN'S LETTER TO SHINGE

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2201 ... Chayat.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2201...Chayat.pdf)

August 25, 2011  
Shinge Roshi  
c/o An Olive Branch

Dear Shinge Roshi:

I write in response to your recent announcements inviting those of us who have been a part of the Zen Studies Society and associated sanghas to provide input for your discussion on August 26-28.

Since I have been unable to return to the Zen Center of Syracuse after learning of Eido Shimano's long history of misconduct, and because I am not a direct victim of his abuse, I am not entirely certain whether my input is invited or relevant. One might ask, how is it my place to comment on these matters? After much thought, I have concluded that as a survivor myself, and as a long-time legal advocate for the abused,

"I cannot sit idly by in [Syracuse] and not be concerned about what happens in [ Dai Bosatsu Zendo]. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Given the courage shown by people such as Kobutsu, Genkaku, Genjo Osho , "Olivia" and our own brother Kensei, how can I remain silent? I am here. Injustice is here. So, I must speak in solidarity with those who have been harmed directly by Eido Shimano, as well as with those who have been shunned for speaking out against the grossly inadequate leadership response to his misconduct.

As you will recall, the specifics behind my leaving the ZCS, given its continuing association with Eido Shimano, are described in my January 5, 2011 letters to you and to

the Zen Center of Syracuse Board of Trustees. In response to my letters, I did receive an apology, but was asked to keep it private while the Zen Studies Society Board of Trustees completed its difficult deliberations concerning Eido Roshi. I did honor that request. But in all of these months since then, that same apology has never been extended to those directly harmed by Eido Shimano. Furthermore, it appears that Shimano has been allowed to retire "with honor", and continues to be allowed access to and influence over the Zen Studies Society and its affiliates. Since these concerns have not been addressed, I believe that the risk of further harm to unsuspecting vulnerable people continues to be great.

Through all of this, I experienced a tremendous loss from not being able to return to the Zen Center of Syracuse. Like Dai Bosatsu Zendo, it is a very beautiful place in its own special way, and I have missed it. I spent many happy moments sitting there with the sangha. I was invited in, trusting in explicit assurances that my vulnerabilities and sensitivities as a survivor and advocate were understood and respected. I felt that I had at last found a safe haven. It was therefore the last place where I expected to find that its guiding teacher is a sexual predator. The continuation by the ZCS of its relationship with Shimano felt like a denial of the kind of suffering caused by him and those like him. While in a state of shock after learning of Eido Shimano's history and the ZCS' continuing relationship with him, I knew that I could not stay at the Zen Center of Syracuse. One Sunday in the Spring on 2010, I entered the zendo, removed my robe and rokasu from their "special hanger" (an inside joke) and put them on for service one last time. I chanted my heart out, while catching glimpses of my beloved sangha. After the chanting had ended, I left the zendo along with my Dharma brothers and sisters, and then walked slowly down the driveway and across the street to my car. I sat there and watched as the zendo filled again and the door was closed shut for zazen (crying my eyes out). I never have been able to return, and it has taken a long time to find adequate words to express how the ripple of Shimano's unchecked misconduct effected me.

Although I believe it is too late for me to return (my practice has now taken a different path), I do hope that the Zen Studies Society and the Zen Center of Syracuse will be able to take the steps needed to become places where people like me can feel safe and supported. To accomplish this, I believe that the Zen Studies Society and the Zen Center of Syracuse need to completely disassociate themselves from Eido Shimano and also take the following steps:

Those who ZSS and ZCS would take on as students should be affirmatively and completely advised of the history of the "Shimano lineage", especially the misconduct of Eido Shimano;

All survivors of Eido Shimano's misconduct, including those harmed directly and indirectly, should be given a safe and appropriate opportunity to be heard by a completely neutral body, outside of Zen Studies Society premises. Then, at the very least, they should receive a detailed written apology from both Eido Shimano and those in leadership who disregarded the possibility that that his harmful behavior might continue;

Those heirs who would continue to teach should themselves refresh their training under another teacher; and

Eido Shimano's honorific as "Retiring Abbott"; his retirement package in lieu of compensation for his victims; and his presence and influence at the ZSS and its affiliates should all come completely and abruptly to an end.

Please receive my best wishes for a meaningful discussion that will lead to real action to benefit those who have been harmed by Eido Shimano.

Let True Dharma Continue!

DaiAn

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#### A LETTER FROM SEIGAN ED GLASSING

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... ing\\_OB.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...ing_OB.pdf)

August 26, 2011

A letter from Seigan Ed Glassing to The Olive Branch Facilitators to be read during an open circle.

Please do not make the same mistake that I made. I started practicing with Eido Shimano in 1985 and despite hearing rumors that he slept with his students; I didn't really want to believe that. I wholeheartedly trusted in my teacher, and whatever he did; whatever he said was a "teaching". When the first scandal occurred (that I experienced in 1993) although many Sangha members left, I stayed. I was a loyal monk, I was not going to quit and I was not going to judge him. I felt that it really wasn't such a big deal after all, whoever he had slept with was an adult too and capable of making decisions for herself. I scoffed at people, who seemed puritanical and snobbish, I learned elitism, I learned arrogance, I learned self-righteousness and I learned how to separate and compartmentalize. Perhaps you think, "Well, what's done is done, now lets move on." Or maybe "I owe Eido Shimano my life and I am grateful to him no matter what." To those who think this I would ask you to think. I ask you to be curious, to ask questions, to stand up to what you believe in. Study the history of the organization, read books such as "Sex and the Spiritual Teacher" and "Spiritual Bypassing". Please don't make the mistake that I did thinking that Zazen is all you need. Please don't keep your head in the sand of the Absolute; thinking that everything is OK when it is not. I enabled this kind of thought. Now I see things in a different way.

The Teacher/Student was breeched repeatedly not just once...but for decades. Do not forget this. Many, many people suffered Sexual, Emotional, and Psychological abuse

stemming from the actions of Eido Shimano. There was a culture of blindness regarding “the Teacher”. I want it known in this meeting that there was definitely an effort on the part of some Board members, and Senior Students to diminish the gravity of the abuse, to sweep it under the rug and to protect Shimano after the scandal broke. This is why I left. I could not be part of an organization that talked about Compassion, Truth and Wisdom and yet so unwilling to actually face the Truth, be Compassionate and wake up to the Wisdom of reality.

Part of the problem is an over attachment to the “Teacher”. I see the same over attachment happening again with Shinge Roshi. Given the best of intentions, the ZSS became over the years cult-like in its worship of Shimano and good people have come to believe in the myths and stories told to them for decades. Stop it, stop the manipulation, deceit and pathology.

I offer a few suggestions to those who want the Society to heal and move forward- take them or leave them.

- I want it to be known that in order to heal Trust must be restored. For this to happen the entire organization must acknowledge over and over again (NOT JUST ONCE) the terrible pain that was inflicted on women by both Eido Shimano and the cover-ups by past Boards. I want them to admit that there were repeated ethical breeches between Teacher and Student and that this caused great suffering. Face it, admit it, acknowledge it and don't ever get tired of saying it. Have it become a part of the mandala.
- A clear and direct Apology to the victims who suffered is warranted and this should be announced to the larger Buddhist community on the web in publications and in tesiho. This apology should be a permanent feature to the ZSS website.
- Reaching out to the abused should be priority.
- A healing and reconciliation meeting like this should be held again and again.
- A Ceremony held each year to acknowledge the pain, reflect, confess, purify and heal through ritual and spirituality the shadow history of the ZSS. Learn what “Fusatsu” is and incorporate into the practice.
- Many who left the ZSS are written out of history and/or attacked. I want this to stop, there are more people who left the organization throughout the years than there are people who stayed behind. None of them deserve to be character assassinated.
- I want the structure of the organization to be completely rebuilt from the bottom upward. I want the bylaws rewritten. I want a democratically elected Board.
- I want a separation of powers so that the new Abbot concentrates solely on the Spiritual teaching of students. The Abbot should not be the Chairman of the Board or associated with the ZSS Board or have voting powers.
- I want the Dharma Heirs to rotate as they do at San Francisco Zen Center.
- Finally, I want the ZSS to make a clean and final break with Eido Shimano disavowing any kind of teaching or visits by him in the future. He is history; don't rewrite it with golden myths, flowery lies and hero worship. Be honest enough and have the courage enough to see things and him as they are.

genkaku

**by christopher::: on Sun Aug 28, 2011 2:38 pm**

Thanks so much for posting these, genkaku. Some of the clearest and most direct letters shared here, so far, especially Oliva's story. (Letters linked to by Genjo's post as well). I hope these messages will be welcomed and really heard in a great many people's hearts. Like the story of the professor who's tea cup overflowed, we each have to first empty our minds of illusions and preconceptions in order to fully receive.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Genjo on Sun Aug 28, 2011 3:00 pm**

christopher::: wrote:  
 Thanks so much for posting these, genkaku. Some of the clearest and most direct letters shared here, so far, especially Oliva's story. ...

Yes, I agree completely. I am so thankful to each of the writers, and hope that these letters were not only read at the meeting held this weekend at DBZ, but well received for the gems that they are.

Genjo  
 Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Bob Skank on Sun Aug 28, 2011 4:22 pm**



Gassho, Shusan, and thank you, Genjo and Genkako! Information and knowledge and diverse points of view are very helpful to me! The article by Katy Butler, "Encountering the Shadow in Buddhist America," cited by Olivia, was especially helpful in my effort to get a reasonable perspective on the conduct that troubled the sanghas of Chogyam Trungpa, Osel Tendzin, and Richard Baker. [http://www.katybutler.com/publications/ ... istusa.htm](http://www.katybutler.com/publications/...istusa.htm) It would have been helpful to me, too, personally, perhaps, if some teachers and students from the few zen temples with which I was at all familiar had earlier in my temple practice been more forthcoming and candid about their past personal relationships. But I now understand that these relationships were no secret to some in the sangha, though they were unknown to me, and that I cannot expect people ceaselessly, like the Ancient Mariner, to tell others their tales. I know also from my own personal life experience how difficult it can be to skillfully negotiate sexual desire. Thanks to the work of Stuart Lachs, Brian Victoria, and writers in the movement known as Critical Buddhism, I am gradually and gratefully coming to understand how the tradition of zen myth, zen legend, transmission, priesthood, authority, submission, obedience, secrecy, nonthinking, and the repudiation of logic and reason can in some instances cause more confusion and darkness than light. In my case, when I questioned what appeared to me to be verbal abuse, I or my opinions were mocked and ridiculed and called "bullshit," "stupid," "dishonest," "denial," "chickenshit," "gossip," and "avoidance"; later when, as respectfully and as honestly as I could, I told others in speech and in writing of my confusion, I was expelled from the temple and, at a meeting of the board I was forbidden to attend, I was accused of "triangulation" and of "violating the precepts." When family and friends asked me what happened and, as best I could, I explained, others said that I was "malicious," a "badmouth," a "gossip," a "phony," and that in my "weaseliness" I was "falsifying" facts and circumstances. Even now, because I tell my story, people call me "aggressive" and "hostile" and say that it is obvious that I have "an axe to grind." Jesus Christ! I have practiced the buddhadharma for thirty-six years. It is exhausting! All my past and harmful karma I fully avow. May all beings embody the great way.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by Ihandclapping on Mon Aug 29, 2011 4:26 am**

Bob Skank wrote:

Does the fact that Shimano was these women's zen priest and zen teacher make his misconduct more heinous than it would have been had he not been their zen teacher and a priest?

I apologize if I seem to be splitting hairs here, Shusan. I appreciate your patience with me.

Some of the Critical Buddhists have suggested that an emphasis on authority, submission, and obedience in relations between zen priest and zen student can make the relationship like that between parent and child.

Absolutely, the misconduct is more heinous if a violation of trust and a position of authority are involved, than when misconduct occurs between peers. Posing this question is not at all "splitting hairs", it's hitting the nail on the head.

Clergy are required to maintain professional boundaries with their congregants, precisely because of the trust placed in them. This trust opens the congregants up to a certain level of vulnerability even if a childhood history of abuse or other emotional neediness is not present, which unfortunately in many cases it is. And in the Mahayana traditions, in addition to mere trust, there is further the aspect of submission and obedience to the teacher. As if that weren't enough, added to that risky mix is the commonly-held belief that the teacher operates from a higher level of understanding, and spiritual attainment and vision than the disciples, and therefore is above "mundane" morality, meaning what appears to be abuse or misconduct may be "skillful means". This is a potential powderkeg.

Due to the power differential between clergy and congregants, and the trust and vulnerability factors, US law holds the principle of "fiduciary trust", which applies to clergy and spiritual counselors. Breach of fiduciary trust was one of the charges upon which Sogyal Rinpoche was brought to trial in the 1990's. Certainly some of the cases I've read about on this thread could have been taken to court (and not merely on fiduciary trust, but on assault grounds), and I would think that sangha boards and other oversight organizations could also be held liable for negligence if they fail to remove a clergy member who has repeatedly harmed disciples. Has their potential liability not occurred to anyone in authority?

Someone here mentioned that Eido Shimano showed a clear pattern of targeting the youngest and most psychologically vulnerable members of the sangha. That is the behavior of a sexual predator. The fact that this behavior was clearly present and recognized, but not remedied, is chilling. Unfortunately, I'm afraid it is more common that some would like to think, throughout the Mahayana tradition, which raises the question: what to do about it?

Ikko\_Ikkoku makes an important point in comments about sangha members and board members too enthralled with the teacher to take action or even to perceive there is a problem. In such environments, one can enact all the stringent behavior rules for teachers one wants, but nothing will come of it if those in authority turn a blind eye, and furthermore, shun the few who might speak up. I don't see a solution to this, except:

- 1) Enacting a widespread education campaign to inform disciples, would-be disciples and aspiring board members of the potential risks inherent in the disciple-teacher relationship

(some books were recommended earlier here, websites could be set up, etc.), so as to introduce more clarity to the community, and

2) Consider retiring the concept of the teacher as an enlightened master worthy of blind trust, submission and obedience. Isn't this one factor that enables the type of problem we're discussing? Don't teachers need to earn our respect and trust, by demonstrating their commitment to the principles they preach? Has the practice of submitting to a teacher as an unquestioned and unquestionable authority and even a quasi-deity become for us, with good reason, an anachronism? These are only partial remedies to the problem, but through discussions such as this, hopefully a more comprehensive solution can be found and implemented.

I think a strong awareness-raising campaign throughout the Buddhist community is needed on this issue. It's wonderful to see the issue discussed openly and calmly here, but this is an extremely exceptional occurrence, in my observation.

1handclapping

**by Bob Skank on Mon Aug 29, 2011 4:42 am**

1handclapping wrote:

Consider retiring the concept of the teacher as an enlightened master worthy of blind trust, submission and obedience.

Isn't this one factor that enables the type of problem we're discussing?

Don't teachers need to earn our respect and trust, by demonstrating their commitment to the principles they preach?

Has the practice of submitting to a teacher as an unquestioned and unquestionable authority and even a quasi-deity become for us, with good reason, an anachronism?

....It's wonderful to see the issue discussed openly and calmly here, but this is an extremely exceptional occurrence, in my observation.

Thank you, Clapping Hand! Yes, yes, and yes. My hand is clapping!

Bob

Bob Skank

**by genkaku on Tue Aug 30, 2011 12:43 am**

If anyone can provide a description of the Aug. 26-28 meeting at Dai Bosatsu, it might help shed some light on the direction Zen Studies Society plans to take. How many people attended? Who attended? Who did not attend? What was the format? What happened? What conclusions, if any, were reached?

Thank you.  
genkaku

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**by 1handclapping on Tue Aug 30, 2011 5:27 am**

I second genkaku's motion: could someone give us a report? How are members of the ZSS board selected?  
1handclapping

**by Genjo on Tue Aug 30, 2011 4:09 pm**

1handclapping wrote:

I second genkaku's motion: could someone give us a report [of the Aug. 26-28 meeting at Dai Bosatsu] ? How are members of the ZSS board selected?

As for how ZSS Board members are selected: They are usually nominated by the abbot and occasionally nominated by a current board member. Board members serve a three year term and are usually consecutively re-elected, there are no term limits. In my mind, this system ends up placing too much power in one person, and as I see it how board members are selected should become much more democratic, but there is still some resistance within the board to this idea.

As for the Aug. 26-28th meeting, I was turned back by Hurricane Irene and was not able to attend, but this is what I've heard: There 30-40 people in attendance. Three were facilitators from An-Olive-Branch (see: <http://www.an-olive-branch.org/about>). About a half-dozen people in attendance were staunch Eido Roshi supporters, and objected to the idea that any "intervention" was made against Eido Roshi in this last year, and also objected to the idea there had been any "sexual misconduct" by Eido Roshi. It was also reported that evidently one ZSS Board member's car was vandalized because of his support of restrictions on Eido Roshi being on ZSS property. A collection was taken up to repair the damage. Friday was mostly taken up with a ZSS Board meeting (it is my

understanding only 4 board members were present) and small meetings with facilitators so they got a good idea of the range of opinions held by those present. Saturday was taken up with presenting a time line of ZSS history, and examining significant dates with those present. Then the main event on Saturday was an "adapted Samoan Circle" (see: [http://www.daibosatsu.org/pdf/ZSSMediation\\_Site.pdf](http://www.daibosatsu.org/pdf/ZSSMediation_Site.pdf)) where the idea was that everyone would have a chance to be heard. I believe it was during this time that 10 letters received by people who were either not able or did not feel safe to attend were read to all present, including the three posted above by Genkaku. All letters basically insisted that complete separation from Eido Roshi was necessary for any healing to be possible at ZSS.

Sunday was devoted to expressing what steps would be needed to allow for a healthy future at ZSS. It appears that the minority was as stubborn as ever, but that the majority urged that further separation from Eido Roshi was necessary, and that bylaw reform was necessary to ensure a more democratic board. Participants also advocated that further steps be taken to reach out to those who were taken advantage of, manipulated or abused, and that ZSS issue to an organizational apology (but there was board resistance to an organizational apology because of legal issues). How accurate is this account? I don't know for sure because unfortunately I wasn't there.

What the ZSS Board will do with this split in the sangha and how they respond to the majority remains to be seen.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Pedestrian on Tue Aug 30, 2011 4:57 pm**

Thanks for that update, Genjo. This board situation evokes of a lot of badly structured and poorly functioning boards that I've seen over the decades. By-law reform is a crucial step, as would be some strategic planning with an organization used to working with NP boards.

One exercise that many boards perform is to create a matrix of the skills, competencies, and professional expertise the board needs to execute its stated roles and responsibilities. Current board members self-identify their areas of expertise, leaving a clear set of characteristics that a board development committee can then use for proactive, appropriate ethical recruitment. The classic example is finance: most boards are chock-a-block full of people who get the *raison d'être* of the organization but have no clue about quarterly reports, debt management, and so on.

It's a great exercise, since virtually every board can identify areas that would truly improve their collective work with ease. It's also a way to avoid the sort of interest blocs that can derail the actual function of a board, but it avoids getting personal with individual members about their voting records or what have you.

Finally, and obviously, a successful strategic process produces a board with the resources to do the work it is charged to do. For those of us who serve on NP boards, it indicates that the board is self-reflective about what it is and does -- a basic requirement for most competent volunteers to serve as directors. In situations such as this, where serious past problems must be addressed and organizations must be remade, boards that enabled or sat idly by often lack precisely those with the skills needed to move the board forward.

One last comment from someone new to this scene on the outside looking in. I'm struck by the high level of interest and commitment the greater Zen and Buddhist community has in working out these complex organizational and governance issues at ZSS, among those intimately (and often troublingly) connected to ZSS and those who care only about the broader Zen sangha. That significant interest and commitment suggests that ZSS has an opportunity to do something quite remarkable -- remarkably difficult, yes, but also remarkably important. Indeed, as an organization committed to a practice that embraces being in this moment, here and now, in all its complexity, ZSS could demonstrate profound leadership that would resonate throughout that broader sangha, particularly in the West.

[edited to clarify two sentences -- CA]

Pedestrian  
Chris Amirault

Pedestrian

**by Carol on Tue Aug 30, 2011 5:15 pm**

Really good advice, Pedestrian. I too have seen major dysfunction on non-profit boards I have served on myself. Solving the problem through democratic election of board members didn't work very well when we tried it with one (non-Buddhist) nonprofit board because it became a "popularity contest" where the range of skills needed on the board wasn't necessarily the criteria used by the voters. We have had a 10-year dysfunction resulting from electing our boards! But we had a 15-year dysfunction before we rewrote the bylaws to require elections because the previous boards were very out of touch with the needs of the membership.

However, in the context of a Zen Center, I do believe the board must be elected ... at least most of them, with some options for adding board members with needed skills. An Abbot-appointed board is a dangerous entity ... it's very difficult to hold an Abbot (or

head teacher or founder) accountable as it is ... but with his/her hand-picked board, perhaps nearly impossible.

Watching the developments at ZSS over the past year, I have been impressed that the board has moved as far as it has so far. Wrenching, I'm sure. I hope the board was sufficiently impressed by the large number of Sangha members who want complete separation from Eido Shimano. I've seen it before, where a cadre of loyalists was able to protect a Zen teacher from any and all challenges ... but this is SUCH AN EXTREME CASE. I just don't see how half a dozen people can be allowed to control this decision. Some people may have to leave if they cannot accept what must be done. Sometimes you just cannot get unanimous agreement, and must take strong steps anyway.

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by Nonin on Tue Aug 30, 2011 7:20 pm**

I agree, Carol, that a lot of necessary steps have been taken at ZSS, and I also agree that many more steps need to be taken. That the transgressions by Eido Shimano occurred over such a long period of time without any organizational correction is indicative of major structural and ethical flaws in the organization, an appointed board, secrecy, and cover-up being three of the worst.

Whether ZSS is able to right itself and change its by-laws to include things like an elected board remains to be seen. The ethical gravitas of the organization also needs to be changed and their current Ethics Statement needs major revision and expansion. Most importantly, taking institutional responsibility for the wounding of so many women over the years needs to be at the forefront of the healing process.

I know Roko Sherry Chayat (Shinge-roshi), ZSS's current abbot, fairly well, and I trust that she knows what needs to be done to steer the organization on the right track. Whether she and others will be able to do this in the face of opposition both from within and without remains to be seen. I hope so, but right now the organization is so severely wounded that its recovery is not a given.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin  
Global Moderator

**by Pedestrian on Tue Aug 30, 2011 7:44 pm**

Elected NP boards are pretty common, particularly after an organization has been up and running for a while and gets past charismatic leadership structures to the second or third by-law iteration with a board of actual directors. At that stage, in my experience, the distinction of elected and appointed is pretty much moot, since only those boards that elect or appoint with unanimous support function effectively anyway. How they got there is less important than whether they truly share a sense responsibility to the organization and community, defined explicitly with coherent statements of mission, purpose, and principle that guide their action.

Of course, if some directors believe that the organization's interests coincide exactly with one individual's interests, or if some directors prioritize a small segment of that community at the expense of the broader community interest... it's hard to see a way forward....

Pedestrian  
Chris Amirault

Pedestrian

**by Shusan on Wed Aug 31, 2011 12:32 am**

again, I find the hypothetical discussions about general organizational practices interesting, but overlooking in some key ways the distinguishing marks of this situation. It seems like so much whistling past the graveyard.

I think even more important than the similarities with other not-for-profit orgs are the differences for a Zen community. Especially this Zen community.

time will tell. I can't imagine with everything that's now known that ZSS will be able to attract any kind of vital new membership. If a new teacher isn't going to be brought in from completely outside the profoundly dysfunctional and highly suspect community that Shimano built around himself with zero peer oversight (save the periodic issuing of calls for him to step down), well, as I say, who with the sense of a billy goat would pick ZSS over another organization? I don't know the numbers, but it seems like there are some expensive properties and other financial commitments - these seem like not only giant



drags on an organization, but obstacles to more radical and healing treatment of what ails this community.

I don't know what kind of endowment is currently supporting all this, but I doubt membership dues or donations at this time are even making a dent - they surely must have trickled to virtually nothing. And how is it all going to survive until a whole new community can be generated to support the structure - full of people that don't care about the history? That'll take years, IF everything continually goes right - and so far nothing has. Can the ZSS exist without dues or donations for a year? Two? Five? This is part of what is so weird about the ZSS - there was a huge endowment thrown at this charismatic Asian guy who built a cult around himself populated by (sympathetically) ignorant Americans, a rotating cast of whom decided that as long as it didn't happen to them or "he's stopped now", he could do what he wanted and they could live the dream. Though I don't doubt the good intentions of most, or that real practice occurred.

There wasn't the normal grass-roots, "a few students are attracted to a teacher and build a community together" kind of thing, with organically grown checks and balances. Or a teacher who simply had an ethical lapse or two along the way. Shimano attracted people with flash and flourish and a questionable charisma, plus a whole lot of fancy Japanese exotica bought with someone else's dime (someone who lived to regret it). Meanwhile he pathologically stalked and sexually molested dozens of women, continually cheated on his wife, lied, manipulated others to lie, on and on, year after year. He wasn't "good" and then went "bad". He was a hot mess from the get go. Now his balloon has gone poof, and you have a crippled, imploding org. stuck with a pretty, expensive, hollow shell.

Me, I'd bag it, get therapy, and find another teacher not trained by Shimano. Hopefully with some beat prefab zendo, in a trailer maybe, with a neon-pink plastic Buddha from Hong Kong...

Last edited by Shusan on Wed Aug 31, 2011 1:34 am, edited 1 time in total.

Shusan

**by Genjo on Wed Aug 31, 2011 1:05 am**

Nonin wrote:

I agree, Carol, that a lot of necessary steps have been taken at ZSS, and I also agree that many more steps need to be taken. ...

Whether ZSS is able to right itself and change its by-laws to include things like an elected board remains to be seen. The ethical gravitas of the organization also needs to be changed and their current Ethics Statement needs major revision and expansion. Most importantly, taking institutional responsibility for the wounding of so many women over the years needs to be at the forefront of the healing process. ...

I couldn't agree more with all these points, especially the need for a more democratically selected and independent board, and most of all the need for the institution to reach out to those harmed with an organizational apology. In my mind these steps are absolutely essential. Regarding the needed organizational apology, the ZSS Board should not hide behind any legal liability fears. As the Faith Trust Institute told us, it has been demonstrated that sincere open apologies diminish the likelihood of civil suits. The ZSS board revamped their Ethical Guidelines in June of 2010, but given what the organization has been through, it should be very clear to all spiritual communities who are aware of the plight of ZSS, that every group should review and probably strengthen their ethical guidelines to insure that for serious accusations there is a truly independent form of investigation and determination of consequences.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by goddess on Wed Aug 31, 2011 8:54 am**

The apology idea sounds perfect to me. Apology is like a vacuum cleaner that sucks trauma out of the world.

goddess

**by christopher::: on Wed Aug 31, 2011 10:24 am**

Shusan wrote:

again, I find the hypothetical discussions about general organizational practices interesting, but overlooking in some key ways the distinguishing marks of this situation. It seems like so much whistling past the graveyard.

I think even more important than the similarities with other not-for-profit orgs are the differences for a Zen community. Especially this Zen community.

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over another organization? I don't know the numbers, but it seems like there are some expensive properties and other financial commitments - these seem like not only giant drags on an organization, but obstacles to more radical and healing treatment of what ails this community.

I don't know what kind of endowment is currently supporting all this, but I doubt membership dues or donations at this time are even making a dent - they surely must have trickled to virtually nothing. And how is it all going to survive until a whole new community can be generated to support the structure - full of people that don't care about the history? That'll take years, IF everything continually goes right - and so far nothing has. Can the ZSS exist without dues or donations for a year? Two? Five? This is part of what is so weird about the ZSS - there was a huge endowment thrown at this charismatic Asian guy who built a cult around himself populated by (sympathetically) ignorant Americans, a rotating cast of whom decided that as long as it didn't happen to them or "he's stopped now", he could do what he wanted and they could live the dream. Though I don't doubt the good intentions of most, or that real practice occurred.

There wasn't the normal grass-roots, "a few students are attracted to a teacher and build a community together" kind of thing, with organically grown checks and balances. Or a teacher who simply had an ethical lapse or two along the way. Shimano attracted people with flash and flourish and a questionable charisma, plus a whole lot of fancy Japanese exotica bought with someone else's dime (someone who lived to regret it). Meanwhile he pathologically stalked and sexually molested dozens of women, continually cheated on his wife, lied, manipulated others to lie, on and on, year after year. He wasn't "good" and then went "bad". He was a hot mess from the get go. Now his balloon has gone poof, and you have a crippled, imploding org. stuck with a pretty, expensive, hollow shell.

Me, I'd bag it, get therapy, and find another teacher not trained by Shimano. Hopefully with some beat prefab zendo, in a trailer maybe, with a neon-pink plastic Buddha from Hong Kong...

Shushan makes some pretty important points, imo, in regards to the financial "bottom line" for any large organization. These issues came up almost immediately for the Kanzeon Zen Center in Utah, when Genpo Merzel's problems emerged earlier this year.

The Zen Studies Society was originally established in 1956 to assist D.T. Suzuki and didn't come under Shimano's control until 1965. If Shimano's community cannot renew themselves successfully it might not be such a bad outcome for a healthy outside Zen Buddhist organization to come in and simply start over with ZSS, from scratch.

Something dies, something new is born. This is the natural way of all compounded forms in our Universe, no?

As Shushan said:

time will tell

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Genjo on Wed Aug 31, 2011 3:42 pm**

Carol wrote:

Watching the developments at ZSS over the past year, I have been impressed that the board has moved as far as it has so far. Wrenching, I'm sure. I hope the board was sufficiently impressed by the large number of Sangha members who want complete separation from Eido Shimano. I've seen it before, where a cadre of loyalists was able to protect a Zen teacher from any and all challenges ... but this is SUCH AN EXTREME CASE. I just don't see how half a dozen people can be allowed to control this decision. Some people may have to leave if they cannot accept what must be done. Sometimes you just cannot get unanimous agreement, and must take strong steps anyway.

I've just learned that at the conclusion of the ZSS Sangha meeting held last weekend that Eido Roshi's staunch supporters plan to organize an effort to buy the New York Zendo, Shobo-Ji, from ZSS so that Eido Roshi can continue to teach them and others. Their first step will be to see if Eido Roshi is open to the idea. It is fine with me if his staunch supporters want to continue to meet with him at some venue of their choosing off campus, but I think the idea of selling Shobo-Ji to Eido Roshi or the Eido Roshi faction is ludicrous and morally bankrupt. It is apparent that one or more of the few remaining ZSS board members thinks this idea has some merit. If the ZSS board were to agree to sell Shobo-Ji to this faction of enablers they would become enablers themselves. I also know that if you asked the majority of those still practicing at Shobo-Ji since Eido Roshi's departure, they would be aghast at the idea of selling their center out from under them. I call on an immediate vote of the ZSS board to firmly close the door on this possibility.

Turning any part of ZSS property over to a known serial abuser of basic ethical guidelines, who has seriously wounded many lives with his sexual misconduct with students over decades, would be a travesty beyond measure. Surely it is not asking too much of the ZSS board that assures us that Eido Roshi will not teach again on its property, that it will not sell to a faction of supporters that will encourage him to teach again!

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Pedestrian on Wed Aug 31, 2011 3:54 pm**

Well, those actions pretty well confirm Shushan's cautions above. My points about NP organization boards assumed far too much about ZSS, clearly. How terribly sad.

Pedestrian

Chris Amirault

Pedestrian

**by Shusan on Wed Aug 31, 2011 5:27 pm**

Christopher said "it might not be such a bad outcome for a healthy outside Zen Buddhist organization to come in and simply start over with ZSS, from scratch."

This is another level of the tragedy of all this. This small, faltering organization that was begun by such a seminal figure, DT Suzuki, was to my mind hijacked by Shimano; it was a tiny little study group until Shimano used it as his escape hatch from Hawaii, and platform to build his empire of predation and control. It would have been a minor footnote in American Buddhist history if Shimano had not arrived when he did. And so much more the loss.

I've written some things about Adi Da Samraj; I've found him to be a classic case study in pathological inflation and cult development, but sort of on steroids. The parallels with Shimano are in some ways quite striking.

They were born about the same time, and their stars rose in the same era of post-hippie boomer idealism and cultural experimentation. They were both heavily into a theatrical, costume-y, hierarchical, authoritarian, highly sexualized, psychologically manipulative pseudo-spiritual scene. Both ended up totally alienated from their more traditionally-rooted teachers. They both coasted for decades on large endowments and donations that the era made possible for them to get control of and build some gorgeous compounds with. Many of their followers claim they demonstrated extraordinary personal charisma and "spiritual power." I could go on. I'm a Gen X'r myself, and I can't imagine being attracted to either one of these guys - I think they precisely delineate certain psychological shadows of an era.

The ZSS as a org. doesn't have the historical or current institutional legs to say "we were this other thing before - we can bring in new leadership and reconfigure." They were a few years old teacherless 'zen study' (not practice) 'society' (not temple or center) before Shimano came in and developed this utterly dysfunctional cult over 45 years. There is no one there who predates him, or some tradition to fall back on. It's Shimano's cult - it's not a respected "Rinzai" institution, with deep ties to a larger organization or constellation in Japan or the US (Rinzai teachers in Japan have little respect for Shimano - he is considered something of an embarrassment by most, and there are serious questions about his fundamental credentials, much less his behavior. We know what most American teachers think about him.) The majority of his own heirs have cut the cord with him and ZSS precisely due to his abuses - yet none that I know have cared to give up the titles granted by him, which I find interesting.

This is exactly a large part of the problem. If it had been either of those things, there would now be some support to fall back on, some people to appeal to. But as I've said already, I think the only way forward for the ZSS community would be to completely restructure with a new, non-Shimano related teacher, and new board. As I've also said before, if this was a corporation, the entire board would be tossed over, an interim board would be instituted, the thing would be rebuilt, there would probably be radical dispensation of property, etc etc etc.

Instead its limp limp squabble "moderate hiatus" type talk. How could it be otherwise, when everyone involved is utterly, completely, and totally compromised by being where they are (as teacher, monk, student, or board member) solely due to Shimano himself?

Of course it would be heinous if Shimano's closest, most denial-bound groupies (who let's not forget included nearly everyone still involved until not very long ago - read the Aitken blog comments from last year) get their hands on one of the properties and perpetuate their cult, further alienating the majority who I'm sure are primarily motivated by noble intentions to just have a place to gather and practice with each other without all of this psychodrama. But the whole thing was built on psychodrama. The language of his teaching and even that of his heirs is still psychodramatical. There was a cancer growing within the body of the thing since the day Shimano showed up. The body is riddled with it. There are decades of documents tracking his activities, and the organization covering for him, apologizing for him, hiding his misdeeds, silencing and alienating his accusers, perpetuating in every way his actions. It is not "Bad Shimano" separate from "Good Organization that predated him." That's exactly the kind of f-ed up compartmentalization that got everyone into this mess in the first place. I guess my argument is that they are at this point utterly inseparable, as demonstrated by the way this has all been (largely mis-) handled over the last year, to today.

Yes, time will tell. It's a serious black eye for Buddhism in America, but a positive sign that the truth will out, and of a slowly but surely maturing American sangha. And you think young people today (the Gen Y's and Millennials) interested in Buddhism would go

for a teacher like Shimano? I seriously doubt it...I wouldn't have. We're hopefully learning a few things from the hard won lessons of our forbears.  
Shusan

**by 1handclapping on Wed Aug 31, 2011 7:47 pm**

Nonin wrote:

Whether ZSS is able to right itself and change its by-laws to include things like an elected board remains to be seen. The ethical gravitas of the organization also needs to be changed and their current Ethics Statement needs major revision and expansion. Most importantly, taking institutional responsibility for the wounding of so many women over the years needs to be at the forefront of the healing process.

I think all the deep organizational soul-searching, examination of failed ethics statements, analysis of the mechanics of board selections, etc. is a process which, though painful, is a good example for other organizations. There is tremendous learning going on here. I would hope that this experience could someday benefit other Buddhist organizations who need to face similar issues. I'd like to see the question of ethics discussed by sangha leadership nationwide, if not internationally. (I tend to dream big.) These problems crop up everywhere, and denial can be strong. The ideal would be to have effective ethics guidelines in place and an aware and conscientious board before a problem arises.

I'm very impressed and moved by this discussion. (Where is a :heart: emoticon when you need one?) ; )  
1handclapping

**by Nonin on Wed Aug 31, 2011 8:03 pm**

1handclapping said,  
I'd like to see the question of ethics discussed by sangha leadership nationwide

It has been for the last twenty years in the US. It's been taken up many times in both American Zen Teachers Association and in Soto Zen Buddhist Association meetings.

As a result, most temples and monasteries have drafted ethics statements that contain grievance procedures in case the ethical guidelines described therein are violated. And, The Buddhist Peace Fellowship publishes a booklet titled Safe Harbor that outlines ethical guidelines for Buddhist groups.

We display our organization's ethics statement prominently at both Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple and Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple. Here's a link to it. It about halfway down the page:

[viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1280](http://www.prairiewindzen.org/viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1280)

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by 1handclapping on Wed Aug 31, 2011 10:34 pm**

Thank you so much for this info, Nonin. I plan to poll local Buddhist centers where I live (which are Tibetan, mostly) to see what guidelines and procedures they have set up, as an informal study.

1handclapping

**by genkaku on Wed Aug 31, 2011 10:44 pm**

Genjo wrote:

I've just learned that at the conclusion of the ZSS Sangha meeting held last weekend that Eido Roshi's staunch supporters plan to organize an effort to buy the New York Zendo, Shobo-Ji, from ZSS so that Eido Roshi can continue to teach them and others. Their first step will be to see if Eido Roshi is open to the idea. It is fine with me if his staunch supporters want to continue to meet with him at some venue of their choosing off campus, but I think the idea of selling Shobo-Ji to Eido Roshi or the Eido Roshi faction is ludicrous and morally bankrupt. It is apparent that one or more of the few remaining ZSS board members thinks this idea has some merit. If the ZSS board were to agree to sell Shobo-Ji to this faction of enablers they would become enablers themselves. I also know that if you asked the majority of those still practicing at Shobo-Ji since Eido Roshi's departure, they would be aghast at the idea of selling their center out from under them. I call on an immediate vote of the ZSS board to firmly close the door on this possibility.



Turning any part of ZSS property over to a known serial abuser of basic ethical guidelines, who has seriously wounded many lives with his sexual misconduct with students over decades, would be a travesty beyond measure. Surely it is not asking too much of the ZSS board that assures us that Eido Roshi will not teach again on its property, that it will not sell to a faction of supporters that will encourage him to teach again!

Genjo

Assuming anyone is seriously considering the proposal Genjo has outlined, I think it would be a moral travesty (and that's as polite as I can be).

Craven in the extreme.

And for those still addicted to sweetly-modulated, hug-festival language, at least have the courtesy to familiarize yourselves with the background ... as for example in The Shimano Archive among many other sources.  
genkaku

**by PeterB on Wed Aug 31, 2011 11:46 pm**

Hello Adam...

PeterB

**by Genjo on Thu Sep 01, 2011 2:18 am**

Shusan wrote:

Instead its limp limp squabble "moderate hiatus" type talk. How could it be otherwise, when everyone involved is utterly, completely, and totally compromised by being where they are (as teacher, monk, student, or board member) solely due to Shimano himself?

Hello Shusan,

I answered your doubt and negativity about what I meant by "moderate hiatus" a few posts ago. See: [viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1300](http://viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1300)

I'm sorry you still see this as utterly, completely, and totally compromised.

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Thu Sep 01, 2011 6:08 am, edited 1 time in total.  
Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist  
and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Tenshin on Thu Sep 01, 2011 6:57 am**

Genjo wrote:

... but I think the idea of selling Shobo-Ji to Eido Roshi or the Eido Roshi faction is ludicrous and morally bankrupt. It is apparent that one or more of the few remaining ZSS board members thinks this idea has some merit. If the ZSS board were to agree to sell Shobo-Ji to this faction of enablers they would become enablers themselves.

Genjo

Genjo's point addresses the dysfunction exhibited by the one or more ZSS board members (I will call them, "The Attached Ones"), and how their inability to exhibit common sense and compassion is deadlocking / hanging the board. This is why this disaster has festered for so long. Until the truth about The Attached Ones, comes out into the open, nothing is going to change. ZSS will just bumble along until it ceases to exist.

There are likely some who, like Genjo, have taken the painful steps of opening their eyes to what has been a grand con game – and Genjo, I wish you would reconsider your resignation. I applaud them, as they are examples of the Dharma at work. Yeah, it sucks finding out you have been taken, but it certainly sucks more to let it continue.

Putting aside the immense suffering that Shimano has created, there is still the problem of individuals who have enabled and supported his actions over the years. A vast majority of these people have been board members of ZSS.

With the behavior and actions exhibited over this past weekend's meeting - and we are talking about violent and criminal behavior that in my unprofessional opinion strikes me as psychotic - one really has to ask why the board hasn't sent a unified message that, "Enough is enough; those who are attached to Shimano are free to call Shimano, make your own personal arrangements, and do whatever he asks of you. However, you are disruptive to the Sangha and are no longer welcome on ZSS property. Good bye." A half

dozen people / The Attached Ones are being allowed to hijack the desires of a Sangha that consists of multiples of more individuals.

Even after a board member's car was trashed in the parking lot at DBZ, the board is unable to stand in unity and state that they are putting a stop to this, now. The reason for this is The Attached Ones, who lack the intellectual horsepower, common sense, understanding, and compassion to put their needs aside for the benefit of the wider Sangha.

The question simply becomes how can the board be un-hung and the impasse cleared?

The answer is simple. Let the sun shine where it hasn't. Let the world see the opinions written by The Attached Ones. There are enough ex-recent board members with ample documentation that clearly shows The Attached One's cover-ups, deficient moral attitudes, scheming, and lack of ability to manage ZSS that they should simply and anonymously send that documentation to Kobutsu Malone so that the world can get the unabridged picture – THE TRUTH. The source of the materials needn't be identified – mail it in a manila envelope with no return address. Let the WW Sangha see the statements of those Attached board members, so they can truly see who these people are underneath their robes, Kesas, and fly whisks.

If you folks with relevant documentation would finally step up to the plate, this deadlock would finally be broken. IT IS IN YOUR POWER TO FIX THIS. Do you want to be enablers, too?

Come on – step up to the plate. Do the right thing. It's the same courage that supports your great doubt. Unload the documentation, and I promise you that it will take a huge weight off of your chests.

Hang loose,

-tenshin

Tenshin

**Page 69**

**by Genjo on Fri Sep 02, 2011 8:55 am**

Tenshin wrote:

The question simply becomes how can the board be un-hung and the impasse cleared?

The answer is simple.

FYI here is a copy of my latest letter to the ZSS Board...

Dear Board,

The question is how can the ZSS board demonstrate plainly that any impasse has cleared. I think the answer is relatively simple. I know a sincere effort was made at the Sangha Meeting, August 26-28, to bring the two factions together to hear each other so that movement could be made to arrive on the same page towards a healthy future, but it seems clear from the little I've heard of the meeting that the staunch supporters of Eido Roshi cannot even concede that there was sexual misconduct. Therefore, it is time to move on; please let the majority of those present be assured by your prompt actions that you heard them.

If together you can manage to quickly, 1) declare that under no circumstances will any ZSS property be sold to either Eido Roshi or some consortium that supports him, 2) exclude Eido Roshi from being on ZSS property indefinitely, 3) remind staunch supporters of Eido Roshi that they can train elsewhere, 4) offer an organizational apology to those the organization was not able to protect from serial abuses over decades, 5) adopt bylaws that allow for significant democratization of the board and the limiting of the role of abbot to conducting practice style and schedule, 6) announce that significant resources will be devoted to healing the deep wounds of those directly and indirectly harmed during Eido Roshi's tenure as Abbot, then and only then will this board be able to establish the credibility it needs to chart a healthy recovery and future. Take at least the first two steps immediately and I will rescind my resignation from the ZSS Board. The construction of the new Chobo-Ji Practice Center is nearly complete, and I have confidence that the root being planted will grow even if I remain a bit distracted by events in New York. However, if you are unable to take at least these two steps, then I will be approaching Chobo-Ji's board to end all affiliation with ZSS, at least until this impasse has cleared.

In my mind, only by taking these steps can the current board and abbot offer any evidence that the organization is capable of honoring the good Eido Roshi has done. I know many critics will say that he could not have done any good given his flaws, but I will continue to adamantly disagree and say unequivocally that anyone who thinks only in black and white or good or bad has learned nothing about what Zen Buddhism has to offer. He was for me and many others a significant catalyst in our own unfolding, and for this I will be forever grateful. However, since he has proven himself incapable of discerning the great damage he has done, it falls to the current abbot and board to do it for him. This is truly the only way the gifts he has given have any possibility of being appreciated over time. It was an error not to have any mention of why Eido Roshi retired so precipitously at his retirement Dec. 8th, at Shinge Roshi's installation Jan. 1st, at the "special announcement" July 2nd, or even in the recently released ZSS newsletter. I completely agree with Seigan [<http://www.zenforuminternational.org/viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1333>] that

there should be repeated acknowledgment of the terrible pain caused by both Eido Shimano Roshi and the organizational structure that allowed his abuses to go on for decades. May we all work concertedly to see that the wheel of Dharma turns with deep self-reflection and openheartedness at the practice centers we are associated with.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Genjo on Fri Sep 09, 2011 6:06 am**

Genjo wrote:

.... quickly, 1) declare that under no circumstances will any ZSS property be sold to either Eido Roshi or some consortium that supports him, 2) exclude Eido Roshi from being on ZSS property indefinitely, 3) remind staunch supporters of Eido Roshi that they can train elsewhere, 4) offer an organizational apology to those the organization was not able to protect from serial abuses over decades, 5) adopt bylaws that allow for significant democratization of the board and the limiting of the role of abbot to conducting practice style and schedule, 6) announce that significant resources will be devoted to healing the deep wounds of those directly and indirectly harmed during Eido Roshi's tenure as Abbot...

Several people have asked me if I have heard anything from the ZSS Board after sending this letter. Yes, three board members have contacted me about it including the Board President and Shinge Roshi. Shinge Roshi has said the Board will NOT be selling Shobo-Ji, the New York City Zendo, and is making her best efforts to support and encourage the practice there. The board president tells me that bylaw reform and completion of an audit are currently their top priorities. A third board member told me a report about the Sangha Meeting should be out soon and assured me that the "pro-Roshi faction" is not monolithic and some have even given praise to the boards actions, up to a point. Regarding the proposal to have Eido Roshi supporters buy Shobo-Ji, Shinge Roshi assured me it was not being considered by the board, but thought the idea had merit because it demonstrated thinking out of the box.

In my mind, this idea is more like thinking in the box, the box that has allowed Eido Roshi to continue to abuse the most vulnerable females under his spiritual care for

decades despite multiple well documented egregious violations of ethical guidelines and precepts. It was not so long ago that I too demonstrated "in the box" thinking. I will forever regret not paying more attention to Eido Roshi's history and not taking care that Ethical Guidelines with teeth and the Precepts were more prominent in our practice.

I definitely feel that the steps the ZSS Board are taking are good and necessary, but, in my mind, so far insufficient. As Shinge Roshi admitted to Olivia, "You are right, the complex and difficult loyalties have not allowed a clean and strong separation. I hear you"; in other words, a clean and strong separation has yet to be accomplished and is sorely needed. The most direct way to accomplish a clean and strong separation is to include in the board's next public offering some sort of statement that reads, "We are greatly saddened to conclude that Eido Roshi's continued lack of understanding of the great harm he has caused this sangha and American Zen necessitates that his presence be precluded from ZSS property indefinitely." Such a statement would go a long, long way to abating reasonable peoples fears that the abusing grandfather is still a presence on campus.

I know that ER does not have a key to NYZ, I know that he is not allowed to teach, and I know that he does not visit often, but it is much more than the most radical factions who need to see a "clean break" with Eido Roshi by the ZSS board. Despite his many flaws, Eido Roshi also has shown great genius, and sometimes he reminds me of other historical figures who have demonstrated both great gifts and great flaws. I believe that the organization owes Eido Roshi a lot for the gifts he has given, but I also believe that the organization owes a lot to those who have been harmed over the decades and were not adequately protected by the ZSS organization. It adds insult to their injuries, like rubbing salt in a wound, not to have Eido Roshi cleanly and completely excluded from the use of the properties. The fact that until recently ZSS Ethical Guidelines with teeth (admittedly they need additional refinement) and the Precepts were not more prominent in our practice, means to me, that the least we can offer those we did not adequately protect is to say he is around no more. This will give at least partial relief to those he abused, and I think much relief to the Maha-Sangha, which is watching carefully to see if the board can really turn 180 degrees away from the sordid past. As I see it, we must at least partially atone for the sins of our father. I know the Board is taking time to integrate the input received from the Sangha Meeting; I only hope this integration will lead to bold additional steps to help heal the ZSS sangha. To say Eido Roshi is "fully retired" is simply not enough.

Over this last year, what has hurt terribly is coming to realize the full extent of Eido Roshi's serial abuse of females under his spiritual care, yet more painful was watching him dissemble, rationalize and backslide from taking responsibility for his actions. As I have said many times, if he can't take and hold responsibility for his actions, it falls to us to do it for him. Though I am no longer on the board, I still have a lot of years invested in this organization and lineage, and I want it to right itself and thrive in time.

I've been told by those still attached to Eido Roshi that I have been hostile and power hungry, don't represent a balanced view and even compared to Mubarak refusing to yield

to reason, to them I say I truly believe we are all doing our best under very difficult trying circumstances. I want to also point out that this kind of rhetoric has been used to describe everyone who has stepped out of the box.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Shodo on Wed Sep 14, 2011 4:50 am**

Another poster has shared her story on genkaku's blog...

One of the seduced said...

I slept with Shimano.

One of the reasons I am posting this is because, from reading Genkaku's blog for the past months, if I did not know better, I might think Shimano slept with only a few women through these fifty some years – the few mentioned on the blog. I know other posters believe this.

From my short time around ZSS, I know, personally, three other women who slept with him, none of which have been mentioned.

The more tragic thing is that I know two young women, both about 18, whom Shimano tried to seduce but they were strong enough to refuse. One was extremely traumatized by the attempted seduction. The other, with great maturity, told me she looked at it as a good thing: to never, ever trust men of authority.

So that was 6 attempts, 4 successes, within a few short years. Six that I know of! How many do you think he slept with or attempted to seduce through all these years?

I will not get into the details of my experiences. I have considered "telling all" through these past months but after much consideration, have decided "no." What good would it do to tell all? Certainly would not consider talking to the ZSS board. And I don't know who's on this blog. Very few people (myself included) have the courage to use their real names – so I see no point in telling my story to a group of anonymous people.

But – to get to the point: Great appreciation to Kobutsu and Genkaku for all that they have done. If I had had access to this blog and the archives, I would never have connected with ZSS in the first place.

Which brings me to the purpose of this letter. Who knows what will happen down the line with ZSS. Who knows if ES will find a way to start teaching again. My one hope is that there is a way that the blog/archive information is made available to any person who may possibly come in contact with ES in the future as a student.

I don't know how this may be accomplished. I am hoping there is a way!

One request to Kobutsu: You have put endless hours of work into creating and maintaining the archives and I apologize for asking for more. But . . . several months ago, when I first started reading the posts, there was so much information I was not able to get through it all.

Could you possibly choose the most relevant & powerful posts – maybe 10, 20, 30 – and create a new page – a condensed, mini-history of the past 40, 50 years which could be used as a post to which we could refer people. Then, possibly, this could be compiled and distributed to future students, if it should come to that, to warn them of who they are choosing as their teacher.

These months (well, years actually) have been so difficult for so many people. Personally, knowing at least that others will be warned would be a huge part of healing. The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides nowhere. The Stranger: The Dude abides nowhere... I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Nonin on Tue Sep 20, 2011 9:35 pm**

Here's a letter from Abbot Roko Chayat, Shinge Roshi, to the ZSS Sangha concerning the Sangha Meeting held August 26-28:

Dear Sangha,

Our Sangha Weekend Meeting, facilitated by three members from An Olive Branch, brought together a wide range of people with diverse points of view, and the intensity of our discussions was mirrored by the weather: Hurricane Irene raged outside, the strong winds and rain purifying our hearts (as well as washing out our roads!).

We had planned this meeting with the goal of deeply hearing each other, knowing that no healing can occur when wounds are untended and left to fester; that we must have the



courage to uncover them, facing our pain from the past in the present, so that we can work toward a strong, healthy future. For a summary of the structure of the meeting, please see the link at the end of this email.

The most painful yet crucial aspect of the meeting was an adapted Samoan Circle. Soun Joe Dowling and I, together with AOB facilitators, sat in the inner circle, and participants from the outer circle took an empty chair in turn to speak.

#### What we heard

First, letters were read from several people who couldn't be there; one in particular was extremely moving in its articulation of the hurt and harm experienced from an unwanted teacher-student liaison. Quite a few spoke of their feelings of betrayal, disappointment and disillusionment. Someone noted how harmful the culture of secrecy and silence in the Sangha has been, which can cause one to deny what one sees and hears—to question one's own truth.

Others stressed the life-changing significance of Eido Roshi's teaching, his founding of New York Zendo and Dai Bosatsu Zendo, and the need to carry it forward authentically: "The Dharma is like holding water in one's palm; if it's held loosely, it will drain away. Our task is to offer this Dharma water to the next generation. We have to hand over exactly the same water. We don't want to color it, or it will destroy our tradition."

A woman who suffered deep sadness over losing Eido Roshi as her teacher said she has now been able to let go, and hopes others can as well, "so that we can go forward in the spirit of love and acceptance of each other, not allowing our views to fragment our Sangha. My attachment is to the Dharma, and to this place." Concurring, someone responded, "This is an amazing place. I have come to understand something beyond my own thinking. It's easy to become angry, but doing zazen helps that anger go away. We can respect Rinzai Zen practice for what it is—a real treasure. In our hearts we can find compassion to forgive the person who betrays us, or who shouts at us. We're human beings. My stand is to say, I love you." And another said, "This is the only place I can go to discover what I have inside. One must judge oneself, not others. We each have stories; this practice helps me see what is much bigger."

Someone said, "It's clear that these board members care so much, and they've done a phenomenal job, but most have been hand-picked by Eido Roshi. The board membership should be made up of professionals, and should rotate every three years." Agreeing, another person said, "Now we need to help these women [who were harmed by relationships with their teacher] come back to the Sangha, and make this into a safe place for women."

Someone expressed her joy at seeing people who left long ago who cared enough to return for this meeting, and her hope that they would come back to regular practice.

One of the newest Sangha members said, "I am beyond grateful. This is a magical place. Please don't let it be lost. My generation needs this. I know more young people will come. Please, please, keep it safe."

At the end of each person's comments, one of us responded by reflecting them back to show that they were deeply heard; and then the entire group declared, "We hear you!"

What came from our intense discussions was the realization that we are the beneficiaries of a rare and wonderful practice, Rinzai Zen; that deep listening to each other without crosstalk or snap judgments reveals the treasure of Sangha; and that we are responsible for shaping and guiding Rinzai Zen for future generations of practitioners on American soil.

#### Further reflections

Several people sent their further reflections to me in emails after the weekend. One person suggested that the attention and effort given to address the issues of the past, and to healing, can cripple the effort to establish a new vision, develop a new plan, and implement a sustainable future for ZSS. "There is a fine line between tending a wound and picking at it."

Another wrote, "All of us know that we are obliged to challenge dualistic moral judgment and appreciate the distinction—and lack of such—between the realm in which cause and effect are one and the realm in which they're separate. On the other hand, we must not forget that the world we live in is, thanks to media and pop-psychology, more materialistic, thus more addicted to such dualism and the simplistic moralism it produces...."

#### Moving Forward

In the wake of this important weekend, I have done the following:

Instructed the board to complete its review and revision of our by-laws to rationalize our governance decisions by October 15.

Nominated new board members with a broad range of backgrounds and professional skill sets to replace those who are stepping down. New members will begin serving in January 2012.

Ordered an in-depth financial audit to clarify our strongest sources of funding, get a better understanding of our operating and capital expense needs, and examine past practices that may not have been in the best interests of the Sangha. We are looking for this audit to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2012.

Begun to investigate ways to broaden our sources of funding, to create reliable income streams that are in line with our mission to offer Rinzai Zen in America. I plan on implementing these in the coming year.

To increase attendance at New York Zendo, I have planned an ongoing series of workshops and programs (like the one I organized recently at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in brushwork with Kazuaki Tanahashi), to include tea masters, bodywork practitioners, and traditional craftspersons, as well as lectures by visiting scholars to encourage study, in keeping with the vision of ZSS's first president, D. T. Suzuki.

To increase residency at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, I have begun work on a communication and public relations campaign to improve our visibility and make the world aware of what a great place this is for authentic Rinzai Zen training.

In these endeavors, I am receiving the enthusiastic support of Sangha and Board members, and I look forward to your participation as well.

This past Sunday I led an all-day sitting at Shobo-ji, and the Sangha was invited to join in a potluck dinner afterward. It is my hope that many more such informal gatherings will take place there, to encourage a warm and mutually supportive atmosphere.

Please join me for our next sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, Golden Wind, September 24–October 2. If you can't come for this one, do consider attending Harvest Sesshin, October 29–November 6, and Rohatsu Sesshin, November 30–December 8.

It is my intention to put the Zen Studies Society at the forefront of Zen in America once again. Our founding teacher has devoted his life to bringing the Dharma to the West. It is our job to uphold what we have received, and to improve upon the vehicle for actualizing it in our ever-changing world. I am completely dedicated to this.

Gassho,

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat

A summary of the August meeting prepared by the facilitators from An Olive Branch may be accessed here:

[http://www.zenstudies.org/Summary-Facil ... -16-11.pdf](http://www.zenstudies.org/Summary-Facil...-16-11.pdf)  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Tenshin on Wed Sep 21, 2011 4:44 am**

From Adam/Genkaku's blog

One of the Seduced said...

Dear Bloggers,

I do appreciate your suggestions that I tell my whole story. One of the reasons I will not do that at this time is that – if I did, I would be very clearly identifying myself – a pseudonym just wouldn't cut it. And as I said, I am not ready to do that.

Erasmus, I thought your post hit many points so right on.

From my experiences with him, I totally agree that he actually loves danger and the thrill of the possibility of being caught. I've often wondered at the processes of that man's brain that manifest in such contradictory actions. On the one hand, he consistently initiated "necking sessions" in locations that were very likely to be seen by others. On the other hand, he warned women to lie about their involvement with him (actually, I don't recall him telling me that but I have read it happened with others).

The first time I slept with ES, it was the result of date rape. He intentionally got me drunk. I was absolutely caught off guard, blindsided and completely devastated. The sad fact is that after the trauma of the situation and my immediate intention to leave and never return, I actually wound up sleeping with him two more times. And that is the shame I have carried with me and beaten myself up over for years.

<SNIP>

September 17, 2011 5:59 PM

[bold emphasis added by tenshin]

Thought it useful to Include this to avoid whitewashing. I believe it of import that people be informed so they can come to their own objective and independent conclusions. There is nothing to be gained by people being instructed as to what to think.

Tenshin

**by unsui on Wed Sep 21, 2011 10:32 am**

Tenshin wrote:

[bold emphasis added by tenshin]

Thought it useful to Include this to avoid whitewashing. I believe it of import that people be informed so they can come to their own objective and independent conclusions. There is nothing to be gained by people being instructed as to what to think.

I am stepping out on a limb here and am liable to be misunderstood. So, please understand that I, with all my heart and mind, know that this healing process for all the misused/abused must continue and that a substantial part of coming to terms with the reality of what has occurred is telling and re-telling and digesting the story so that the identification with it will be released. I also recognize the importance of the whole story coming out so that others may learn and pre-existing myths dissolved.

I don't know where or how I am being instructed what to think? Many places in this thread, there are partial excerpts from the Shimano archives, various blogs or minutes from sangha meetings that have been used to back the poster's agenda up. In this one, a single sentence is highlighted.

I am not so mature in my practice, but I experience many of the things that have been written as not in accordance with the fundamental precepts or the ten precepts - more than one post is vindictive and many reactions based on a personal scale of right/wrong or acceptable/unacceptable rather than the whole perspective.

We never will get a real chance for becoming totally informed as we haven't ourselves experienced the described situations or heard "the other side". There is a lack of balance. May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by Dan74 on Wed Sep 21, 2011 11:09 am**

I guess Eido Shimano or any of his supporters are welcome to join this site and present "the other side."

Earlier on in this thread before the recent incidents became widely known, there were quite a few "pro-Shimano" posts and genkaku was painted as someone harbouring a grudge and unwilling to let go. I am not sure if he ever received an apology for this but it would probably not be out of place as well as a thankyou for being one of the people that have helped bring about these long-overdue developments.

Dan74

**by unsui on Wed Sep 21, 2011 12:33 pm**

Nonin wrote:

Here's a letter from Abbot Roko Chayat, Shinge Roshi, to the ZSS Sangha concerning the Sangha Meeting held August 26-28:

Nonin, thank-you for posting this. It is heartening that we also see here the work that is being done and the investment in a strong healthy future.

In my reading of this, I see some contradictory statements, but this could be that I misunderstand things? Maybe it doesn't matter to ask about them here, since Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat probably doesn't follow this long conversation?!

Shinge Roko writes:

Someone said, "It's clear that these board members care so much, and they've done a phenomenal job, but most have been hand-picked by Eido Roshi. The board membership should be made up of professionals, and should rotate every three years."

and there has been talk of a more democratic process, but it ends up that Shinge Roko has:

Nominated new board members with a broad range of backgrounds and professional skill sets to replace those who are stepping down.

So maybe the democracy is for the future?

The degree of ambition expressed here seems quite odd from the POV of healing and going forward with awareness:

It is my intention to put the Zen Studies Society at the forefront of Zen in America once again.

but, again, maybe I have misunderstood something.

One thing I don't see anywhere is a discussion of the way earlier Dharma heirs have been "manipulated" out of the picture. It seems that there is just as painful a silence, regarding this part of history.

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by Genjo on Wed Sep 21, 2011 3:53 pm**

Nonin wrote:

Here's a letter from Abbot Roko Chayat, Shinge Roshi, to the ZSS Sangha concerning the Sangha Meeting held August 26-28:

...

Moving Forward

In the wake of this important weekend, I have done the following:

Instructed the board to complete its review and revision of our by-laws to rationalize our governance decisions by October 15.

Nominated new board members with a broad range of backgrounds and professional skill sets to replace those who are stepping down. New members will begin serving in January 2012.

Ordered an in-depth financial audit to clarify our strongest sources of funding, get a better understanding of our operating and capital expense needs, and examine past practices that may not have been in the best interests of the Sangha. We are looking for this audit to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2012.

Begun to investigate ways to broaden our sources of funding, to create reliable income streams that are in line with our mission to offer Rinzai Zen in America. I plan on implementing these in the coming year.

To increase attendance at New York Zendo, I have planned an ongoing series of workshops and programs (like the one I organized recently at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in brushwork with Kazuaki Tanahashi), to include tea masters, bodywork practitioners, and traditional craftspersons, as well as lectures by visiting scholars to encourage study, in keeping with the vision of ZSS's first president, D. T. Suzuki.

To increase residency at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, I have begun work on a communication and public relations campaign to improve our visibility and make the world aware of what a great place this is for authentic Rinzai Zen training.

...

It is my intention to put the Zen Studies Society at the forefront of Zen in America once again. Our founding teacher has devoted his life to bringing the Dharma to the West. It is our job to uphold what we have received, and to improve upon the vehicle for actualizing it in our ever-changing world. I am completely dedicated to this.

Gassho,

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat

Though I applaud these efforts, here is a list of what I think is missing:

- 1) No clean break with the past by excluding Eido Roshi from having use and access to the properties.
- 2) As yet insufficient democratization of the ZSS Board of Directors.
- 3) No organizational apology for its part in inadequately protecting students from serial abuses of Eido Roshi over decades.
- 4) As yet no resources devoted explicitly to the necessity of recognizing, educating, and repairing at least some of the damage done to the sangha by being subjected to decades of Eido Roshi's ethical breaches.
- 5) As yet no resources devoted to making some sort of reparations to the victims and survivors of Eido Roshi's sexual abuses. I don't mind that Eido Roshi is given a comfortable retirement package for the gifts he has given, but shouldn't at least some if not equal resources be set aside to deal with his abuses of rank and post that have caused such harm?

I'm sorry, but without these steps Shinge Roshi and the board are demonstrating that they have more loyalty to the man than to protecting and propagating the Dharma. I believe without these steps the board is severely diminishing any possibility of ZSS becoming a healthy place to practice Rinzaï Zen in the West.

With palms together and hope for more complete and essential action,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Nonin on Wed Sep 21, 2011 4:02 pm**



Unsui,

I don't have the answers to any of your questions, I have no connection to ZSS. I've been following the events there as an interested bystander, and I received Shinge Roshi's letter and the attached summary by An Olive Branch as a posting on a Zen Buddhist teachers' listserv that I subscribe to. Because it was also posted on other websites, it's public knowledge, so I posted it here for people's information.

Why don't you contact Shinge Roshi or someone else on the ZSS Board directly and ask her about your concerns? There's a place for contacts at the ZSS website.

I, too, noticed that she's nominated new people to serve on ZSS's Board of Directors. I assume that those nominations mean that someone will then vote, but I don't know for sure and who that will be, whether the current Board or the sangha as a whole. I don't know what their current by-laws are on this matter.

Whether ZSS will be able to recover from this debacle and forge a positive future still remains to be seen. I regard the August meeting and subsequent actions as outlined in Shinge's letter as positive steps. We'll just have to wait and see.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Shusan on Wed Sep 21, 2011 4:07 pm**

Further reflections

Several people sent their further reflections to me in emails after the weekend. One person suggested that the attention and effort given to address the issues of the past, and to healing, can cripple the effort to establish a new vision, develop a new plan, and implement a sustainable future for ZSS. "There is a fine line between tending a wound and picking at it."

Another wrote, "All of us know that we are obliged to challenge dualistic moral judgment and appreciate the distinction—and lack of such—between the realm in which cause and effect are one and the realm in which they're separate. On the other hand, we must not forget that the world we live in is, thanks to media and pop-psychology, more materialistic, thus more addicted to such dualism and the simplistic moralism it produces...."

There it is - yet more deflection. Shinge actually wraps up her summary of the Olive Branch event with these quotes. Anyone else notice this? She includes these two statements, but not any that state Shimano might be pathological, and even criminally liable. No, she leaves it all with the hint that the problem is with the community for being "simplistic" and "dualistic" and that this wound is already on its way to 'healing itself' and that we should stop "picking at it."

These were just emails. She didn't have to include these sentiments. Or, as i say, she could have included more negative assessments too. So she reveals how she really feels about it. No doubt she wants to move on. No doubt she wants to find ways for Shimano to be excused in some way.

This man is a dangerous predator. The damage he has done not only to individual women, whose lives have been irrevocably harmed, but to the Dharma and Zen in America, is incalculable. This is NOT "simplistic, dualistic moralism". This is the crystal clear reality of a situation. As much as he built the ZSS as a "noble place of practice" Shimano also built it as his private fiefdom of control and stage for his predations - there is no separation. I see more and more evidence at every step in this process that Shimano's people have inherited his profound dysfunctional ability to compartmentalize, deflect, and defer. All of this talk of "absolute" realities versus "conditional" realities, that I see bandied about by all of his students (largely used to deflect the sharp spear point of truth), is sheer heresy, and a total distortion of Zen and Buddhism.  
Shusan

**by Shodo on Wed Sep 21, 2011 5:36 pm**

I don't know if anyone has seen this yet... A letter from Lawrence Shainberg to Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... Chayat.pdf>

Sept. 5, 2011

Dear Shinge Roshi,

I know that, since I've not been a member of ZSS, I may not be completely qualified to offer my observations on the crisis faced by the organization now, but as a member of the

Ethics Committee, I was invited to Olive Branch meetings, so I had the chance to see first-hand the anger, sadness and confusion which Eido Roshi's behavior has produced. I am also a long-time Zen student, training primarily with Kyudo Roshi, the third of Soen Roshi's successors and, until his death three years ago, Abbot at Ryutakuji, where I and others of his New York students often did sesshin and residencies. It seems to me that Kyudo's connection with Soen makes Dai Bosatsu part of my own lineage, so I can't look at the crisis with complete detachment. Finally, my work as a writer has often centered on Zen, producing, among other things, a cover article for THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE on Dai Bosatsu at the time of its opening and, more recently, the memoir, AMBIVALENT ZEN. For what they're worth then, here are my thoughts in the aftermath of the Olive Branch attempt at mediation.

I am as bewildered as anyone else by Eido Roshi, but it seems to me that, as Zen students, we must bring our practice to bear on our response to him. All of us know that our roots are in the Heart Sutra, the identity of Relative and Absolute, thus that we are obliged to challenge dualistic moral judgment and appreciate the distinction -- and lack of such -- between the realm in which cause and effect are one and the realm in which they're separate. On the other hand, we must not forget that the world we live in is every day, thanks to media, pop-psychology and the righteous fury of political correctness, more addicted to such dualism and the simplistic moralism it produces. It is obvious to us all, I think, that our practice requires us to find a Middle Way which avoids such moralism without denying that Eido's behavior has had concrete effect in the relative world. One doesn't have to forgive his malfeasance to acknowledge that Shoboji, DBZ and the Zen Studies Society in general owe their existence to his realization, and one doesn't deny that realization by holding him accountable for the repercussions of his behavior. If he's failed us as a human being, he's not the first master whose realization did not carry over into the Relative Realm, and if we continue to revere him, we are not the first students to benefit from an imperfect teacher. In effect, we are required to judge him and not judge him simultaneously, practice with our response to him as we practice with our koans on and off our cushions.

In addition to this particular koan, ZSS has to face two concrete realities. First, while many students want to see Eido barred from teaching altogether, some want to continue their work with him and resent those who would prevent their doing so. It seems to me that ZSS owes it to these students to make possible continuation of their practice in any framework they choose. Second, the society faces daunting financial and legal issues produced not only by this crisis and the legal threat it has generated but the enormous amount of property it owns. I don't underestimate these challenges but I see one way to deal with them. Traumatic though it would be, ZSS could challenge Eido Roshi and his supporters to raise the money to buy Shoboji. If he could do so, the tangible benefits of this transaction would be huge. Those who remain devoted to him would have a chance to continue their studies, and those who can't forgive him would not have to cross paths with him or them. Hopefully, the anger and conflict between these two groups would be defused. If Eido crosses lines he's crossed in the past, he alone would pay the price for doing so, and anyone who studies with him, knowing of his past, would have to take responsibility for any interaction that occurs. Finally, the ZSS would not only

acknowledge its debt to Eido and restore this controversy to the Zen perspective from which it needs to be seen but see itself financially stabilized and, downsized from the unmanageable amount of property it owns, secure in its capacity to support DBZ.

Respecting his realization as I do, I can't believe that anything I've said above has not occurred to Eido Roshi himself. If so, the hope would be that the combination of this humbling, painful experience and the opportunity to resume teaching in an independent framework would enable him, at last, to acknowledge the choices he's made and offer concrete, honest teachings on their causes and effects. Since sexual issues like those he's created are close to epidemic among those with power in our culture (see Bill Clinton, Eliot Spitzer, numerous Catholic priests, and spiritual teachers like Maezumi Roshi, Chogyam Trungpa, Baker Roshi, Gempo Merzel, and many others), the insights produced by these teachings might be profound and valuable beyond any we can imagine. I can't speak for anyone else of course but I know that, while I've not been Eido Roshi's student, I'd make every effort to study with him at this juncture of his life. I know there are those who will be enraged at this proposal but to me it seems inarguable.

Respectfully/Lawrence Shainberg

I'm starting to see where this is all sadly headed.

I guess this was the letter Roko was referencing in Shusan's above post. Calling the abuse of dozens of women from Eido's unceasing predations a horrible thing as "simplistic moralism" is in my opinion shameful.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides nowhere.

The Stranger: The Dude abides nowhere... I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Bob Skank on Sat Sep 24, 2011 9:52 pm**

On the thread Zen Practice Is Difficult and Dangerous, PeterB wrote: "I am reminded of one of Trungpa Rinpoche's most frequent sayings: 'It's best not to get into this at all unless you are prepared to go all the way. Otherwise you will end up in a worse situation than when you started.' Buddha Dharma is not about an easier life. It's about seeing what is. All of it."

Yes.

At age 47 Trungpa died of drinking and smoking, I believe, or so people close to him say. His first heir, Osel Tendzin, infected at least one of his students with HIV and died himself of AIDS, I believe. One of Richard Baker's lovers committed suicide, I'm told.

Clearly, the practice can be difficult and dangerous even for its most accomplished practitioners and for their students.

In the USA, for every three homicides—about 15,000 a year—there are five suicides, for every successful suicide there are eleven attempts, and everyone is aware that many citizens suffer from depression and mental illness or are addicted to alcohol and drugs of one kind or another.

Life is difficult and dangerous even for those who do not practice zen. I have known several dozen people who called themselves Buddhists and—except for the handful who were priests—none of these people in my opinion had "gone all the way," an expression by which I think is meant renunciation. On the whole I believe that Buddhist practice, even for those who cannot "go all the way," is for most who try it a good thing.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by 1handclapping on Sun Sep 25, 2011 5:11 am**

Bob Skank wrote:

On the thread Zen Practice Is Difficult and Dangerous, PeterB wrote: "I am reminded of one of Trungpa Rinpoche's most frequent sayings: 'It's best not to get into this at all unless you are prepared to go all the way. Otherwise you will end up in a worse situation than when you started.' Buddha Dharma is not about an easier life. It's about seeing what is. All of it."

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Bob

?! I thought Buddhism was about the cessation of suffering, and about practicing compassion. This sounds like it's about causing suffering and practicing heedlessness.  
1handclapping

**by Bob Skank on Sun Sep 25, 2011 5:51 am**

Handclapping wrote:

Bob Skank wrote:

On the thread Zen Practice Is Difficult and Dangerous, PeterB wrote: "I am reminded of one of Trungpa Rinpoche's most frequent sayings: 'It's best not to get into this at all unless you are prepared to go all the way. Otherwise you will end up in a worse situation than when you started.' Buddha Dharma is not about an easier life. It's about seeing what is. All of it."

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At age 47 Trungpa died of drinking and smoking, I believe, or so people close to him say. His first heir, Osel Tendzin, infected at least one of his students with HIV and died himself of AIDS, I believe. One of Richard Baker's lovers committed suicide, I'm told. Clearly, the practice can be difficult and dangerous even for its most accomplished practitioners and for their students

Bob

?! I thought Buddhism was about the cessation of suffering, and about practicing compassion. This sounds like it's about causing suffering and practicing heedlessness.

Yes, Clapping Hand, as you know, the conduct of a few Buddhist teachers has put many in the American Buddhist community on the defensive. I thought my post belonged on the thread I mention to begin my post, since I meant to differ with the opinion expressed there that practice is dangerous for those who are not prepared to go "all the way" and for those who attempt to practice without a teacher, but I was advised that because my post seemed off topic I should perhaps post it here on this thread since I refer to alleged misconduct by teachers.

Okay.

The point I wanted to make was simply that I do not believe that trying to practice Buddhism, by which I mean a combination of studying the Truths and the Path, practicing meditation, and following the ethical precepts, is at all "dangerous," as several people here have now warned. I believe exactly the opposite! I encourage it! It saddens me to hear Buddhists saying that practice without a teacher and even practice with [!] a teacher are dangerous and that anything short of renunciation and total commitment can result in anything from mental illness to tragedy.

Please!

Is there any documentation of even a dabbler, a dilettante, without a teacher, suffering death or serious consequences from trying to practice Buddhism?

I don't know but I've never heard of any.

But on the other we do have documentation of serious practitioners, with teachers, who did give it their all and did indeed suffer serious and tragic consequences.

I do not understand the thinking of some of the Buddhists on this site who acknowledge that they began slowly themselves, a little at a time, dipped a toe into the Buddhist pond, tested its temperature, sat a while on the shore, and practiced for a time on their own before they jumped in, yet seem intolerant of others who are doing exactly the same thing.

What is up with that, Clapping Hand?

I don't get it.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by 1handclapping on Sun Sep 25, 2011 5:50 pm**

Thank you for the clarification, Bob, I haven't seen that other thread, a bit of context helps. My comment more correctly belongs in Trungpa's mailbox, rather than yours. I also don't appreciate his double-entendre re: being willing to "go all the way" in Buddhism. \*cough\* ahem.

"What's up with that?", indeed! What's up with all of it?

I'm alarmed by the letter posted above, which states, "...our roots are in the Heart Sutra, the identity of Relative and Absolute, thus we are obliged to challenge dualistic moral judgment and appreciate the distinction --and lack of such--between the realm in which cause and effect are one and the realm in which they're separate. ... [E.S.] is not the first master whose realization did not carry over into the Relative Realm..."

If this kind of gobbledygook is what Buddhism teaches as a response to violent crimes, callous opportunism and total disregard for professional ethics (not to mention students' well-being), I want out. It's tragic that circumstances have come to this, but the time has clearly come across the Mahayana spectrum for a serious questioning of certain teachings, with the goal of adjusting them to 21st Century reality and mores. For the present, I'm keeping my roots out of the Heart Sutra.

The Dalai Lama, whose tradition is far from free of "issues" (\*cough\*), has a refreshing take on masters having trouble walking the line between "Relative and Absolute":

"If a teacher's actions are unethical, then, even if they have practiced for many years, their practice has been wrong-footed. Quite simply, they lack a proper understanding of the Dharma. There is a 'gap' between the Dharma and their life."

Ihandclapping

**by Carol on Sun Sep 25, 2011 6:22 pm**

Ihandclapping wrote:

If this kind of gobbledygook is what Buddhism teaches as a response to violent crimes, callous opportunism and total disregard for professional ethics (not to mention students' well-being), I want out.

Fortunately this isn't what Buddhism teaches ... it's the deluded self-serving gobbledygook of someone afraid of his own shadow.

Ihandclapping wrote:

"If a teacher's actions are unethical, then, even if they have practiced for many years, their practice has been wrong-footed. Quite simply, they lack a proper understanding of the Dharma. There is a 'gap' between the Dharma and their life."

Yes.

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol

Global Moderator

**by Genjo on Fri Oct 07, 2011 7:37 am**

Shodo wrote:

I don't know if anyone has seen this yet... A letter from Lawrence Shainberg to Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... Chayat.pdf>

Sept. 5, 2011

Dear Shinge Roshi,

I know that, since I've not been a member of ZSS, I may not be completely qualified to offer my observations on the crisis faced by the organization now, but as a member of the Ethics Committee, ... It seems to me that ZSS owes it to these students to make possible



continuation of their practice in any framework they choose. ... I know there are those who will be enraged at this proposal but to me it seems inarguable.

Respectfully/Lawrence Shainberg

I'm starting to see where this is all sadly headed.

Recently I had the good pleasure to read the "Informational Paper" ([http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... \\_Paper.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011..._Paper.pdf)) presented to the Zen Studies Society (ZSS) at the all Sangha Meeting held August 26-28, by Rev. Kyoki Roberts, the lead facilitator from An Olive Branch. The paper starts out by going over the fact that thirteen states, but not New York, have enacted long overdue statutes making Sexual Conduct by Clergy a felony. By these enlightened standards my own Dharma Father would probably be behind bars after his very likely conviction(s) if subject to these laws honoring basic ground rules of ethical decency. And yet he is still allowed on campus, and at times shows up when Shinge Roshi, his successor, is not present, and apparently everyone acts like nothing has changed. Of course those present find it very disorienting to say the least. I find this totally unacceptable, and again call for the ZSS Board to insist that Eido Roshi be banned indefinitely from ZSS property. Here is a man who by a reasonable estimate not only seduced and slept with dozens of vulnerable students under his spiritual care over the course of decades, but also plied some with alcoholic libations and forced himself on them. There is a first hand account of a senior student of Eido Roshi's on the blogs that confirms just such an act. Many may not know who this student is, as she wishes to remain anonymous, but I have a good idea whom this is, and knowing this person, I totally accept her account as completely credible.

The "Informational Paper" goes on to say that resources need to be devoted to "educate your Sangha on prevention of misconduct and the abuse of power within a Sangha. Get training in communication, conflict resolution and family systems... You may want to create a task force to oversee and plan the events, education, and training that your community will need to re-create itself." In addition, the paper calls for the board to address "structural issues" such as membership and board representation that just may help prevent future excessive abuses of power and authority centered on one person. The paper notes that there are "victims of sexual misconduct who need your support" and a Sangha that is "desperately trying to figure out what to do."

I ask where in Shinge Roshi's letter to the ZSS Sangha summarizing her response to the Sangha Meeting (also posted on this page of this forum) does she move forward on these essential points presented by Rev. Kyoki Roberts? Instead of committing the organization to structural reforms that would decentralize power by making the organization membership based with a primarily elected board, we hear about how there is going to be a "review and revision of our by-laws to rationalize our governance decisions". Moreover, we read how new unnamed board members are being essentially appointed to board positions vacated by those who demanded more from this organization than it

seems capable of giving. Since June of last year, five board members have resigned because more was not being done. Where is any kind of commitment to “educate your Sangha on prevention of misconduct and the abuse of power with the Sangha”? Where is the needed support for the many victims of sexual misconduct perpetrated by the founding abbot and serially minimized and inadequately addressed by previous ZSS boards?

At one point, the “Informational Paper” says, “For much of this past year Eido has been trying to figure a way back into teaching. That is exactly what he has managed to do before... This time it didn’t work and on July 2nd he stated,... ‘I will stop doing dokusan and giving teisho in a formal way’ ... With these words, Eido finished teaching and working with students.” However, I have in my possession an email from Eido Roshi, addressed to the ZSS Board President and copied to other board members including myself dated July 5th, asking to be allowed to lead zazen at New York Zendo, teach Zen classics in a classroom format, stating, “Thus, everyone will have the opportunity to share the enthusiasm while I am still able to teach. And when the time comes, I will send them to DBZ and they will start (like Freshman) their zazen training.” My fellow members of the ZSS Board insisted that this letter was an aberration of a desperate man. They said it should not be released because it would be confusing, embarrassing, and further damage his reputation. How is that possible? I resigned from the board because after the Board received this letter exposing Eido Roshi’s sham of stepping down from all teaching, the majority of the ZSS Board, including the Board president and current abbot were not willing to insist on even a moderate hiatus of Eido Roshi’s presence on ZSS property. I should have released the letter earlier, though I did not cover it up and publicly spoke of its content. Here is a redacted (email addresses removed) copy:  
<http://www.choboji.org/Transcript.pdf>

Moreover, as late as Sept. 5th of this year, a proposal by Lawrence Shainberg, who is unbelievably to me still on the current ZSS ethics committee, seriously suggests that Eido Roshi’s supporters be given the opportunity to buy the New York Zendo – Shobo-Ji, so that Eido Roshi could continue to teach there! No one can stop him from teaching if there are enough fanatics to make that happen, but for Buddha’s sake I’m glad to report the ZSS Board will not entertain this absurd but well stated argument that is also printed on this page of this forum. The point is there is no way Eido Roshi is not behind these attempts to find new venues to continue teaching and the least the ZSS Board can do is definitively restrict him from all further access to ZSS property. How can the Sangha hope to regain a solid footing while he remains present? Sadly, the founding abbot has almost no awareness of his crimes or the harm that he has done. More sadly to me, the current abbot still supports his presence on campus and doesn’t appear to understand that much more needs to be done to foster real healing within the ZSS Sangha.

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Fri Oct 07, 2011 3:45 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by genkaku on Fri Oct 07, 2011 1:37 pm**

Here is the publicly-available, uncorrected letter from Eido Shimano (as dictated to Martin Hara) to Soun Joe Dowling:

From: Martin Hara

Date: July 5, 2011 2:32:30 PM PDT

To: Soun Joe Dowling

Cc: Shinge Roshi Roko Sherry Chayat , Shinkon, Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz, Genjo Joe Marinello, Shoteki Chris Phelan, Zenshin Richard Rudin

Subject: DBZ Transcript

Dear Soun

Although I agreed not to mention about the Shoboji key matter, I did not agree to ignore Zensho's question and my response. This must be clearly transcribed and distributed to the ZSS sangha properly.

The reason why I feel that this is so important, is that if we dont nurture the seeds of future Dharma students, the continuuity will not be done. By my doing zazen meetings (no dokosan no teisho) rather than formal sesshins, my intention is to sit together and study the zen classics in a classroom format. Thus, everyone will have the opportunity to share the enthusiasm while I am still able to teach. And when the time comes, I will send them to DBZ and they will start (like Freshman) their zazen training. Even Harvard university would disappear in ten years if there were no freshmen students. No one in our sangha wishes THIS for the future of DBZ and Shoboji. What we all need to do is to nurture the next generation. Shoboji's Public Meetings on Thursday Night used to be the entrance gate. We seriously need to think the reactivation of Thursday Nights.

With the cooperation of the ZSS board, what i can do is start sowing the seeds of the plant for the next season. Right now we are too involved with present problems and have not been concerned about the future ten or twenty years from now. DBZ is already 35 years old. Time flies and I am getting older. These students will grow and become the core of the next generation. Same is true in Japanese Dharma Classes. Yusen, Shinobu, Junko, Julie, and others who are regularly going to DBZ to help each weekend are all from the Japanese Dharma Class. So without their presence, DBZ will suffer a greater impact.

I am not creating a new Sangha. Instead, I am hatching new eggs for the future growth of Shinge's students. Who would know? some of them will become future residents, some of them will be future monks. this is what i regard as important from my response to Zensho's question.

Therefore I urge you to include my comment in response to Zensho's question.

Gassho,  
Eido Shimano

Send from Martin Hara as dictated by Eido Shimano Roshi  
Martin Hara

Letter available at:  
[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... owling.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...owling.pdf)  
genkaku

**by christopher::: on Fri Oct 07, 2011 2:00 pm**

All the talk of "sowing the seeds of the plant for the next season" and "hatching new eggs" just illuminates the depth of his delusion, imo. If Shimano wants to teach his old students at his apartment, okay... but to request repeated access to young people, beginning students?

Oy...

Has anyone talked seriously about handing the ZSS/DBZ facilities over to a different Zen group, as D.T. Suzuki's group handed ZSS over to Shimano? I think people are afraid to let this Sangha "die out" but it would probably be the healthiest thing, Nature's way.

Letting go of fear and attachment to forms and identity, letting go of delusions, cultivating deep wisdom and compassion - isn't this what Dharma practice is all about? Getting these glimpses at how Shimano thinks, he seems so far away from that.

Ihandclapping wrote:

The Dalai Lama, whose tradition is far from free of "issues" (\*cough\*), has a refreshing take on masters having trouble walking the line between "Relative and Absolute":

"If a teacher's actions are unethical, then, even if they have practiced for many years, their practice has been wrong-footed. Quite simply, they lack a proper understanding of the Dharma. There is a 'gap' between the Dharma and their life."

So true.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher::  
 Founding Member

## Page 70

**by Carol on Fri Oct 07, 2011 5:08 pm**

Folks, we're seeing a deeply delusional man clinging to the shreds of what supplied him with an identity for several decades. It's beyond outrageous ... it's profoundly sad. Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
 Global Moderator

**by Nonin on Fri Oct 07, 2011 6:37 pm**

Yes, it is profoundly sad. And from what I've heard, he's a sad old man limping his way through the morass he's put himself in. Whether he'll ever emerge from it, who knows? Will those hurt by his behavior ever receive the apologies that they deserve? Who knows? Will ZSS ever emerge from the morass that Eido Shimano and others who never productively and positively dealt with his behavior put the organization in over the years? Who knows? Will the organization re-structure itself and proceed in a positive direction? Who knows? It's going to take quite awhile for the situation to resolve in any direction.

Everyone, If you read the Informational Paper prepared by Rev. Kyoki Roberts of An Olive Branch, you'll get clearer picture of what the whole situation is about. Genjo already linked to it. Here's another link:

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... \\_Paper.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... _Paper.pdf)

Hands palm-to-palm,

nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin  
Global Moderator

**by Bob Skank on Sat Oct 08, 2011 2:34 am**

In the "Informational Paper" prepared by Rev. Kyoki Roberts of An Olive Branch and available at the link provided by Rev. Chowaney, Rev. Roberts says: "In my own lineage, I know that three of the seven male (43%) dharma heirs have committed sexual misconduct...." Rev. Roberts adds that "all three went public with their actions, all three made public apologies, all were one time only, and all three, after significant intervention, returned to teaching."

I was told by an unimpeachable source that Rev. Dosho Mike Port engaged in a sexual relationship with a student of his in Minnesota; but I have not heard the identities of the other two dharma heirs mentioned by Rev. Roberts.

Who are they? Or has this information become again relatively confidential? It might be helpful to us students to hear these three priests describe and explain the conditions and causes of their "misconduct."

Many of us have struggled with desire.

I gather that Rev. Dainin Katagiri, who is also known to have had sex with a student, is not one of the three priests to whom Rev. Roberts refers, since Katagiri kept his sexual misconduct secret, I am told, and it was revealed only after his death. I infer that he made no public admission nor "public apology."

Is this correct?

Rev. Roberts suggests, rightly, I think, that priests may assume that "if a priest's teacher did it, the priest can too, creating a Zen family norm of misconduct."

Rev. Roberts says that "in 13 states it is a felony for clergy to have a sexual relationship with a member of his congregation" and that in Minnesota "a person who engages in sexual penetration with another person is guilty of criminal sexual conduct in the third degree if any of the following circumstances exists: the actor is or purports to be a member of the clergy, the complainant is not married to the actor, and: (i) the sexual

penetration occurred during the course of a meeting in which the complainant sought or received religious or spiritual advice, aid, or comfort from the actor in private; or (ii) the sexual penetration occurred during a period of time in which the complainant was meeting on an ongoing basis with the actor to seek or receive religious or spiritual advice, aid, or comfort in private. Consent by the complainant is not a defense."

Was Rev. Port charged with a felony? Or the other two "dharma heirs" who made a "public apology"?

Surely it is possible for us Zen practitioners and Zen priests to discuss these matters honestly and openly and reasonably in an understanding and forgiving way!

Yes?

My thanks to Rev. Roberts for her part in continuing such a discussion.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by christopher::: on Sat Oct 08, 2011 5:06 am**

Hi Bob.

The section of the informational paper that mentions Rev. Kyoki Roberts lineage also provides some very important contextual information, concerning the "enabling" factors that seem to be contributing to these problems...

While there have not been any studies that I know of within American Zen Buddhism, I suspect the incidence of sexual misconduct is very high. We create an intimacy in the zendo, the Buddha Hall, and the dokusan room that doesn't exist in any other spiritual community. We have both males and females, often in residency, and often new members come into the Sangha vulnerable because of divorce or trauma. We have the Zen mystique and we grant infallibility to the teacher. Whether we confront our teacher or he/she us, it is always our ego getting in the way.

Zen priests, historically, are completely untrained in transference -- the process in which a student unconsciously redirects feelings about something onto a new object, often the teacher or therapist -- and the use and mis-use of power. If a priest's teacher did it, the priest can too, creating a Zen family norm of misconduct. At the very least, a Zen teacher needs to know that a student may well fall in love with him or her, but it is always the teacher's responsibility to maintain the boundary between student and teacher.

Often Zen priests rely solely on the precepts as guides rather than being required to adhere to society's expectations as defined by specific laws, by-laws, or professional standards. Without an oversight body that can enforce behavior, priests are free to continue behaviors that, in other professions, would have their license to practice pulled or even criminal charges filed. In my own lineage, I know that three of the seven male (43%) dharma heirs have committed sexual misconduct and perhaps I just haven't heard about the others. (By the way, all three went public with their actions, all three made public apologies, all were one time only, and all three, after significant intervention, returned to teaching).

In cases where its been one or two instances only, and the teachers have already made apologies to their local sangha community, is it really in our best interest to "out them" - mention their names publicly?

What I think is more important is to look at the enabling factors and for those to be discussed, in depth. If teachers wish to step forward and talk about their own actions, that could be very helpful, but I for one don't feel comfortable finger pointing, drawing up a list and "naming names."

The exception, imo, would be teachers who have used deception to keep their situations secret or have stepped over the line so many times that all potential students should be warned...

That's part of the great tragedy of Shimano, that there was a culture of secrecy that developed, where young women would come to the Sangha time and time again, for decades, no one there warning them of the dangers. The teacher alone can not be blamed when that happens.

What is it in the culture and contexts of Zen Buddhism that contributes to such a tragedy, and how can these factors best be transformed and changed?

This is what's most important to consider, imo.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by Bob Skank on Sat Oct 08, 2011 2:44 pm**

christopher::: wrote:

I for one don't feel comfortable finger pointing, drawing up a list and "naming names."



Yes, I understand your point, Christopher, but to say, as Rev. Roberts does, that three of seven male dharma heirs in her lineage have been guilty of sexual misconduct puts all seven under suspicion. Rev. Roberts even adds: "[P]erhaps I just haven't heard about the others." To me it would seem fairer to all concerned just to acknowledge the facts. None of this is confidential, I infer, unless Rev. Roberts means something other than the usual understanding of the word "public."

Bob

Bob Skank

**by Kojip on Sat Oct 08, 2011 3:19 pm**

Bob Skank wrote:

christopher::: wrote:

I for one don't feel comfortable finger pointing, drawing up a list and "naming names."

..... puts all seven under suspicion.

Bob

Oh really? What is this experience of suspicion like? Thoughts? images? generally?

I agree with christopher's tone. There are some issues that have to be dealt with, by those involved with the situation, obviously, but a suspicious mind is my problem.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by Shusan on Sat Oct 08, 2011 3:31 pm**

I'm not sure it was necessary for Kyoki Roberts to get into the that kind of granular detail about her fellow heirs - it would have been enough to say there was misconduct that was healthily dealt with and resolved. So Bob can only partly be blamed for wanting more soap opera details, for a situation that has nothing to do with him, that needs no further discussion here, that is none of his (or my) business.

Really, this kind of mind, wanting to impugn other blameless teachers totally unrelated to this Shimano thing, and drag those who have processed, suffered, and moved on back

through the mud, is a terrifically unwholesome impulse. Bob, step away from the screen and keyboard for a minute, "drive all blame into the self", and put it all down. Which is what I am going to go do.

Gassho.

Shusan

**by Jundo Cohen on Sat Oct 08, 2011 3:32 pm**

Hi,

May I just drop something in here, as one who has been quite critical of folks like Eido and Genpo and the like? I have followed this thread all through, but it is taking a very uptight, puritanical turn here. Not all relationships are the same! I often say ...

This, in my mind, is what makes the difference between, for example, a "master" who may have fallen at some time in life into an affair ... and those that repeat the behavior again and again over many years. (That, in my mind, appears to be the difference between such cases and ... Genpo "Roshi" and Eido "Roshi" who seem to have repeated their harmful behavior over decades).

Eido appears to have been a serial predator, often employing physical and mental coercion over a number of vulnerable individuals resulting in great psychological harm to several.

But on the other end of the scale, "Eido" is vastly different from a teacher and a consenting, adult student who may be attracted to each other like any two people, beginning a relationship or falling in love without the element of coercion being present, with both parties having their eyes wide open. The "student" may be balanced and psychologically solid enough that the student is not swayed by the teacher being "the teacher". It is possible that two adult people simply fall for each other! I mean, we are not talking about a high school teacher and a 16 year old here! Some very good teachers have been "tarred and feathered" and ridden out of their Zen centers on a rail who should not have been.

Now, in between these two there may be many many cases where the teacher does take advantage (intentionally or unintentionally) of being looked upon as "the teacher", where the student is vulnerable, easily swayed and inequalities come into play. That is why teacher-student relationships are to be discouraged (many Zen centers in the west, ours included, have rules now such as that the teacher-student relationship should have been ended at least 6 months prior to limit the chance for this). These cases happen all too often and are to be criticized too.

However, I think it quite wrong to lump these three situations together. Not every teacher who fell/falls into a relationship with a student, ordained or non-ordained, is guilty of some harm. Some situations are perfectly natural and innocent. Nonetheless, folks (mostly Americans, I notice) prudishly have a tendency to lump all these situations together. So, saying that some teacher "had a relationship with someone who was a student" should not mean "that teacher is the same as Eido "Roshi" ... nor should it even mean that there is even anything necessarily improper about it at all.

Case by case.

Gassho, Jundo

PS - We are not talking about Buddhist clergy who have taken a vow of celibacy (different issues involved), but those who have taken the path of Buddhist clergy who vow "not to misuse sexuality". I believe many situations would not be abusive or a misuse of sexuality.

Last edited by Jundo Cohen on Sun Oct 09, 2011 3:24 am, edited 2 times in total.  
 Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/forum/viewforum.php?f=17](http://www.treeleaf.org/forum/viewforum.php?f=17)) & all of a Soto Sangha (<http://www.treeleaf.org>) Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by Carol on Sat Oct 08, 2011 4:00 pm**

Indeed, Jundo.

Thank you.

~Carol

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
 Global Moderator

**by christopher::: on Sat Oct 08, 2011 4:02 pm**

Yes, thank you Jundo.

Again, the big problem with naming names is it draws attention away from the many factors that contribute to these situations. We start to think in terms of the "guilty" and

the "innocent" which is a false view, imo. Many who may have done something wrong but have kept it a secret appear to be innocent while those whose offenses are known are viewed with mistrust. This is why I dislike terms like "exconvict" which becomes a scarlet letter someone has to carry around for the rest of their life. A person who has confessed and shows remorse for a misdeed should be forgiven. No need to speak of it anymore unless there is concern (as in the case of Shimano) that they have not shown remorse and/or continue to behave in the same way, harming others.

But most importantly the key enabling factors should be brought to light, and everyone should consider how these may have contributed to the situation. Otherwise the past just keeps repeating itself.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Bob Skank on Sat Oct 08, 2011 4:42 pm**

Shusan wrote:

I'm not sure it was necessary for Kyoki Roberts to get into the that kind of granular detail about her fellow heirs.... Bob, step away from the screen and keyboard for a minute, "drive all blame into the self," and put it all down.

An adulterer twelve times over in my first marriage, married, the father of two children, I fell in love with a student eleven years my junior, and we married, so when it comes to consensual sex between competent adults, I judge no man.

For the reasons cited by Rev. Cohen, I am appalled by the Minnesota law cited by Rev. Roberts. There but for the grace of god....

Bob

Bob Skank

**by Michaeljc on Sat Oct 08, 2011 5:39 pm**

Wow - 1390 posts and still no correct answer to the sex koan

Post script (afterthought) It can work both ways ya no: I lost my virginity while very drunk at age 18, on being seduced by my boss's wife - who was 10 years older. I guess that made me an adulterer.

Michaeljc

**by Kojip on Sat Oct 08, 2011 10:54 pm**

Discussing the issue of sexual conduct/teachers in general is one thing, ....but I wonder how many people who appear to be really invested in these particular situations really have a stake in them? Is there a bit of vicarious melodrama going on? I confess to indulging a bit of that when this thread began.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by Linda Anderson on Sun Oct 09, 2011 6:18 am**

Actually Kojip, I was wondering something similar this morning.... thinking of those fundamentalists who opposed all forms of pornography... way, way back when that was the issue ... but first, they had to view them to assert that they were indeed pornographic! Mon Dieu! Let's watch it again so we can see how awful it is.

Of course, that's not all that's going on in this thread, but it's all in the unknown, as Nonin pointed out.

Or, it could be a sign that our reading comprehension needs improvement to cut down on the loopy-loops.

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Luminous Heart on Sun Oct 09, 2011 8:36 pm**

Unknown may not mean uncaring.

Luminous Heart

**by Gregory Wonderwheel on Mon Oct 10, 2011 1:12 am**

Kojip wrote:

Is there a bit of vicarious melodrama going on?

Much more than "a bit" I dare say. Everyone who thinks "that's not me" is by definition engaging in vicarious melodrama. Only through direct immediate identification do we become free of the paradigm of the vicarious.

Anyone who looks at a murderer, rapist, war monger, genocidal racist, etc., and thinks "that's not me, I'd never do that" is engaging vicariously and maintaining the distance of self and other, subject and object, internal and external, etc..

The Wondrous Dharma of the Lotus Flower, the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye is nothing other than the pure and clear nature of our own mind by which afflictions are discriminated such that they are identical with mind yet they do not contact mind. This intimacy of non-contact is the most mysterious and difficult to understand.

\_/\\_

gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel  
Global Moderator

**by Bob Skank on Mon Oct 10, 2011 2:02 am**

Gregory Wonderwheel wrote:

Anyone who looks at a murderer, rapist, war monger, genocidal racist, etc., and thinks "that's not me, I'd never do that" is engaging vicariously and maintaining the distance of self and other, subject and object, internal and external, etc.

I do agree that this position is mainstream buddhadogma, Gregory, and I understand and I do agree in the abstract with the point you make, but it would be more persuasive coming from a woman, if you get my drift. The simple fact is that most murderers, rapists,

warmongers, genocidal racists, etc., are male, and I believe we need to explore the reasons why. It is also true that the founders and leaders of most of the world's major religions are male, and I believe we need to explore the reasons why. The facts show, don't they, that most women do not do those things you cite? If a woman thinks, "That's not me, I would never do that," is there no truth to her thought? The facts do indicate that women are less likely to do such things than men. This is a complex issue, I think, more so than the buddhadogma suggests. Our glorious teacher abandoned his wife and child, after all, and did condone some quite peculiar rules about women. As Rev. Roberts suggests in her paper, the example of the founder, the leader, the root guru, the main teacher, does, right or wrong, "enable" his later disciples. I say these things only in the spirit of academic inquiry. I do not know the answers to these questions, but I believe they are worth asking and wondering about.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by Linda Anderson on Mon Oct 10, 2011 2:09 am**

Luminous Heart wrote:  
Unknown may not mean uncaring.

unknown cares the most

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Linda Anderson on Mon Oct 10, 2011 3:06 am**

Bob Skank wrote:  
Gregory Wonderwheel wrote:  
Anyone who looks at a murderer, rapist, war monger, genocidal racist, etc., and thinks "that's not me, I'd never do that" is engaging vicariously and maintaining the distance of self and other, subject and object, internal and external, etc.

I do agree that this position is mainstream buddhadogma, Gregory, and I understand and I do agree in the abstract with the point you make, but it would be more persuasive coming from a woman, if you get my drift. The simple fact is that most murderers, rapists, warmongers, genocidal racists, etc., are male, and I believe we need to explore the reasons why. It is also true that the founders and leaders of most of the world's major religions are male, and I believe we need to explore the reasons why. The facts show, don't they, that most women do not do those things you cite? If a woman thinks, "That's not me, I would never do that," is there no truth to her thought? The facts do indicate that women are less likely to do such things than men. This is a complex issue, I think, more so than the buddhadogma suggests. Our glorious teacher abandoned his wife and child, after all, and did condone some quite peculiar rules about women. As Rev. Roberts suggests in her paper, the example of the founder, the leader, the root guru, the main teacher, does, right or wrong, "enable" his later disciples. I say these things only in the spirit of academic inquiry. I do not know the answers to these questions, but I believe they are worth asking and wondering about.

Bob

OK, this is nearly impossible to respond to, it's such a spin.... and I am feeling sorry for myself tonight for my estrangements ... so I may be crazy after all these years. BUT... Never mind everything points rationally in the other direction towards the heart.

Gregory has brought out good points in relationship to shadow material and polarities. I'll have to sit with the last paragraph a bit more.. I don't get it yet.

Bob, the idea that this is buddhadogma seems to add to the polarity, to me. and I don't get at all why you call it dogma. It cuts off dialog right out of the box. I heard Gregory presenting both sides of a profound polarity for examination. I hasten to add that I am very capable of the very thing that had been perpetrated on me, symbolic murder and rape, when I am out of my comfort zone and feeling attacked.

I am not for one minute trying to align your response with mine. I have no idea what is motivating you.

I am not too impressed with the observation that women are not typically spiritual leaders and teachers,, as if that implies some sort of inequality and victimization. I say, thank God, we are not in that political nightmare. Red is not green, or any other thing. A lot of my process has been coming to understand that I won't bring out my wisdom being a teacher or guru. You won't find me marching for those rights, as if they imply rank. Compassion for those who take on false gods.

Rest assured that I am no more pure than my male counter-parts... it's just that women may work in subterranean ways until we go beyond birth and death. Truth be told, I do not want to be cast in a purer than thou attitude, because at the end of the day, it's just not true. And, it robs me of my truth and power.... as I observed many pages ago in this



never-ending-story. Idealizing the feminine is another crock of sh.... If memory serves, I have said this before in reference to victimizing the so-called victims.

I am still struggling to transcend my own feelings of victimization... they don't serve truth or my true brilliance and power.

I am not going to blame "our glorious teacher" for abandoning his family... that just doesn't touch the bigger view at all. Yes, I've heard this viewpoint before.... it stops so short of truth.. and leans in the direction of co-dependance and a personalized projection of safety. If you look clearly, he could be seen as a spoiled little boy who didn't know the world in real-time, who didn't know life. Not so far off from most stories of arrested development among us mortals. Who knows what Buddhism might have become if he wasn't a wealthy person disassociated from what most of us experience every day ... a peasant would not see suffering in the same light. I support any foolishness on his part... it was necessary to see thru his privilege.

Hope I've made some sense, I am not going to edit this. I'll just give myself the luxury of this commentary, foolish as it may be.

Oh my, the webs we weave.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Gregory Wonderwheel on Mon Oct 10, 2011 3:42 am**

Linda Anderson wrote:

Hope I've made some sense, I am not going to edit this. I'll just give myself the luxury of this commentary, foolish as it may be.

Oh my, the webs we weave.

Linda

Yes, editing is not necessary when the riff is what it is, jazzy, bluesy, folksy, however. I enjoyed it.

Linda Anderson wrote:

I'll have to sit with the last paragraph a bit more.. I don't get it yet.

You're in good company. The last paragraph is about as brief as it gets as a synopsis of the Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana. This treatise is a summation of the Ekayana view of the Mahayana that synthesizes the three main streams of Mahayana of Madhyamaka, Yogacara, and Tathagatagarbha. D.T. Suzuki called the Awakening of Faith an excellent summation of the Buddhism of the Lanakavatra Sutra.

In brief, the Madhyamaka emphasized sunyata, the Yogacara emphasized Alayavijnana, and Tathagatagarbha emphasized Tathagatagarbha. There was intense debate about their distinctions. The Lankavatara and Awakening of Faith teach that all three are merely names for the same-same also known as Dharmakaya, Buddha Nature, One Suchness, etc. In other words, the Ekayana or One Vehicle, as taught in the Lankavatara, the Awakening of Faith (as well as the Sutra of Queen Srimala's Lion's Roar and other sutras) states that all three streams are correct in their descriptions of our true nature to the extent that they all reinforce or share the Buddha view of reality.

Here's a thumbnail outline.

Specifically, the point of the paragraph mentioned, is to address the critical point of how afflictions arise in the world if the Dharmakaya is pure and clear. In Christian terminology it is the question of why is there evil in a world created by a god that is both all good and all powerful. In Buddhist terminology there was great debate as to how and why the clear and pure Dharmakaya can manifest as afflictions or troubles and suffering. Some people claimed there is a separation between the Dharmakaya and the world so that Nirvana is leaving the world entirely and extinguishing all conditional experience. This separation of Nirvana and samsara was perceived as a rather childish attempt at the solution to the problem, much like the childish solutions of Christian heaven and hell being totally separate. The Madhyamaka in terms of philosophical or metaphysical discourse said since all is emptiness it Nirvana and samsara cannot be separate and at root are identical because both are empty. However, many felt that this was too one-sided in that it led people to think that since samsara is empty and not different from Nirvana that there is no evil and no Nirvana and that Buddhism is nihilistic.

To clarify the situation the Yogacara developed, as a more psychological discourse, the system of the structure and function of consciousness in a practical method (yoga) of describing how the Alaya-consciousness (8th consciousness) becomes bifurcated (7th consciousness) and through ideation (6th consciousness) conceptualizing the 5 senses (1st to 5th consciousnesses) and that it is through the afflictions arising from the bifurcation process being objectified and lietalized that the afflictions obscure the pure Alaya as the foundation of mind. However, this created problems too in that it doesn't describe how the afflictions have continuity since it is the Alaya aspect of consciousness that preserves continuity between lifetimes and unless the Alaya is one with afflictions the afflictions have no continuity as the fruit of karma.

To address this the Tathagatagarbha discourse developed, as a metaphysical and psychological discourse, to explain that the Tathagata is incipient in samsara and afflictions and that the seed or embryo of the Tathagata is within each person as the Buddha Nature aspect of the Alaya that is in relation to afflicted aspect of the Alaya, while the Dharmakaya aspect of the Alaya remains pure and clear.

The Ekayana says that all three of these mainstream positions are true from its point of view and that the profound difficulty of reconciling these streams is in the understanding of this intimate connection between the pure Dharmakaya and the appearance of afflictions and evil in the world. This is one of the boundary limits where words fail and only by turning the light around to experience the Alaya-Suchness-Dharmakaya for oneself can it be resolved satisfactorily.

There is a very profound reason why the Dharmakaya is truthfully called "pure and clear" and at the same time why objectifying "purity" becomes a limitation overlaying the True Buddha Dharma. As long as we look at afflictions (or at the people who are embodying and subject to afflictions, such as murderers etc. the whole list) as "not me" then we are still within the polarization of purity-impurity and not standing on the purity of the Dharmakaya that acknowledges every living being has the inner Tathagata ready to be embodied. In other words, at the root of each of us is the pure Dharmakaya and when we are in touch with our root we can see how all of the branches and leaves develop even the twisted and perverted ones and we recognize our intimacy with them as being of the same one family tree.

But as long as we distinguish between male and female as if they have different realities as if males can't know the female POV and vice versa, then we will never realize the True Buddha Dharma. What we call "male" and "female" are primarily the psycho-socialized POV of fundamental mental configurations (samskara) produced in accord with the function and development of consciousness. As mind is not ultimately limited to any particular mental configurations we are not ultimately limited to any particular male and female points of view. The limit is in our own self-image as male or female, not in our essence of mind.

\_/\\\_  
Gregory

\_/\\\_  
Gregory

The Blessed One said, "The recognition of the one vehicle (□□) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness." ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel  
Global Moderator

**Page 71**

**by Linda Anderson on Mon Oct 10, 2011 4:07 am**

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Bob Skank on Mon Oct 10, 2011 4:30 am**

Linda Anderson wrote:  
Hope I've made some sense, I am not going to edit this. I'll just give myself the luxury of this commentary, foolish as it may be.

I liked it.

It seemed inspired by the same source as my post.

Bob

Bob Skank

**by Linda Anderson on Mon Oct 10, 2011 4:36 am**

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

by Gregory Wonderwheel on Mon Oct 10, 2011 4:52 am

Bob Skank wrote:

The simple fact is that most murderers, rapists, warmongers, genocidal racists, etc., are male, and I believe we need to explore the reasons why. It is also true that the founders and leaders of most of the world's major religions are male, and I believe we need to explore the reasons why. The facts show, don't they, that most women do not do those things you cite? If a woman thinks, "That's not me, I would never do that," is there no truth to her thought?

There is truth to this thought, but the truth is entirely conventional and determined by the mental configurations of self-image. It is this kind of fundamental dis-identification by a woman in the face of men, or any victim in the face of an oppressor, that becomes the false basis of a "holier than thou" attitude. The idea of "most women" is also a generalization that shows the level of investigation is not where I was addressing. I'm addressing the personal experience of the self-image not the social statistic of behavior. It is exactly in identifying with "the other" whose behavior is NOT how one perceives oneself to be, that is the hard part of opening the mind to the Buddha's knowing and seeing.

The facts do indicate that women are less likely to do such things than men. This is a complex issue, I think, more so than the buddhadogma suggests. Our glorious teacher abandoned his wife and child, after all, and did condone some quite peculiar rules about women. As Rev. Roberts suggests in her paper, the example of the founder, the leader, the root guru, the main teacher, does, right or wrong, "enable" his later disciples. I say these things only in the spirit of academic inquiry. I do not know the answers to these questions, but I believe they are worth asking and wondering about.

Bob

To understand Buddhism, one needs to identify with all parts of the Buddha story, even why one would "abandon" family and home. Not that each of us must today do the same literal enactment, but each of us today must be able to put ourselves in those sandals without being judgmental. The same goes for the peculiar rules about women. It is because those rules are imbued with judgmental aspects that they are peculiar and should be jettisoned for today in most cases, however that does not mean that they should be judged as something "we would never do." That is just as foolish as those who use such history to rationalize and justify continuing the "peculiar rules" enabled for the oppression of women.

Patriarchial social determination is alive and well today, and one need only look at the composition of the US Senate to see how alive it is in the USA. But to be against patriarchy doesn't mean that we have to disidentify with people suffering from that affliction, and if we adopt an attitude that "I could never be patriarchial" or "I could never be matriarchial" then we are jsut deluding ourselves.

\_/\\_

Gregory

The Blessed One said, “The recognition of the one vehicle (一乘) is obtained when there is no rising of discrimination by doing away with the notion of grasped and grasping and by abiding in the reality of suchness.” ~ From the Lankavatara Sutra

Gregory Wonderwheel  
Global Moderator

**by Luminous Heart on Mon Oct 10, 2011 4:59 am**

Linda Anderson wrote:

Luminous Heart wrote:

Unknown may not mean uncaring.

unknown cares the most

Linda

Well, after the long decades of being unknown, now that such abuses are well known they finally have a chance to rest.

Luminous Heart

**by Linda Anderson on Mon Oct 10, 2011 6:12 am**

Luminous Heart,

It seems, from your response, that I didn't understand what you meant. My reference to unknown was via Nonin who said, in several ways, that we don't know how this will resolve or whether it will... thus it is unknown.

the unknown women, centuries of unknown women, is something else to sing about...

Dedication and Thanks from Sutra Service:

Buddha nature pervades the whole universe  
existing right here, right now  
the wind howls and the waves crash on that shore,  
Quan Yin finds us on that dark and broken highway

we give thanks to all the ancestors of meditation

ants and sticks and grisly bears  
 let the five wisdom warm up every corner of the home  
 let us find joy in one another's joy  
 and keep on smiling

all the grandmothers long since gone  
 all the mothers long since gone  
 all the little girls long since gone  
 who held us in their arms when we cried,  
 and gave us milk to drink when we were hungry  
 all those women long since gone

to all the women, yesterday, today and tomorrow  
 who hold us in their arms,  
 enlightened,  
 enlightened  
 who hold us in their arms, and keep on smiling  
 .....

All Buddhas through out space and time,  
 all awakened beings, great beings,  
 the heart of perfect wisdom

~ Pacific Zen Institute  
 .

Seems impossible to walk the talk ... and I can't see how punishment will make it so  
 Not last night,  
 not this morning;  
 Melon flowers bloomed.  
 ~ Basho

Linda Anderson

**by christopher::: on Mon Oct 10, 2011 6:31 am**

[Accidently edited this post, sorry!]

The key idea I wanted to share was John Welwoods concept of Spiritual Bypassing, which may help to explain some of the issues we see arising for those of us deeply committed to spiritual practices...

"Spiritual bypassing" is a term I coined to describe a process I saw happening in the Buddhist community I was in, and also in myself. Although most of us were sincerely trying to work on ourselves, I noticed a widespread tendency to use spiritual ideas and practices to sidestep or avoid facing unresolved emotional issues, psychological wounds, and unfinished developmental tasks. When we are spiritually bypassing, we often use the goal of awakening or liberation to try to rise above the raw and messy side of our humanness before we have fully faced and made peace with it. We may also use our notion of absolute truth to disparage or dismiss relative human needs, feelings, psychological problems, relational difficulties, and developmental deficits. I see this as a basic hazard of the spiritual path, in that spirituality does involve a vision of going beyond our current karmic situation."

~John Welwood

Human Nature, Buddha Nature

Last edited by christopher::: on Mon Oct 10, 2011 5:05 pm, edited 4 times in total.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by Linda Anderson on Mon Oct 10, 2011 6:45 am**

Hi Chris,

It seems to me that this has been a part of the tension in many conversations here on the forum ... with all sides weighing in, and weighting down

But this conversation seems on the weighty side of things with 1406 posts and 48694 views with some talk of punishment. You could never call it light-weight.

Pretty soon, it might qualify to be called the grave matter. (just kidding)

Linda

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Luminous Heart on Mon Oct 10, 2011 7:16 am**



I was responding to "unknown cares the most", Linda.

Luminous Heart

**by Linda Anderson on Mon Oct 10, 2011 7:17 am**

Luminous Heart wrote:

I was responding to "unknown cares the most", Linda.

yes

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Luminous Heart on Mon Oct 10, 2011 7:30 am**

Please, no bows. \_^\_

Luminous Heart

**by Kobutsu on Mon Oct 10, 2011 12:47 pm**

At this time, I would like to offer a formal public apology to Genjo Marinello, Roshi his family, friends, students and organization who might have been hurt by any additions to the Shimanoarchive. In addition, my apology extends to any innocent party who might have been hurt or denigrated by my actions, lack thereof, and my making available in public anything that might have been considered private on a personal level.

In dynamic peace,

Kobutsu

.  
.

Kobutsu

**by genkaku on Mon Oct 10, 2011 2:10 pm**

Would that there were others capable of such transparent repentance.  
genkaku

**by genkaku on Mon Oct 10, 2011 2:19 pm**

And for those who haven't seen it, here is a blog posting by Grace Shireson Roshi:

I have been contemplating Fukushima Roshi's teaching to me about the Zen word freedom or "jiyu" in Japanese. This teaching is most relevant to the misconduct that has been justified as the privilege of a Zen teacher's enlightenment. Fukushima Roshi, who had studied in America and spoke English well, stated that the most obvious problem with the use of the word "jiyu" or Zen freedom, is that Westerners associate freedom with freedom from (oppression, cultural conventions, taxation without representation etc), but the Japanese meaning of the word is not freedom FROM, but freedom TO. Jiyu or Zen freedom is freedom \*to\* take the entire universe and its needs as oneself; freedom to hold another's well being as your responsibility; freedom to express Zen in a way that respects Dharma and upholds Western values and laws. Jiyu does not mean that a Zen Master, living and relying on Mushin (the mind of no separate self), is free from consequences or ethical norms when using others to satisfy his whims; nor is he free from causing harm when he believes that he has been freed \*from\* the laws and values of the society in which he lives. I see this fundamental misunderstanding of enlightenment being enacted by self-centered Zen teachers quoting the Japanese jiyu or "Zen freedom" based on Enlightened understanding as "freedom from."

Fukushima Roshi taught me that the literal translation of "Zen freedom" is based on living with the mind of mu (or no separate self) and it means "self-reliance". Ji=self, yu=reliance. Fukushima Roshi clarified that the self we rely on is based on the mu self or becoming "mu," and living one's life from the perspective of mushin. Mushin is living in the realm of understanding how the universal self expresses itself through and with us. Fukushima Roshi also said that Western thought interpreted \*freedom\* as freedom \*from\* oppression and unfair laws. But it must be made clear, he said, that jiyu means \*freedom to.\* This is a life that is "freedom to" bring creativity, love, wholeness and support \*to\* everything we encounter. We are not separate from those we meet by some fictitious license of Zen enlightenment.

Our task is how we bring Zen \*to\* help people even under the most difficult and confusing circumstances? This is the freedom \*to\* creatively connect with our life. Zen Freedom, jiyu, is not at all like freedom \*from\* following rules and laws in order to get

away from the consequences of satisfying one's own personal desires or ambitions. Jiyu, Zen freedom, is the responsibility \*to\* help bring healing to all life we encounter. Uchiyama Roshi, a Dharma friend of Fukushima Roshi, said it another way: "Everything you encounter is your life."

Currently we see several examples of Zen teachers who are confused and confusing their sanghas with this bogus "freedom from" Zen-- a Zen that eschews following the ethical rules that protect students. We hear of Eido Shimano, formerly Abbot of Zen Studies Society, being described as "living in the realm of the Absolute." The follow on foolish talk concludes that he cannot cause harm to others due to this so-called attainment. Teaching this mistaken, blatantly self-serving and dangerous idea reveals a teaching which has no stable understanding of what it means to be interconnected, to have no separate self. We must correct this mistaken teaching without condemning the ones who promote it. However, once we understand that someone is preaching false Dharma, it is our responsibility \*to\* not allow them to continue this harmful charade. This is our gift \*to\* them. We need to walk away, to vote with our feet, and if necessary, we are free \*to\* pursue legal options to stop their harm. We need to take our wallets with us and not support any further perversion of Zen understanding Zen which can only result in greater harm to individuals and to Dharma.

The relative world is not put on hold when we manifest Awakening or vividly experience the Absolute. There is proof that this is true; even Eido Shimano will die in this relative realm. There is not a speck of separation between the realm of the relative and the Absolute. We are relative beings existing in both realms simultaneously, we answer \*to\* the understandings of both realms simultaneously, and we are connected \*to\* all beings in these realms simultaneously. We are responsible \*to\* expressing our relationship to both realms at all times.

If we harm other people, deceive other people, denounce other people we are responsible to all of them. We have not gained through Zen freedom any \*freedom from\* harming others or the consequences of harming others. Zen freedom is not a free pass that liberates us from our karma. Far from it! We become all the more responsible to not causing harm, so be impeccably careful with your Zen freedom!

The post can be found at: <http://sweepingzen.com/2011/10/09/true-dharma-eye-enlightenment-versus-social-misconduct/>

Last edited by genkaku on Mon Oct 10, 2011 3:24 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
genkaku

**by Pedestrian on Mon Oct 10, 2011 2:24 pm**

Gassho for that lucid, helpful post, genkaku.  
Pedestrian

Chris Amirault

Pedestrian

**by genkaku on Mon Oct 10, 2011 3:21 pm**

For further elucidation, courtesy of The Rev. Nonin Chowaney and Genjo Marinello Roshi, it might be useful to consider the following assertions within past presentations:

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100522\\_Nonin\\_Declarations\\_ZFI.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100522_Nonin_Declarations_ZFI.pdf)

and

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100609\\_Marinello\\_AZTA.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100609_Marinello_AZTA.pdf)

These too might be well-served with some version of "I'm sorry."  
genkaku

**by Genjo on Mon Oct 10, 2011 6:28 pm**

genkaku wrote:

For further elucidation, courtesy of The Rev. Nonin Chowaney and Genjo Marinello Roshi, it might be useful to consider the following assertions within past presentations:

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100522\\_Nonin\\_Declarations\\_ZFI.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100522_Nonin_Declarations_ZFI.pdf)

and

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100609\\_Marinello\\_AZTA.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100609_Marinello_AZTA.pdf)

These too might be well-served with some version of "I'm sorry."

Dear all,

As for my AZTA post it should never have become public, but I referenced my own post trying to support the claim that Eido Roshi had truly reformed and that there had been no report of any sexual misconduct for 15 years. I now know differently, I was wrong, but at the time I really believed this with all my heart. However, within hours of posting it, I realized I should not have referenced an AZTA post at all, even mine, and withdrew it, but not before Kobutsu got a hold of it. He is quick! Which I love, but also hate because there is no room to rethink or reconsider.

I also said, Eido Roshi's previous bad behavior was "not even illegal just unconscionable by our standards, still it is not like he forced, bribed, coerced or paid anyone to have sex with him." On this claim, I was wrong again, I have heard credible accounts that Eido Roshi did indeed coerce and even force sexual relations with students, and there are credible claims he has indeed paid for sex off campus. I also said of sexual relations with students that "the power dynamic is totally lopsided and his responsibility for these actions is 80% or more, but not all his." This too is partially in error, because it is incomplete. As I have previously said on this forum, Eido Roshi was 100% responsible for the ethical breach. If he had been adequately held responsible for these earlier breaches, many lives would have been spared great psychological damage. I've also said here, "age difference, depth of professional relationship, who pursues whom, and recidivism does matter in determining the severity of the ethical breach" and "I completely agree that the power dynamic can sometimes be so great between a spiritual teacher and their students, that if it is the case that the teacher is pursuing aggressively a much younger vulnerable student, such actions are so lopsided as to border on rape."

I also said in my AZTA post which was written in June of 2009, "This current controversy, over old material, has been and continues to be fanned by four men with old grudges, intent to 'bring him down,' as one said directly. By the way, none of the four men I am referring to are members of AZTA, but please be aware that a man who was declined membership in AZTA, in part because Eido Roshi would not acknowledge him as a Dharma Teacher, started the current wave of vilification."

I never named the four men, but people have correctly guessed three of the four I had in mind, Kobutsu Malone, Adam Genkaku Fisher and Stuart Lachs. Many have suggested that the fourth unnamed man was Robert Aitken, but he was not who I was thinking of. I never thought the release of the Shimano Archive kept at the University of Hawaii was a bad thing, in fact I said in this same AZTA post, "We should remember the past so that we learn not to repeat old errors. It's true that among the many transgressions of many teachers, Eido Roshi's history makes a good case study.", which turns out to be a gross understatement.

Anyway, I hereby publicly apologize to these four men, they have done a great service in exposing Eido Roshi's miss use of power and position. I particularly apologize to Rev. Kobutsu Malone for so doubting his motives based on the information I had at the time, much of it I now know was either in error or minimally incomplete. Having some idea of what he and his family have suffered at the hands of Eido Roshi or others associated with ZSS, I am so very saddened by his experience, and have worked as hard as I can to keep Eido Roshi away from new students and to turn the organization he helped birth to a profoundly new course.

With palms together,

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Tue Oct 11, 2011 2:13 am, edited 3 times in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Luminous Heart on Mon Oct 10, 2011 6:41 pm**

Feeling much respect, Genjo.

Luminous Heart

**by Carol on Mon Oct 10, 2011 7:18 pm**

Grace Schireson, Lewis Richmond and others have founded a Zen Priest training seminary, Shogaku Zen Institute. From looking over the Mission Statement, it looks like a valuable program to help prepare Zen priests for the kind of real world situations -- projections, transference & counter-transference, group dynamics in sanghas -- and the power dynamics that are such a trap for the unwary student and teacher alike. Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by Kobutsu on Mon Oct 10, 2011 7:54 pm**

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Dear Genjo Roshi,

I wish to express my sincere gratitude for your above statement – that took real insight and courage to publish. I thank you not just for myself, but for the other three men and most of all – for the good will your statement will engender in the larger disenfranchised, exiled ZSS sangha.

It feels like a weight has been lifted... I am delighted to be able to refer to you as my Dharma brother for I sincerely perceive that we are truly in agreement on facing the truth together as we walk side by side on the path of the awakened state of mind.

I extend my best wishes for you and your group in establishing your new temple and wish I could have been there for your opening ceremony. I will send along a few of my rakusu rings <http://www.engaged-zen.org/articles/Rings.html> as an opening gift for folks who take jukai in the new facility.

In dynamic peace,

Kobutsu

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Kobutsu

**Page 72 of 76 • 1 ... 6970717273747576**

**Re: Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers (was Eido Tai Shi**

**by genkaku on Mon Oct 10, 2011 8:36 pm**

Nine deep bows, Genjo Roshi.

I believe your honesty and your willingness to reconsider matters will serve you and Zen practice in America well.

Thank you.  
genkaku

**by christopher::: on Tue Oct 11, 2011 5:15 am**

Indeed. Thank you, Genjo.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
Founding Member

**by Nonin on Tue Oct 11, 2011 4:47 pm**

This thread is entitled "Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers," but it's deteriorating into yet another Zen Buddhist teacher-bashing thread. If you have an axe to grind on Zen Buddhist teachers, please take your axe to another thread so we can continue this important topic.

In the spirit of returning to topic, I'm posting the following, which is the part of our temple Ethics statement, that includes not only a section on student/teacher sexual relationships but also a section on the procedures for resolving issues arising from any form of ethical misconduct. Here it is:

"Appropriate action. We aspire to relationships that are characterized by appropriate action, relationships based on trust, cooperation, openness to differences, good communication, fairness, kindness, and respect. The Sangha cultivates these qualities as the practice of keeping the precepts and developing good dharma friendships.

Inappropriate action. Inappropriate action is harmful to ourselves and others. It may include physical violence, sexual misconduct or harassment, drug and substance abuse, malicious gossip, extreme or regular displays of anger, insults or demeaning comments, and manipulative or duplicitous speech or action. Persons who encounter inappropriate actions from any member of the NZC Sangha -- including its teachers and senior instructors -- or who themselves practice such conduct, should be aware that these actions violate the spirit of the precepts and the practice of appropriate action.

Student/teacher relationships. A teacher at NZC is anyone involved in an instructional capacity. This includes the Head Priest and anyone designated by the Head Priest to serve as an instructor or mentor for newer students. This includes those giving zazen instruction, teaching Intro to Zen workshops, and leading study groups. Student/teacher relationships should be based on mutual respect, compassion, and kindness. We acknowledge the inequality inherent in such a relationship and the power issues involved. We specifically acknowledge the great harm, both psychological and spiritual, that results from teachers becoming sexually involved with their students, both for the teacher and student involved and for the community as a whole. We, therefore, consider it unethical for a teacher to engage in sexual behavior with her or his student.

We furthermore expect all who participate at NZC to follow these guidelines:

- 1) If a teacher and/or student feel at risk of violating the above ethical principle, they should suspend their teacher-student relationship at least until they have sought counsel with a senior teacher.



2) It is considered a misuse of sexuality for a teacher to form a sexual relationship with a former student within three months of the termination of the student-teacher relationship.

3) Any teacher considering forming a sexual relationship with another NZC participant should discuss the appropriateness of the relationship with a senior teacher.

Procedures for addressing inappropriate action. We are committed to solving problems and resolving differences that may arise from inappropriate action. If a person believes that they have been inappropriately treated and seeks resolution, the following steps may be taken:

Informal Resolution. 1) The aggrieved person should directly contact the person (s) who has (have) allegedly acted inappropriately and make an effort to reach an understanding and to resolve differences. 2) If the grievance is not resolved under step 1), the aggrieved person may request a meeting with the most senior priest not included in the grievance, the President of the Board of Directors (or Vice-President, if the President is involved in the grievance), and the person who has allegedly acted inappropriately to resolve the grievance.

If the parties are unable to reconcile under steps 1) and 2), the aggrieved person may proceed to step 3):

Informal Meeting. 3) The person filing the grievance should contact the Board President or Secretary. If the President and Secretary are named in the grievance, the most senior Nebraska Zen Center Priest not named may be contacted. The person filing the grievance will provide the contact person with a written description of the alleged inappropriate action and the effort to resolve the matter informally in steps 1) and 2) above. The person who allegedly acted inappropriately shall respond to the allegation in writing to the contact person within one week. The contact person shall request a meeting with a third party trained in mediation practices to be held within four weeks of receipt of response, and shall include the person alleging the grievance and the person (s) who allegedly acted inappropriately. The mediator may contact and seek information from others who have knowledge relevant to the case under discussion. The meeting shall consist of an attempted mediation led by the mediator, and may be supplemented, if the parties agree, by a meeting with others who have knowledge relevant to the case under discussion. The mediation meeting shall result in a written statement of the position reached by the parties in the mediation process, and this statement will be given to the contact person who originally received the grievance.

If step 3) results in a statement resolving the grievance, a copy of the statement will be kept in NZC files.

If step 3) results in a statement that resolution has not been reached, the aggrieved person may proceed to step 4).

Reconciliation Council. 4) The person filing the grievance may notify the Board of Directors that they wish to proceed with the unresolved grievance. Thereupon, the Board will form a Reconciliation Council consisting of the President and Secretary of the Board (or two other Board members if these Officers are named in the grievance), the most senior priest not named in the grievance, one person chosen by the person filing the grievance, and one person chosen by the person (s) who has allegedly acted inappropriately. After formation, The Council shall notify the concerned parties in writing, and all written records of actions heretofore filed shall be provided to the Council within two weeks of notification that they are needed. The Council shall set an appropriate date for a hearing within four weeks of receipt of the written records.

At the hearing, the Council shall hear the presentation of the person filing the grievance and the response of the person (s) who has allegedly acted inappropriately. The Council may also solicit views of other persons where that is deemed appropriate. Additional meetings may be called and may include the entire sangha, should the Council deem them necessary.

The Council shall make a finding based on the above process. The finding shall be written and shall be communicated to the person filing the grievance and the person (s) allegedly behaving inappropriately within four weeks of the completion of the reconciliation process.

The Reconciliation Council will keep written records of all meetings and findings. These shall be kept on file at Nebraska Zen Center.

Atonement. Any person who acts inappropriately is expected to make every effort to realign their conduct in accord with the precepts and to take the actions necessary to restore the harmony of the Sangha and to mitigate harm done. Such atonement is an integral part of our spiritual practice."

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Carol on Tue Oct 11, 2011 6:50 pm**

Moderator's Note:

I have moved a number of off-topic posts to the Practicing alone Without a Teacher Topic and to the Stuart Lachs Topic

Please return to the topic here.

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by genkaku on Thu Oct 13, 2011 2:33 am**

This thread is entitled "Sexual misconduct by Buddhist teachers," but it's deteriorating into yet another Zen Buddhist teacher-bashing thread.

Nonin -- Perhaps you would be willing to describe your understanding of "teacher-bashing" and "teacher-revering." Is one preferable to the other? Are they different or the same? If criticism is not acceptable or appropriate or truthful, is praise somehow more acceptable or appropriate or truthful? Why?

What do you suppose a Zen teacher might say?  
genkaku

**by Tenshin on Thu Oct 13, 2011 4:41 am**

People who aid, abet, enable, or support sexual abusers - particularly abusers who are in positions of power - are as responsible for the continuation of abuse as the actual abusers. If personal attachments or even conflicts of interest make this difficult for such people, perhaps they themselves should reclude themselves from passing judgement on such vital discussion.

Given the overwhelming amount of evidence of the harm caused by these so-called, "teachers," of Dharma, I would think the blinded would be more willing to look in the mirror.

This isn't about teacher bashing. For one thing - it's about protecting the Sangha from abuse. The Sangha is a jewel. Secondly, if someone is still attached to the fantasy that this is about, "teachers," well that surely says a lot.

Caveat emptor.

Courage has brought light to darkness, so let's not confuse this as "teacher" bashing. To do so dishonors those affected by those exhibiting personality disorders that in many states would be treated as felonious behavior.

tenshin

Tenshin

**by genkaku on Wed Oct 26, 2011 12:20 pm**

I realize that associative thinking is not always welcome (not 'on-topic,' dontcha know), but a friend sent along the following article about reform or lack thereof within the Catholic church. I found the article stunning not just within a Roman Catholic framework, but also as a description of what any organized spiritual adventure might spawn and then seek to reform ... a reform that always faces an uphill battle as those in power seek to bank and perhaps squelch the outraged flames of the very constituency on which that power is dependent.

Anyway, FWIW:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EU\\_VATICAN\\_LEGION\\_OF\\_CHRIST?SITE=MI&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&SECTION=HOME](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EU_VATICAN_LEGION_OF_CHRIST?SITE=MI&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&SECTION=HOME)

genkaku

**by Carol on Wed Oct 26, 2011 12:42 pm**

genkaku wrote:

I realize that associative thinking is not always welcome (not 'on-topic,' dontcha know), but a friend sent along the following article about reform or lack thereof within the Catholic church. I found the article stunning not just within a Roman Catholic framework, but also as a description of what any organized spiritual adventure might spawn and then seek to reform ... a reform that always faces an uphill battle as those in power seek to bank and perhaps squelch the outraged flames of the very constituency on which that power is dependent.

Anyway, FWIW:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EU\\_VATICAN\\_LEGION\\_OF\\_CHRIST?SITE=MI&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&SECTION=HOME](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EU_VATICAN_LEGION_OF_CHRIST?SITE=MI&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&SECTION=HOME)

I think there are parallels ... and it's very interesting.

But it's important to remember, too, that there is no zen "heirarchy" that can take action when a priest goes bad. It's up to their sangha and/or board of directors. All the outside pressure put on Zen Studies Society to remove Eido Shimano is just "advisory" and has no authority other than as peers and "public opinion."

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol

Global Moderator

**by genkaku on Wed Oct 26, 2011 2:05 pm**

Carol -- Your point is obviously well taken. But, too, if you take it a step further, perhaps even the Catholic Church would have to admit that its "hierarchy" would have no functioning meaning without the "peers and "public opinion"" you aptly point to. And if this is so, it puts the whole question of "authority" back in our very own laps... just as Buddhism and even Christianity ("The kingdom of heaven is within") once suggested.

As a business model, however, I concede your point... if not the follow-on conclusion drawn by some that critiques are solely the critic's problem and undeserving of consideration.

genkaku

**by Carol on Wed Oct 26, 2011 3:18 pm**

genkaku wrote:

As a business model, however, I concede your point... if not the follow-on conclusion drawn by some that critiques are solely the critic's problem and undeserving of consideration.

That is not a follow-on conclusion that I hold.

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol

Global Moderator

**by genkaku on Wed Oct 26, 2011 3:46 pm**

Carol wrote:

genkaku wrote:

As a business model, however, I concede your point... if not the follow-on conclusion drawn by some that critiques are solely the critic's problem and undeserving of consideration.

That is not a follow-on conclusion that I hold.

Carol -- FWIW, that's not an implication I intended to make.

genkaku

**by Carol on Wed Oct 26, 2011 3:56 pm**

genkaku wrote:

Carol wrote:

genkaku wrote:

As a business model, however, I concede your point... if not the follow-on conclusion drawn by some that critiques are solely the critic's problem and undeserving of consideration.

That is not a follow-on conclusion that I hold.

Carol -- FWIW, that's not an implication I intended to make.

I didn't think so ... but wanted to clarify anyway.

I think many people, when they first started hearing about it thought it was an "old story" and that it had been "dealt with" -- or something like that. As more facts became public ... thanks to those who persevered in making them public ... and as new and current facts came out as well ... that changed a lot of peoples' perspectives.

As someone who has seen people destroyed by malicious gossip, I think it is always wise to look into things carefully before reaching conclusions about them. That's a hurdle that sincere and truthful witnesses have to overcome and it can be very frustrating for them ...

the tendency of responsible people to require more than "rumors" before they condemn someone. On the other hand, the tendency of some people to go off spreading rumors without checking them out carefully is often very damaging to innocent people. I've seen that happen, as I said, and it's really really ugly.

So, it cuts both ways.

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by genkaku on Thu Nov 03, 2011 5:12 pm**

Tangential to this whole thread, I just got word last night that Merry Benezra had finished her novel, "Special Karma," which is based in part on her unfortunate adventures at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, one of Eido Shimano's headquarter locations. I haven't read it, but was aware of its creation since Merry contacted me to ask if it was OK if she depicted me (even fictionally) as the twit I was back in the gung-ho, holy-roller Zen days. I told her I figured it was her book and I probably deserved whatever criticism she wanted to mete out. Dontcha just hate the mirror?

Anyway, here's the link: <http://specialkarma.wordpress.com/genkaku>

**by christopher::: on Sun Nov 06, 2011 1:43 pm**

genkaku wrote:

Tangential to this whole thread, I just got word last night that Merry Benezra had finished her novel, "Special Karma," which is based in part on her unfortunate adventures at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, one of Eido Shimano's headquarter locations. I haven't read it, but was aware of its creation since Merry contacted me to ask if it was OK if she depicted me (even fictionally) as the twit I was back in the gung-ho, holy-roller Zen days. I told her I figured it was her book and I probably deserved whatever criticism she wanted to mete out. Dontcha just hate the mirror?

Anyway, here's the link: <http://specialkarma.wordpress.com/>

Wow, I was just looking at the excerpts. She writes VERY well. I didn't even get to the third excerpt, where she describes her encounter with Shimano but already i'm very impressed. I like her style of writing, very simple (Zen like?) - not overwritten, yet really pulls you into the moment.

If the rest of the book is as well written as this she's going to be reaching a lot of readers with her story.

<http://specialkarma.wordpress.com/excerpts/>

Well done Merry!

:::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork :::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Nonin on Sun Nov 06, 2011 3:20 pm**

Please remember that this book is a self-published work of fiction, so don't take it as a definitive work of non-fiction.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
 Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin  
 Global Moderator

**by Carol on Sun Nov 06, 2011 7:19 pm**

Please also remember that Merry White Benezra was there and is writing of her own experience... Bless her courage for doing so, and I hope many will read her book.

I know her husband, though I've never had the pleasure of meeting her. I know from him that her experiences with Shimano at Dai Bosatsu Monastery had a profound impact on her, and that the decades which have passed have allowed her to develop insight that will be valuable to all who read her story.

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra



Carol  
Global Moderator

**by Jundo Cohen on Mon Nov 07, 2011 2:45 am**

Carol wrote:

Please also remember that Merry White Benezra was there and is writing of her own experience... Bless her courage for doing so, and I hope many will read her book.

I know her husband, though I've never had the pleasure of meeting her. I know from him that her experiences with Shimano at Dai Bosatsu Monastery had a profound impact on her, and that the decades which have passed have allowed her to develop insight that will be valuable to all who read her story.

I just ordered it. I have not yet read it, but my gut reaction is that books like this are a breath of fresh air into the sometimes reified atmosphere of our Ways, as or more valuable than all the Sutras and standard "Zen Books" combined. Why?

The power of this Practice is that it sees and shines right through all the crap, right through all the overly idealized images of what Zen and Zen Masters should be. And in doing so it finds a certain Treasure Beyond Compare that all the mud can't sully. When we knock the golden idols made of wood and clay off their pedestals, we discover the Real Jewel that was here all along.

... And that is, after all, what all the Sutras and standard "Zen Books" are preaching.

Gassho, Jundo

Last edited by Jundo Cohen on Mon Nov 07, 2011 2:53 am, edited 2 times in total.  
Founder Treeleaf Zendo, Japan. Member SZBA AZTA. Treeleaf is an online Sangha for those unable to commute to a Sangha, w/ netcast Zazen ([www.treeleaf.org/forum/viewforum.php?f=17](http://www.treeleaf.org/forum/viewforum.php?f=17)) & all of a Soto Sangha (<http://www.treeleaf.org>) Nishijima/Niwa

Jundo Cohen

**by Bob Skank on Mon Nov 07, 2011 2:49 am**

Jundo Cohen wrote:

[M]y gut reaction is that books like this are a breath of fresh air on our Ways, as or more valuable in their way than all the Sutras and standard "Zen Books" combined. Why? The power of this Practice is that it sees and shines right through all the crap, right through all

the overly idealized images of what Zen and Zen Masters should be. And in doing so it finds a certain Treasure Beyond Compare that all the mud can't sully. When we knock the golden idols made of wood and clay off their pedestals, we discover the Real Jewel that was here all along...and that is, after all, what all the Sutras and standard "Zen Books" are preaching.

Amen.

Bob

Last edited by Bob Skank on Mon Nov 07, 2011 3:24 am, edited 1 time in total.

Bob Skank

**by Kobutsu on Mon Nov 07, 2011 2:50 am**

Please also remember that just because a book might be labeled, as a "novel" does not necessarily mean that its contents are not true renditions of the writer's experiences. There is more that one reason a book might be labeled as a "novel" or as "fiction."

Here is a letter I received from Merry almost a year ago... It is in the Shimoarchive and has been a matter of public record for quite some time:

Merry Benezra  
December 17,2010

Kobutsu,

I was a resident and kessei student at Dai Bosatsu Zendo from September 1976 to February 1977. You asked me to describe my experience of sexual harassment by Eido Roshi.

I was new to Zen practice when I became a DBZ kessei student September 1976, having attended Thursday night men in the city on a very sporadic basis over the previous few years, and having also stayed at DBZ as a guest/work student for the last two weeks of July 1976. I returned to DBZ in September 1976 for the kessei in a very serious refuge-taking state of mind.

Although I had been warned by Adam Fisher (when we were both summer guest students at DBZ In late July 1976) that there had been a scandal the previous year, It sounded to me as though the problem was the Edo had taken more than one (willing) lover but had not told any of his lovers that their relationships were not exclusive - and then at some

point they all found out about each other. I had no interest in being a lover of Edo Roshi's - I had had enough of married lovers when I showed up, and my intention was to move in the exact opposite direction toward sexual abstinence. Nor did Eido strike me as an appealing lover. When he made his initial and rather subtle advances, I did not encourage him.

I was assigned to the position of Assistant Jisha at the beginning of the first 7-day sesshin of Dai Bosatsu's first kessei. This was also my first 7-day sesshin. My entire intention for that first sesshin was to experience kensho I was sitting very diligently and with tremendous effort toward this goal. After the last sitting on the sixth day, Roshi asked me to meet with him in his study. I assumed (hoped) this had to do with jisha work, but when we sat (kneeled) at the table, he produced a large book of photographs of nude women. He said that a student had recently sent it to him, and proceeded to flip through the pages. He said, "This one's really not so bad," and showed me the photo of a nude young woman straddling a chair backwards. I said, "I think I should go now," and he asked, "Why?" and then clasped my hand. I didn't argue with him - I just stood up and left. The following day, I told him that his behavior was likely to trigger another scandal.

Despite this, Eido made it very clear that he was patiently waiting for me to relent, and he made several more passes. In dokusan in the middle of my second sesshin, he told me that I had a "special karma," and I was so naïve and so committed to practice that I took this to mean I would be his dharma heir. When I realized, and he confirmed, that it meant I was destined to be his lover, I was emotionally and psychologically devastated. I know that Eido labels his accusers as mentally unstable, but actions like this can hardly do otherwise than to destabilize otherwise healthy but koan-stressed and sleep-deprived students in the middle of a Rim! Zen sesshin. I was never able to complete a sesshin after that.

For me, the experience of being diverted from my path and de-valued as a serious Zen student has had a lifelong impact on my relationship with Zen Buddhism. I do not trust Buddhist teachers of any sect. What I mean by this is that I understand that sexual attractions are part of human nature and that, without very clear and enforceable rules prohibiting teacher-student liaisons in Buddhist practice, this corrosive interaction is likely to play itself out again and again and again. It seems a shame that the standards that psychologists and university professors and lawyers are bound to (and the beneficial atmosphere these standards create), are beyond the scope and reach of so many Buddhist organizations.

With warm regards,

Merry White Benezra (Nennen)

Kobutsu

**by Tenshin on Mon Nov 07, 2011 5:22 am**

Carol wrote:

Please also remember that Merry White Benezra was there and is writing of her own experience... Bless her courage for doing so, and I hope many will read her book.

I know her husband, though I've never had the pleasure of meeting her. I know from him that her experiences with Shimano at Dai Bosatsu Monastery had a profound impact on her, and that the decades which have passed have allowed her to develop insight that will be valuable to all who read her story.

Carol,

Thanks for standing up for truth, here. It is quite a breath of fresh air.

tenshin

Tenshin

**Page 73**

**by Tenshin on Mon Nov 07, 2011 5:36 am**

Kobutsu wrote:

Please also remember that just because a book might be labeled, as a "novel" does not necessarily mean that its contents are not true renditions of the writer's experiences. There is more than one reason a book might be labeled as a "novel" or as "fiction."

Likewise, there can be more than one reason for someone to ignore the truth, to enable the actions of serial sexual assaulters who masquerade as, "Dharma lineage holders," and to try to confuse others into believing mistruth as truth. The last point is incredibly toxic as it draws more potential victims into the web of deceit, and creates confusion. It doesn't matter one bit if a person is naïve, stupid, or dishonest with themselves, but to confuse others is a most shameful and poisonous act.

tenshin

Tenshin

**by unsui on Mon Nov 07, 2011 2:34 pm**

Kobutsu wrote:

Please also remember that just because a book might be labeled, as a “novel” does not necessarily mean that its contents are not true renditions of the writer’s experiences. There is more that one reason a book might be labeled as a “novel” or as “fiction.”

MWB writes on the "About" page:

Special Karma is a novelized account of my experiences in a Zen Buddhist monastery in America, the first to address the issue of sexual misconduct by a Zen master. Why did I write it as a novel and not a memoir? Good question! The answer is that I wanted to approach this material in a way that would give me a novelist’s freedom in exploring the vulnerabilities and shortcomings of my protagonist, as well as those of the book’s other characters, including the Roshi. As an avid novel-reader, I also hoped to harness the novel’s ability to create a richly detailed world, one that the reader can inhabit and explore.

That is a pretty clear message to the reader.

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by Kojip on Mon Nov 07, 2011 3:07 pm**

I sure as hell don't believe my own stories....

For those with an actual interest in this situation, the archival material seems plentiful.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by Linda Anderson on Mon Nov 07, 2011 5:18 pm**

I've always valued fiction for its multi-dimensional ability to give the reader an experience of the complexities in life. That is what the world's great novels accomplish. A factual description just doesn't communicate beyond the incident to the place where we may actually be moved to discover how these forces are at work in each of us.... and how we choose to live our lives kindly and compassionately. Like old newspapers, archives can be forgotten.

Linda  
Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Tenshin on Mon Nov 07, 2011 5:31 pm**

unsui wrote:

That is a pretty clear message to the reader.

Yeah, that the world is full of lots and lots of attorneys.

Ever see the Law & Order episodes about, say, the Abner Louima case or the Maddoff case? Both clearly caveated by, "The following story is fictional, and any similarity to events or people living is purely coincidental." Yet, both are identical to the real-in-life events, but noted as fictional creations.

It's called legal CYA, pure and simple.

Tenshin

**by Kojip on Mon Nov 07, 2011 5:53 pm**

Linda Anderson wrote:

I've always valued fiction for its multi-dimensional ability to give the reader an experience of the complexities in life. That is what the world's great novels accomplish. A factual description just doesn't communicate beyond the incident to the place where we may actually be moved to discover how these forces are at work in each of us.... and how

we choose to live our lives kindly and compassionately. Like old newspapers, archives can be forgotten.

Linda

Stories have value. The emotional and mental life of an author obviously has value. An account of that author's heart and mind has value. But, if I read an account (archival or fictionalized) of a situation in which I have no first hand involvement, and think it is experiencing anything but an image built up in this mind, twice removed, that is confused.

This isn't a defence of Shimano, it is just a bullshit detector going off.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by Luminous Heart on Mon Nov 07, 2011 6:43 pm**

Forty years of allowing this to go on suggests to me that "first hand involvement" is no guarantee of seeing things clearly.

Luminous Heart

**by Bob Skank on Mon Nov 07, 2011 6:49 pm**

Linda Anderson wrote:

I've always valued fiction for its multi-dimensional ability to give the reader an experience of the complexities in life. That is what the world's great novels accomplish. A factual description just doesn't communicate beyond the incident to the place where we may actually be moved to discover how these forces are at work in each of us...and how we choose to live our lives kindly and compassionately. Like old newspapers, archives can be forgotten.

The premise of postmodern study of literature is that any piece of writing is only the writer's subjective point of view, his or her personal opinion, no matter how "objective" or how "true" the writer claims his or her writing to be. All writing is done, can be done, only by taking something "out of context." Some things have to be selected from the infinity that is past and present life, and most things have to be deselected, omitted, left out. That is the nature of all writing—the nature even of history, biography, and memoir.

It is not "the truth," it is just one person's version of "the truth." This premise is familiar to Buddhists, the idea that we do not know ourselves or others as we or they really are but only as subjective and personal images or impressions that are warped and distorted by the biases and prejudices of our experience, our ignorance, our desire, our aversion. Honesty and sincerity are wonderful virtues, but they are not necessarily "truth." Everyone on this forum may be honest and sincere, yet none of us may apprehend "the truth." The truth of any matter may escape us all. The whole truth is elusive, as both Buddhists and postmodern writers understand. When a postmodern writer tells a story of "nonfiction," the writer begins by saying, or by assuming readers understand that he or she is saying, "I may be wrong about these people and these events, but in my writing I have tried as hard as I can to express honestly how these experiences appeared and felt and seemed to me, how these persons looked and sounded to me; I have not just made something up, I haven't just invented things. This is what appeared to me to be the truth, this is what seemed true to me. Someone else's account may be much different." In fiction, of course, one can invent; but good readers understand from the outset that the "truth" presented in both fiction and nonfiction is just one person's point of view, one person's version of the truth, the "story" that Buddhists try to surrender and let go of when they sit. Given this caveat, however, most of us enjoy hearing another person's version of "the truth," another person's vision of life, another person's account of an event or series of events. —Bob

Bob Skank

**by Kojip on Mon Nov 07, 2011 7:15 pm**

Luminous Heart wrote:

Forty years of allowing this to go on suggests to me that "first hand involvement" is no guarantee of seeing things clearly.

True. And for those who do not have first hand involvement, and who are concerned and want to intervene, the stories built up are that much more abstracted. That is all they have to work with, and that is fair enough, as long as it is acknowledged as such.

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Kojip

**by Luminous Heart on Mon Nov 07, 2011 7:24 pm**

Kojip wrote:

Luminous Heart wrote:



Forty years of allowing this to go on suggests to me that "first hand involvement" is no guarantee of seeing things clearly.

True. And for those who do not have first hand involvement, and who are concerned want to intervene, the stories built up are that much more abstracted. That is all they have to work with, and that is fair enough, as long as it is acknowledged as such.

Intervention has taken place, as far as I can tell.

Actually, "involvement" can be a problem to seeing clearly, and in that event a more objective observer can be helpful.

Luminous Heart

**by unsui on Mon Nov 07, 2011 7:28 pm**

Tenshin wrote:

unsui wrote:

That is a pretty clear message to the reader.

Yeah, that the world is full of lots and lots of attorneys.

Ever see the Law & Order episodes about, say, the Abner Louima case or the Maddoff case? Both clearly caveated by, "The following story is fictional, and any similarity to events or people living is purely coincidental." Yet, both are identical to the real-in-life events, but noted as fictional creations.

It's called legal CYA, pure and simple.

Well, I thought she meant it. Seriously. But it seems you know better! I imagine, however, that others may understand it as I do.

BTW, your references to TV-series and real-life cases unfortunately are nothing I have any knowledge of or experience with.

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by unsui on Mon Nov 07, 2011 7:32 pm**

Kojip wrote:

Linda Anderson wrote:

I've always valued fiction for its multi-dimensional ability to give the reader an experience of the complexities in life. That is what the world's great novels accomplish. A factual description just doesn't communicate beyond the incident to the place where we may actually be moved to discover how these forces are at work in each of us.... and how we choose to live our lives kindly and compassionately. Like old newspapers, archives can be forgotten.

Linda

Stories have value. The emotional and mental life of an author obviously has value. An account of that author's heart and mind has value. But, if I read an account (archival or fictionalized) of a situation in which I have no first hand involvement, and think it is experiencing anything but an image built up in this mind, twice removed, that is confused.

This isn't a defence of Shimano, it is just a bullshit detector going off.

Thank-you. An important point.

May we extend This Mind over the whole universe so that we and all beings together may attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom

unsui

**by Linda Anderson on Tue Nov 08, 2011 12:44 am**

I wasn't talking about THE truth, neither is this messy thread. Did you just put down the western literary tradition? or have I misunderstood you. There is a resonance of experience in humanity, it is called relationship, the one body, etc.

Not last night,

not this morning;

Melon flowers bloomed.

~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by Bob Skank on Tue Nov 08, 2011 12:58 am**

Linda Anderson wrote:

Did you [?] just put down the western literary tradition?

Me?

Definitely not.

No!

Just the opposite!

Bob

Bob Skank

**by christopher::: on Tue Nov 08, 2011 1:02 am**

Kojip wrote:

Linda Anderson wrote:

I've always valued fiction for its multi-dimensional ability to give the reader an experience of the complexities in life. That is what the world's great novels accomplish. A factual description just doesn't communicate beyond the incident to the place where we may actually be moved to discover how these forces are at work in each of us.... and how we choose to live our lives kindly and compassionately. Like old newspapers, archives can be forgotten.

Linda

Stories have value. The emotional and mental life of an author obviously has value. An account of that author's heart and mind has value. But, if I read an account (archival or fictionalized) of a situation in which I have no first hand involvement, and think it is experiencing anything but an image built up in this mind, twice removed, that is confused.

This isn't a defence of Shimano, it is just a bullshit detector going off.

And now my bullshit detector is going off. "Anything but an image" ??

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by Kojip on Tue Nov 08, 2011 1:07 am**

Linda Anderson wrote:

I wasn't talking about THE truth, neither is this messy thread. Did you just put down the western literary tradition? or have I misunderstood you. There is a resonance of experience in humanity, it is called relationship, the one body, etc.

Hi Linda. I didn't put down the western literary tradition, or shared meaning. The basic perspective for me is Satipatthana.... right here. It has nothing to do with postmodern theory.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by Kojip on Tue Nov 08, 2011 1:08 am**

christopher::: wrote:

Kojip wrote:

Linda Anderson wrote:

I've always valued fiction for its multi-dimensional ability to give the reader an experience of the complexities in life. That is what the world's great novels accomplish. A factual description just doesn't communicate beyond the incident to the place where we may actually be moved to discover how these forces are at work in each of us.... and how we choose to live our lives kindly and compassionately. Like old newspapers, archives can be forgotten.

Linda

Stories have value. The emotional and mental life of an author obviously has value. An account of that author's heart and mind has value. But, if I read an account (archival or fictionalized) of a situation in which I have no first hand involvement, and think it is experiencing anything but an image built up in this mind, twice removed, that is confused.

This isn't a defence of Shimano, it is just a bullshit detector going off.

And now my bullshit detector is going off. "Anything but an image" ??

yup.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by christopher::: on Tue Nov 08, 2011 1:43 am**

Well, from my pov, when our minds reconstruct someone else's narrative description of an event in their life there are most definitely 2 layers of subjective interpretation present. So the description itself is not truth, its an interpretation. But when the subjective interpretation is about an event that really happened and has had a profound (even traumatic) impact on the person- such as a rape, seduction, abuse- its much more then just "an image" ...

:::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork :::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by christopher::: on Tue Nov 08, 2011 2:54 am**

Jundo Cohen wrote:

Carol wrote:

Please also remember that Merry White Benezra was there and is writing of her own experience... Bless her courage for doing so, and I hope many will read her book.

I know her husband, though I've never had the pleasure of meeting her. I know from him that her experiences with Shimano at Dai Bosatsu Monastery had a profound impact on her, and that the decades which have passed have allowed her to develop insight that will be valuable to all who read her story.

I just ordered it. I have not yet read it, but my gut reaction is that books like this are a breath of fresh air into the sometimes reified atmosphere of our Ways, as or more valuable than all the Sutras and standard "Zen Books" combined. Why?

The power of this Practice is that it sees and shines right through all the crap, right through all the overly idealized images of what Zen and Zen Masters should be. And in doing so it finds a certain Treasure Beyond Compare that all the mud can't sully. When

we knock the golden idols made of wood and clay off their pedestals, we discover the Real Jewel that was here all along.

... And that is, after all, what all the Sutras and standard "Zen Books" are preaching.

Gassho, Jundo

Linda Anderson wrote:

I've always valued fiction for its multi-dimensional ability to give the reader an experience of the complexities in life. That is what the world's great [novels] accomplish. A factual description just doesn't communicate beyond the incident to the place where we may actually be moved to discover how these forces are at work in each of us.... and how we choose to live our lives kindly and compassionately. Like old newspapers, archives can be forgotten.

Linda

Thank you Jundo, Carol and Linda.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by Genjo on Tue Nov 08, 2011 3:22 am**

What follows is my letter to my Dharma Sister, Shinge Roshi, concerning her November 1st letter to the ZSS Sangha...

---

11/7/11

Dear Shinge Roshi,

I hope you had a wonderful Harvest Sesshin at Dai Bosatsu (DBZ). I deeply respect your dedication to the Dharma and the efforts you are putting forth to nurture Zen practice at Hoen-Ji (Syracuse), Shobo-Ji (NYC) and Kongo-Ji (DBZ). I have read and re-read your letter to the Zen Studies Society Sangha dated November 1st <

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011 ... Sangha.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2011...Sangha.pdf) >, and though I see some movement to close this matter of Eido Roshi's multiple ethical breaches over decades, I still find more absent than present in your actions to date.

For example, in your letter you say you "cannot apologize for what others have done or have not done", but on this point, I strongly disagree. The United States apologized long after it should have for the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII, but the apology was greatly appreciated by those internees still living and their decedents. As abbot of the Zen Studies Society (ZSS) I think it is your responsibility to see that the organization as a whole apologizes for its part in minimizing Eido Roshi's earlier ethical breaches and thereby inadequately protecting the sangha. The organization also failed Eido Roshi by never insisting on any conditions that might have helped him address his obvious addiction. Please don't hide behind legal arguments that such an admission would put the organization at financial risk; a far greater risk, as the Faith Trust Institute has told us, is further alienating both victims and the wider public by not forthrightly admitting the organizational contribution to this serial problem.

Your letter also reports that you have revised the ZSS bylaws and affirm that there will be "elected representatives from both the New York Zendo and Dai Bosatsu Zendo." In addition, you say that you have nominated others to be on the board with "strong non-profit, law, and business careers." I applaud the democratic reforms and your pledge for transparency, but as far as I can tell the new bylaws have not been released to the public, there has been no mention of when or how elections will be held, how membership will be determined for who can vote, how large the board will be, or who you have nominated to serve on the board. Frankly, without this information everyone is left in the dark and these steps can hardly be lauded as transparent.

In addition, from what I understand, only one person from each of the two ZSS properties will be elected to the board. This will certainly not constitute a majority, not even a significant minority, hardly the progress many have been waiting for to assure that the ZSS Board be independent of the authority of the Abbot. I know some Zen Centers still have non-profit boards that are not substantially elected by the sangha, but if there was ever a more convincing case of the organizational dangers that are inherent in this model than ZSS, I'm not aware of it. Moreover, it is my understanding that the new bylaws still give the abbot a vote on the board and refer to abbot as the Chief Executive Officer. I know many were hoping for some real signs of separation of secular and spiritual powers in the new bylaws, but this appears to be missing. I understand that this kind of language and organization may work for smaller Zen groups, but given the history of ZSS and the real needs of a larger organization, the abbot should be in charge of practice, and the Board should be in charge of finances and management.

You also announce in your letter that you "will arrange a Board training retreat with a non-profit professional on the best practices for governance and communication." This is all fine and good, but there is no mention of any commitment to directly address the needs of those most impacted by Eido Roshi's ethical breaches. At the very least some kind of trust fund should be set up to help those psychologically damaged by Eido

Roshi's deplorable behavior. In addition, there most definitely needs to be some kind of commitment to further sangha wide meetings where, as recommended by the Olive Branch facilitators, work can be done to educate and train the community in how to recognize and help prevent future abuses of power and authority. Furthermore, there is no mention of efforts to proactively open our arms to our Dharma brothers and sisters alienated from our practice over the decades.

Also noticeably absent from your letter is any mention of any restrictions placed on Eido Roshi. It is my understanding that he still has rooms dedicated to his use on both ZSS properties. I know his teaching has been curtailed and that he is only allowed to visit infrequently and under supervision, but as far as I can see there has been no public codification of these restrictions by the ZSS board. For the Sangha's protection and Eido Roshi's protection the scope and degree of restrictions must be made public. Of course you know my opinion, the simplest and most direct solution that would offer the best chance of healing of the fractured ZSS Sangha, would be to insist on an indefinite hiatus from Eido Roshi's presence on campus. Most ministers who have retired from congregations without controversy volunteer to stay away for a year or more to allow the new minister to become adequately established. Eido Roshi resigned as abbot almost a year ago, for what reason does he still need to have rooms dedicated to his use on both properties? I hear there is still a huge picture of Eido Roshi hanging up in Shobo-Ji. Eido Roshi has proven himself to be a serial predator who has as yet only minimally understood the damage he has done to so many and has no concept of how much he has damaged American Zen. It is an affront to those he has harmed and the wider Maha Sangha that he is still so coddled by you.

Unfortunately, what is missing from your letter far exceeds what is present in your letter. I was hoping to feel sufficiently accepting of your positive steps to feel comfortable attending this year's Rohatsu sesshin at DBZ, but regrettably I do not feel in sufficient communion with the reforms you have made to date. I feel such disappointment and disillusionment at the moment that I'm not sure when or if I will be able to train there again. It is such a shame to see this precious opportunity to really turn this organization around slipping away. Please stop favoring the man over the Dharma. I fear that just as others who have given so much to ZSS and the Dharma, I too will become one those who are alienated and forgotten.

May the Dharma and traditional Rinzai practice flourish at ZSS,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo



**Page 74**

**by genkaku on Tue Nov 08, 2011 4:18 am**

Thank you Genjo, for your patient persistence and clarity. You have done us a great service.

Gassho.  
genkaku

**by Kojip on Tue Nov 08, 2011 5:33 am**

christopher::: wrote:

Well, from my pov, when our minds reconstruct someone else's narrative description of an event in their life there are most definitely 2 layers of subjective interpretation present. So the description itself is not truth, its an interpretation. But when the subjective interpretation is about an event that really happened and has had a profound (even traumatic) impact on the person- such as a rape, seduction, abuse- its much more then just "an image"...

And what exactly is your role in this whole business, besides a spectator juicing outrage? I have no idea who Shimano is, a tragic old man ? Caligula? I do not know him, or the students personally, and have only read about a situation of abuse, and sorrow. I have a picture, that's all, and hope those involved can work it out.

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Kojip

**by christopher::: on Tue Nov 08, 2011 9:23 am**

Kojip wrote:

And what exactly is your role in this whole business, besides a spectator juicing outrage? I have no idea who Shimano is, a tragic old man ? Caligula? I do not know him, or the students personally, and have only read about a situation of abuse, and sorrow. I have a picture, that's all, and hope those involved can work it out.

Both of us stand outside the situation, Richard. Did you read Genjo's letter, just posted?

At the end of the day there is little most of us can do to help out beyond encouraging and supporting those involved. But the charge of "juicing outrage" sounds like a projection on your part, imo. Similar things were said to Kobutsu and genkaku, as they sought to draw attention to this sad situation. I wouldn't be surprised if some are leveling that charge at Genjo now as well.

Yes, i don't know Shimano, and my contact with people involved has been limited. At the end of the day this tragedy (like most other dukkha heavy tragedies in our world) will hopefully turn out to be a helpful koan (for all who have turned their care and attention to it) pointing us in the direction of..

Linda wrote:

.."the place where we may actually be moved to discover how these forces are at work in each of us.... and how we choose to live our lives kindly and compassionately."

For both those directly and indirectly concerned, what more can we really hope for?  
 ::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma ::::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork :::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher::  
 Founding Member

**by Kojip on Tue Nov 08, 2011 1:51 pm**

Yes.. I was projecting when saying that you are "juicing outrage". Good call.  
<http://www.ontariozen.com/>  
<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip

**by genkaku on Tue Nov 08, 2011 5:56 pm**

Outrage has a way of running its self-involved course. But if you have a flat tire on your car, you still might want to fix it.  
 genkaku

**by Luminous Heart on Tue Nov 08, 2011 11:14 pm**

Stories, particularly well told stories, are significantly more influential than bare facts, so it is understandable that those concerned with the public reputation of Zen may not be pleased with the publication of Merry Benezra's new novel.

Luminous Heart

**by Tenshin on Thu Nov 10, 2011 5:47 am**

Genjo wrote:

What follows is my letter to my Dharma Sister, Shinge Roshi, concerning her November 1st letter to the ZSS Sangha...

---

11/7/11

Dear Shinge Roshi,

I hope you had a wonderful Harvest Sesshin at Dai Bosatsu (DBZ).

<SNIP>

Unfortunately, what is missing from your letter far exceeds what is present in your letter....

<SNIP>

Please stop favoring the man over the Dharma.

Genjo

I think Genjo hits in his letter to Sherry Chayat, quite politely, her lack of integrity and either inability or unwillingness to lead the organization into safe harbor.

One point he made that I believe needs to be restated is the last sentence, above. Chayat is not favoring the man over the Dharma - there is too much self-interest at stake, here.

The sentence should read, "Please stop favoring yourself over the Dharma."

To continue to advance this conflicted position for her own interests, and thereby enable a person who has likely committed serial sexual assault on multiple people, displays such

self-centeredness, lack of integrity, lack of empathy, and an unbelievable willingness to disparage the Dharma she claims to uphold.... that it is obvious she is no reverend, but just a carney.

The only thing, apparently, that Shimano has transmitted has been a sexually transmitted disease to one or more persons.

Tenshin

Tenshin

**by christopher::: on Thu Nov 10, 2011 9:46 am**

I'm definitely a bystander, and don't know Shinge Roshi, but from everything that's been shared it sounds like she's been placed in a very very difficult situation. No matter what she says or does some are going to be unhappy with her words and actions, pointing fingers of blame.

I wouldn't be surprised if she hasn't often thought of just giving up and walking away from this role she's been asked to play, feeling just as alienated as Genjo and others feel. It might be helpful if more of us on the outside would wish her well. Self/other, us/them thinking frequently leads to only greater misery, no?

Last edited by christopher::: on Thu Nov 10, 2011 9:54 am, edited 1 time in total.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by PeterB on Thu Nov 10, 2011 9:54 am**

Not necessarily. Thats simply an idea you have elevated to the status of personal dogma  
Chris.

PeterB

**by christopher::: on Thu Nov 10, 2011 10:04 am**

You could be right Peter, but i don't think so. This is a central teaching of Zen Buddhism and something really important to reflect upon for dukkha heavy situations like this.

As Jundo shared elsewhere...

Jundo Cohen wrote:

The Great Way is not difficult  
 for those not attached to preferences.  
 When neither love nor hate arises,  
 all is clear and undisguised.  
 Separate by the smallest amount, however,  
 and you are as far from it as heaven is from earth.

No complicated meditation instructions are needed, no intricate practices, just this simple way pointing directly to a still (even amid & as the turmoil and commotion) and illuminated mind of equanimity and wholeness. This is the Buddha-mind available to all of us ... as all of us ... all judgments and frictions dropped away, the divisions of 'self vs. others and the world' dropped away ... even amid a world we sometimes do not like, and in the heart of life's struggles and strife.

What's more, this mind can come and go ... sometimes in a day, a single Zazen sitting, just a moment. In my talk, I also mention this poem attributed to Hui-Neng, the 6th Patriarch, pointing to how the Buddha Mind (though beyond coming and going) can come and go ...

Deluded, a buddha is a sentient being;  
 awakened, a sentient being is a buddha.  
 ignorant, a buddha is a sentient being;  
 with wisdom, a sentient being is a buddha.  
 if the mind is warped, a buddha is a sentient being  
 if the mind is impartial, a sentient being is a buddha.  
 when once a warped mind is produced,  
 buddha is concealed within the sentient being.  
 if for one instant of thought we become impartial,  
 then sentient beings are themselves buddha.

[Sit with this] amid our lives of sometime ease and sometime difficulties, with the people and situations we seek and those we run from, the beautiful and the ugly ... all human judgments, resistance and separations.

What wholeness arises when all judgments and separations are dropped dropped away?

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher::  
 Founding Member

**by PeterB on Thu Nov 10, 2011 10:16 am**

What is being described here is the fruit of actualizing Buddha nature.....  
 not a mind set that we can choose or elect as a default in the absence of realisation.  
 Self and other are facts of life as lived until then , and self and other are the way things  
 are until the reality of things is clear to us. At which point they retire of their own accord.  
 In theory this can be achieved in a single sitting. In reality it happens for the  
 overwhelming majority only after prolonged struggle under suoervision, not by giving  
 emotional or intellectual assent to the hard won insights of others.  
 We cannot leap to such an insight by appropriating the insights of those who have done  
 the spade work.  
 Until our own realisation has arisen the truck bearing down on us is real. The driver of  
 that bus is real. Us and them is real, Our reponsibility is not to coin verbal formulae that  
 declares that the other with their pain and joy is somehow an extension of ourselves or we  
 of them. Its to accept full responsibility for our actions. Its is to take the blame, it is to  
 serve the other.And the other is served not by a linguistic ploy, but by entering fully into  
 their experience with them by honouring their otherness.  
 PeterB

**by christopher::: on Thu Nov 10, 2011 1:15 pm**

Once again, you could be right Peter, and parts of what you say do ring true. Though i  
 find Jundo's explanation corresponds more to my own practice and experience.

Jundo Cohen wrote:

No complicated meditation instructions are needed, no intricate practices, just this simple  
 way pointing directly to a still (even amid & as the turmoil and commotion) and  
 illuminated mind of equanimity and wholeness. This is the Buddha-mind available to all  
 of us ... as all of us ... all judgments and frictions dropped away, the divisions of 'self vs.  
 others and the world' dropped away ... even amid a world we sometimes do not like, and  
 in the heart of life's struggles and strife.

What's more, this mind can come and go ... sometimes in a day, a single Zazen sitting,  
 just a moment...

And i really like the question he asks here. If we want to understand and/or help resolve the Shimano matter, whether on the inside or outside, this may well be key...

What wholeness arises when all judgments and separations are dropped dropped away

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma ::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork :::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher::  
 Founding Member

**by PeterB on Thu Nov 10, 2011 1:30 pm**

from what I understand of this apparently interminable thread some bloke was a sexual predator, or is alleged to be. How exactly is this resolved or prevented by paying lip service to being non judgmental ? Seriously ?

Its just blather. Nice words that add up to nothing.

Judgement is essential. Separation is a fact at the level of functioning where sexual predation is operating.

We are not an amorphous blob of shiny Buddhadhatu. We arise with all of our joy and sorrow. We do not live in an abstract massive cuddle. Stuff happens. We react to that as wisely as we can. But by God we react.

PeterB

**by christopher::: on Thu Nov 10, 2011 2:06 pm**

Yes, of course. You're right, and this has been said by many here. He should have been booted out of the country 50 years ago when he first arrived and started preying on female students. Something should have been done. The failure and inability to react wisely is indeed central here. It's become a decades long tragedy because of non-action and lack of judgment.

Yet is there a way to see the world BOTH as Jundo describes and as you do? Not just with Shimano but with all the "wrong" actions and mistakes each of us makes in life, all our violations of compassion and precepts.

How to resolve this paradox? I don't have an answer, but rereading what you wrote has been illuminating.

There seems to be a "disconnect" in a situation like this, between the realities and ideals of Buddhist practice.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
 "You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
 Founding Member

**by PeterB on Thu Nov 10, 2011 3:18 pm**

There is no paradox. Neither is there any conflict between my view and Jundo's view that you have plucked from its context to serve your own ends as is your wont.

That is simple variation on Eric Bernes " Lets him and you fight ". A tactic you deploy Chris almost as often as your selective quoting that apparently supports a view that you hold even though the teacher/author you are quoting is on record as holding a wider view in contradiction to that.

So you will for example quote selectively Trungpa or Ajahn Chah apparently denying the need for teachers...when their whole thrust is predicated on the absolute need for teachers.

But I digress.  
 PeterB

**by Carol on Thu Nov 10, 2011 5:05 pm**

Moderator's Note:

We've always allowed a wide range of views on this topic, and have been more lenient with our terms of service in order to make allowances for the strong feelings this topic brings up.

**BUT**, everyone, avoid attacking others on this board for expressing their views on this subject. Whatever your view may be, this needs to be a safe place for others to express differing views.

For the most part, it has been. Thanks. But this reminder is needed again -- please express your own view without attacking others here who see it differently.

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
 Global Moderator



**by JVC108 on Thu Nov 10, 2011 6:48 pm**

It seems to me that there are many parallels between what has been happening at Zen Studies Society and what is happening during the current Penn State scandal.

However, offhand, the biggest lesson was that outside law enforcement and the justice system had to be involved and it still is taking over a decade to resolve.

Please consider viewing the PBS news analysis in this linked video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjYkomNCH0g> . At around the 3 minute mark a Jeff Anderson, lawyer who has had a practice of representing child sex abuse victims is interviewed and he provides a virtual template of the individual and institutional legal obligations in sex abuse cases.

His general legal advice and the explicit advice made by the Faith Institute to the ZSS Board are remarkable but are certainly not coincidental.

JVC108

**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 trying to renegotiate the terms of an extravagant Deferred Compensation Agreement (DCA) that was rubber stamped by a pervious 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

Last edited by Genjo on Thu Nov 10, 2011 9:39 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

by JVC108 on Thu Nov 10, 2011 9:12 pm

Genjo wrote:

...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.

...

Genjo

Your entire letter is well stated.

As a long ago former member I have found such fears in the end baseless. When I left there were only a few other options for places to train but they were available. Despite Shimano, Zen is alive and active in New York City. Destabilizing upset, fear and anger are now mostly sadness and a kind of concern.

Perhaps Zen's fundamental lessons of clarity, impermanence and non-attachment can be brought further to bear the best one can in addressing the strong feelings.

I now believe it best to be less concerned about the continuance of Zen Studies Society, far more concerned with the safety and the spiritual care of present and future possible students.

IMO the questions are what other negatives exist within a teacher and abbot who for decades aware of and has for decades enabled and continues to loyally support a man with kinds and number of problems such as Shimano? Who can say? What are the risks? Why undertake them?

Bluntly, a valid question is should the current abbot receive the same treatment as former head coach, Joe Paterno. Legally and politically, the answer is quite clear. Note that the problematic individual in the Penn State matter, Mr. Sandusky, was "allowed" to retire 12 years ago. Note how charismatic and popular Paterno is.

Again, safety of the community, both its present and future members must be paramount, not the attachment to the continuance of Zen Studies Society and any of its past or current principals. (Although I certainly hope their health and well being are being privately tended to appropriately.)

JVC108

**by Nonin on Thu Nov 10, 2011 10:17 pm**

Genjo, you wrote:

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.

I believe that she has admitted the above to herself and to others. Eventually, she'll have to speak for herself on these issues, but at the moment her public statements are restrained and constrained for a variety of reasons. I also believe that, at the moment, she's doing her best to operate positively within these restraints and constraints. If it is true that Eido Shimano is still allowed on campus during this time of transition and that one room is still reserved for him on each campus, I hope that both these privileges are revoked and that there is no legal reason for not doing so.

You also wrote:

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 am aware of this, Genjo, but I'm also aware that some board members have remained and are still committed to and working towards righting the organization. Shinge is one of them, and she has been for some time. You and others may not be satisfied with the pace of change and neither am I, but I'm not intimately aware of the difficulties encountered in the processes that Shinge, the Board, and the Sangha are going through. I also know that things do not always proceed at the pace that we want them to.

You then wrote:

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.

You're "guessing," Genjo? Have you spoken directly to Shinge about this issue? Have you spoken directly to Shinge lately about the concerns you're addressing not only in this post but also in your public letter to her? All public speculation about Shinge's motives are just that, speculation, and it is not helpful.

As for the deferred compensation and other legal issues, there are lawyers involved, Genjo, and they are working on them. I hope that they're resolved quickly, fairly, and equitably, but the legal gears don't always grind as fast as we want them to.

You also say:

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.

How can you be so sure of the nature of Shinge's fears and the depth of her "attachment to the man?" In your mind, she is acting the way she is for the reasons you think she is, but this is only "in your mind." Again, this is speculation and is not helpful. Have you spoken to her directly about what you've been thinking?

We've known each other for quite a while, Genjo, and I've also known Shinge for quite a longer while. I regard you both as not only quality people deeply grounded in the Way but also as excellent Zen Buddhist teachers. As I stated above, my fondest wish is that you two are able to work together and bring your hopes for ZSS to fruition through a common effort to right the organization. This is not happening at the moment, and to me, it's a damn shame. You both started out working this way after the current scandal erupted a couple of years ago, but something got lost, and I hope that you both can regain it.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**Page 75**

**by Genjo on Thu Nov 10, 2011 11:31 pm**

Nonin wrote:

[b] You and others may not be satisfied with the pace of change and neither am I, but I'm not intimately aware of the difficulties encountered in the processes that Shinge, the Board, and the Sangha are going through. I also know that things do not always proceed at the pace that we want them to."

Dear Nonin,

It's true you have known Shinge longer than I have known her, but I also have had to work more intimately with Shinge Roshi on the ZSS board than you have. In addition, I am intimately aware of the difficulties encountered, and I am very glad I was not made head of this organization. However, it is my informed opinion that she is still somewhat stuck under Eido Roshi's spell. I have many reasons to believe as I do, mostly by directly watching her reticence and flip-flopping on what I would call a more progressive stance on issues, and by hearing what others tell me confidentially. I could release emails that would demonstrate my point, but I have been threatened with legal action if I do. Regardless, I have tried hard to constrain my response, in order to give her every opportunity to grow and mature in her position. I would want the same consideration if I were in her shoes. Unfortunately, it is my conclusion that Shinge Roshi is part of the problem of why things are moving so slowly. As far as talking with her directly, I don't like being yelled at and told I am betraying the organizational structure. She has not responded to my emails in sometime.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Nonin on Thu Nov 10, 2011 11:45 pm**

Genjo,

I also have many reasons to believe as I do. It is my informed opinion that she is doing the best that she can right now under trying circumstances. You base your opinions on what other tell you confidentially; so do I.

Why bash Shinge on this board and speculate on her intentions and motives? What good does this do? You have her issues with her, and I'm sure that she has her issues with you. It would be much more productive if the two of you met and resolved your issues with each other, and, given the hard feelings, it would be best if a third party facilitated such a meeting.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin  
Global Moderator

**by Genjo on Fri Nov 11, 2011 12:04 am**

Nonin wrote:

Genjo,

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I would be happy to meet with a third party; indeed, I've heard her speculations and motives about me. However, this doesn't change the fact that not enough is being done to turn ZSS around.

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by genkaku on Fri Nov 11, 2011 2:05 am**

PeterB wrote:

from what I understand of this apparently interminable thread some bloke was a sexual predator, or is alleged to be. How exactly is this resolved or prevented by paying lip service to being non judgmental ? Seriously ?

Its just blather. Nice words that add up to nothing.

Judgement is essential. Separation is a fact at the level of functioning where sexual predation is operating.

We are not an amorphous blob of shiny Buddhathatu. We arise with all of our joy and sorrow. We do not live in an abstract massive cuddle. Stuff happens. We react to that as wisely as we can. But by God we react.

Ahhh, Peter, my lad! Take two gold stars out of petty cash!

PS. I don't know whether it's allowed or not, but since Tenshin made passing reference to the situation erupting around American football coach Joe Paterno at Penn State University, I would like to recommend a Public Broadcast Service interview between reporter Ray Suarez and trial lawyer Jeff Anderson. Anderson is unlikely to win a Mr. Charisma Award, but his ability to offer a brief, clear template for understanding sex abuse dynamics is pretty compelling. He mentions the Roman Catholic Church in passing and I really found myself thinking he might segue into Zen Studies Society (he didn't, of course). Anderson's remarks begin about three minutes into the segment and last perhaps five minutes. The interview is here

Last edited by genkaku on Fri Nov 11, 2011 2:20 am, edited 1 time in total.

genkaku

**by Kojip on Fri Nov 11, 2011 2:17 am**

genkaku wrote:

PeterB wrote:

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Ahhh, Peter, my lad! Take two gold stars out of petty cash!

I'm in Toronto and have never met any of these people, but I got my pitchfork and I'm ready to roll, just tell me where to go.

<http://www.ontariozen.com/>

<http://www.theravadabuddhistcommunity.org/>

Kojip



**by Nonin on Fri Nov 11, 2011 2:45 am**

Genjo wrote:

Nonin wrote:

Genjo,

Why bash Shinge on this board and speculate on her intentions and motives? What good does this do? You have her issues with her, and I'm sure that she has her issues with you. It would be much more productive if the two of you met and resolved your issues with each other, and it would be best if a third party facilitated such a meeting.

I would be happy to meet with a third party; indeed, I've heard her speculations and motives about me. However, this doesn't change the fact that not enough is being done to turn ZSS around.

Genjo

No, it doesn't, but if you two could come to some resolution and work together, maybe more would be done to turn ZSS around. Sniping at each other from afar, either privately, by rumor, innuendo, or, especially, publicly cannot bring anything but more negativity into the situation and solidify whatever sides or camps to which people belong. Do your differences with Shinge run so deep and have you wounded each other so deeply that no reconciliation is possible so that you two can work together with mutual respect?

I'm not blaming anyone specifically here, Genjo. Many of the reasons why more is not being done quicker are not only the fault of past processes but also the climate that has been generated by the shitstorm of personal attacks and animosity. You were the object of a lot of these early on. Nothing good comes out of this kind of behavior, for when people are attacked, their hearts harden and they dig in their heels. Peace-making, compromise, and other positive actions cannot arise when one's heels are dug in and one's heart is hardened.

So far, the Faith/Trust Institute and An Olive Branch have helped begin to turn things around, and from what I've heard, things have at least begun to move in a positive direction. Sangha meetings have been held; better institutional processes have been instituted; more are in the works. An Olive Branch is still engaged with ZSS and continues to work with the organization. However, it seems that whatever is done, someone finds fault with it and starts bashing whatever has been done, whoever has done it, rehashing old ground, and screaming that not enough is being done. This is no help and has to stop if what is left to be done to clean up the rest of the mess left by Eido Shimano's misconduct and past institutional by-passing of it is accomplished and the organization is ever to function positively and regain the respect of the Zen Buddhist Mahasangha.

San Francisco Zen Center righted itself after a similar sexual scandal, and now it functions extremely well and enjoys the respect of the Mahasangha, but it took many years. Also, remaining righted is an on-going, never-ending process.

I remember, Genjo, how difficult it was for you and Shinge when the scandal broke in the Summer of 2009 and things were crashing down on both of you at the AZTA meeting in Rochester. You were working together and supporting each other through that difficult time. It's very painful for me to see you two now so far apart personally and geographically. You are both very powerful, upright, compassionate, and wise people, exactly the kind of people who are needed to turn ZSS around.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Carol on Fri Nov 11, 2011 3:06 am**

genkaku wrote:

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Definitely allowed, and directly on point. I think this should be required viewing for all associated with ZSS, and the rest of us should take note as well, as these situations can arise in all kinds of venues, religious, educational, in the workplace, etc.

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by Genjo on Fri Nov 11, 2011 3:50 am**

Nonin wrote:

Do your differences with Shinge run so deep and have you wounded each other so deeply that no reconciliation is possible so that you two can work together with mutual respect?

No not at all, but she wanted me off the board and I am not willing to go back to train or negotiate without at least an assurance that Eido Roshi is indefinitely restricted from both campuses (which also means both rooms emptied and restored to ZSS use) and the bylaws improved to where at least the majority of the board is one day elected by the ZSS sangha. Is this so much to ask?

Nonin wrote:

Many of the reasons why more is not being done quicker are not only the fault of past processes but also the climate that has been generated by the shitstorm of personal attacks and animosity. You were the object of a lot of these early on. Nothing good comes out of this kind of behavior, for when people are attacked, their hearts harden and they dig in their heels. Peace-making, compromise, and other positive actions cannot arise when one's heels are dug in and one's heart is hardened.

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I remember, Genjo, how difficult it was for you and Shinge when the scandal broke in the Summer of 2009 and things were crashing down on both of you at the AZTA meeting in Rochester. You were working together and supporting each other through that difficult time. It's very painful for me to see you two now so far apart personally and geographically. You are both very powerful, upright, compassionate, and wise people, exactly the kind of people who are needed to turn ZSS around.

All true Nonin, but even though I was attacked I continued to go straight on to the only natural conclusion possible that Eido Roshi is a sexual predator. I would love to hear Shinge Roshi admit this publicly. I also concluded as many others have that top down administration by the abbot at place with a history such as ZSS is not possible, and I won't support it.

With palms together,

Genjo

Last edited by Genjo on Fri Nov 11, 2011 1:08 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by JVC108 on Fri Nov 11, 2011 6:20 am**

The decades of enablement of a serial sexual abuse by a clergyman (recall this is against the law in a growing number of states) and the harm that has caused cannot and must not be ignored.

Nowhere else but here do I see intelligent people giving serious credence to the notion that major enablers can clean up their own acts, much less clean up after the mess caused by decades of their enabling.

This has nothing to do with Zen Buddhism.

Get real folks!

JVC108

**by christopher::: on Fri Nov 11, 2011 10:34 am**

Carol wrote:

genkaku wrote:

PS. I don't know whether it's allowed or not, but since Tenshin made passing reference to the situation erupting around American football coach Joe Paterno at Penn State University, I would like to recommend a Public Broadcast Service interview between reporter Ray Suarez and trial lawyer Jeff Anderson. Anderson is unlikely to win a Mr. Charisma Award, but his ability to offer a brief, clear template for understanding sex abuse dynamics is pretty compelling. He mentions the Roman Catholic Church in passing

and I really found myself thinking he might segue into Zen Studies Society (he didn't, of course). Anderson's remarks begin about three minutes into the segment and last perhaps five minutes. The interview is here

Definitely allowed, and directly on point. I think this should be required viewing for all associated with ZSS, and the rest of us should take note as well, as these situations can arise in all kinds of venues, religious, educational, in the workplace, etc.

Wow, yes, extremely insightful description of the institutional dynamics in a situation like this. Here's the full transcript of the interview. As Carol says, it should be required viewing or reading.

As Paterno Leaves, Questions Remain on Penn State's Legal Obligations

RAY SUAREZ: We look at the questions surrounding the school, including the legal and ethical issues at stake. Jeff Anderson is a trial lawyer who runs his own practice specializing in representing victims of childhood sexual abuse.

Jeff, let's begin with where this story begins, with a member of the football team staff seeing what he thinks is the commission of a crime in a university facility, Jerry Sandusky raping a young man, a boy. What legal obligations, not suggestions, not ethical obligations, but what legal obligations come into play at that moment?

JEFF ANDERSON, attorney: Well, every adult in this scenario has a legal obligation to report any suspicion of sexual abuse, any suspicion to those trained to investigate, that is, to child protection or law enforcement.

And the failure of the individuals to do that is a failure of their legal obligation, not to mention their moral.

RAY SUAREZ: In this case, the young graduate assistant reported to his superior, Joe Paterno. What -- now, at that point, it becomes a hearsay story. What's Mr. Paterno's responsibility at that point, legally?

JEFF ANDERSON: Well, yes. First, reporting it up the line or down the line doesn't make it. You report it to police. And they investigate it, because that's what they're trained.

Joe Paterno's responsibility once he received the report was to do the same thing, turn it over to law enforcement, let them investigate it. And Joe Paterno failed in his obligations, both moral and legal. And that really leads to the larger question here. This is institutional failure, as well as individual failure of trusted adults.

And it is the institution that failed the kids on multiple levels, from the top to the bottom. And so the resignation of Joe Paterno or the resignation of the president in itself doesn't address the culture and the institutional failure. What really has to be done here now is the institution has to acknowledge their failures and rigorously commit themselves to training and preventing this from happening again and rigorously reaching out and acknowledging the failures of the past.

RAY SUAREZ: In this particular case, Joe Paterno said he turned it over to his superiors.

Now, at that point, he says he's dispensed his obligations. His spokesman, his own son, Scott Paterno, says he's dispensed his obligations. And, in fact, no one is saying they're contemplating charges against Joe Paterno.

What happens next?

JEFF ANDERSON: Well, when you hear of that, it is remindful of what happens in the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy. It's really just obedience to silence and a culture of self-protection, putting reputation above safety of children. Reporting up the line or down the line and telling others in that culture of silence and self-protection doesn't protect kids. The only thing that protects the kids is action.

That is reporting to law enforcement and then training those that are required to report an act. In this case, they didn't. And so, as a result, we know of eight. We know there are dozens more yet suffering in silence ready to come forward. And we know this institution is a real opportunity for a teaching moment, for them to learn the lesson of their failures and then rigorously employ practices that will prevent other kids from being harmed across all cultural lines and institutional boundaries.

RAY SUAREZ: In this case, you're dealing with an institution in Penn State University that is -- takes up a huge space in the culture of Central Pennsylvania.

You're dealing with people who are prominent, well known in every corner of the state, but especially right there in State College, Pa.

Does it become more difficult? Is it more complicated when you're dealing with prominent people inside a culture that is very much devoted to the maintenance and the success of that place?

JEFF ANDERSON: Well, really, you hit the nail on the head.

The problem is, the more powerful and revered the institution, the more difficult it becomes for anybody within it to expose the underbelly or report the sexual abuse and take action. And because it is such a powerful and revered institution, everybody here deferred to the institution to preserve its reputation, and forgot about the kids.

And that is what is the problem in our most powerful and trusted institutions. The kids are at greatest peril, because the most powerful and trusted predators in those institutions are given the most protection.

RAY SUAREZ: Is it often in case in your practice where molesters are not scary strangers, but people who go out of their way over time to gain the confidence and create intimacy with their eventual victims?

JEFF ANDERSON: Well, in our practice across the country for three decades and in Pennsylvania has been a demonstration of serial predators who are very trustworthy, the most prominent in our community, given great deference because they are so trusted, and they continue to offend and re-offend, even with those around them knowing, not wanting to believe or report.

And thus they're given permission. And, in effect, the fox is put back into the henhouse and kept in that position of trust, most notably demonstrated in the Catholic clerical culture, where we have seen that demonstrated time and time again across the country, and as we have seen it demonstrated in other protective institutions, where powerful figures are given deference because they -- we don't want to believe, we don't want to see, we don't want to hear, and, when they get caught, oftentimes are afraid to act or believe that they could do what Sandusky did.

RAY SUAREZ: What he's allegedly -- what he's been accused of doing.

But, Jeff Anderson, thanks a lot for joining us tonight.

JEFF ANDERSON: You're welcome.

source: [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/sports/j ... 11-09.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/sports/j...11-09.html)

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::

Founding Member

**by Genjo on Fri Nov 11, 2011 1:47 pm**

Nonin wrote:

... However, it seems that whatever is done, someone finds fault with it and starts bashing whatever has been done, whoever has done it, rehashing old ground, and screaming that not enough is being done. This is no help and has to stop if what is left to be done to clean up the rest of the mess left by Eido Shimano's misconduct and past institutional by-passing of it is accomplished and the organization is ever to function positively and regain the respect of the Zen Buddhist Mahasangha.

I hope your not suggesting that all who offer critical thinking about a controversial subject and even offer speculation about motives should always keep our mouths shut, or once something is said we should never repeat what we have said. If this were the case you wouldn't have much to say on this forum. You speculate about motives all the time, in fact I was responding to such a post where you speculated about another's motives when I speculated about Shinge Roshi's motives. However, I note that your post has since been deleted. If you feel I have crossed a line you may go ahead and delete my post, but I'll tell you this, when there is a subject I have personal knowledge about, where I have seen the characters involved in action, and I see a wrong or a grossly inadequate response by those with the power and responsibility to do better, I will continue to "shout" about it. I will not let the organization I have given so much of my life to, that is nearly drowning in its own shit, go without making every effort to turn the shit over in the hope that it will more quickly become fertilizer.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Carol on Fri Nov 11, 2011 2:30 pm**

This whole mess makes me think of a family that has suffered from decades of incest. The old man has been protected for decades. Everyone has been deformed by that ... whether they knew of the incest or not.

Problem is he's still part of the family and always will be. You don't get to change who your grandfather, or father, or uncle or brother is, no matter what happens. And some people love him and cannot forget the good that he did for them, even as they learn of the horrible things he did.

The vocabulary that has grown up around these things ... predators, enablers, victims ... makes my stomach queazy.

But the question remains ... what do you do with an old man who has molested women visitors under his charge for decades? You just can't keep him on the premises. You can't if you expect to have any more women visitors, or woman-respecting men visitors.



What do families do in this situation? I'm trying to imagine if it were my father or grandfather -- what would I do?

Forget about salvaging "the family name." That's the last thing you can do. You don't earn that unless and until you've done everything possible to apologize and set things right. And that takes a long time commitment to doing so. And you don't get to say when you're done doing it ... the community gets to say when you're "decent folks" again. You'll never get there if you preserve a special place of honor for him and let him roam about the place.

So, those who both love him and want to salvage the family name are in a pickle. I think they should just all leave ZSS and start their own Shimano cult-thing somewhere else.

Sex and money ... the old man appears to control a lot of the family money. If I were on the board, I'd try to break the deferred compensation contract in court... and if that's not possible, I think I'd just shut the whole thing down and sell-off the assets to pay him off, and then start again with something new and smaller.

But I'm not on the board ... and it looks like most who understand what needs to be done have resigned from the board in frustration ... So, what can anyone do?

This interminable topic continues because what needs to be done has not been done. Every hopeful event ... inviting the Faith Trust people in, inviting the Olive Branch people in ... the outside facilitators ... ends with those in control still not willing to sever all ties between Shimano and ZSS. And that's what it's going to take. But who can make them do it? And if they won't do it, then what? Another 75 pages on this topic? Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by Jok\_Hae on Fri Nov 11, 2011 3:30 pm**

Excellent post, Carol.

I do hope, even if this thread goes on for 100 more pages, that you folks leave it open. Closing it just tucks it away. It was quiet for awhile and when things bubbled up again, it became active. Someday, the thread will end. And maybe then there will be some healing.

I hope you only go straight, don't know,  
which is clear like space, soon get enlightenment  
and save all beings from suffering. - ZM Seung Sahn

\_^\_

Jok\_Hae

**by genkaku on Fri Nov 11, 2011 3:38 pm**

Carol -- Yes, it is exhausting and unnerving, the whole can of worms. Day after day, post after post, polite and impolite thoughts heaped on polite and impolite thoughts. It's a bit like, but worse, the times when your mother told you to eat your awful, icky vegetables ... when do I get dessert?! Couldn't we all just make nice for a change?!

And the answer is, of course we could. The grinding exhaustion is what those who see nothing amiss are counting on ... the world will just forget about this unfortunate upset and they will be left in some cozy, if mediocre, Buddhist catbird seat.

Exhausting? Yes. Distasteful? Yes. Impossible to unravel? Well it certainly feels like that sometimes.

But however exhausting and however unnerving and however many goofs are made, still I think the Quakers are right: "Speak truth to power." Do we know beyond any shadow of a doubt what the truth is? Probably not. But even so, the encouragement is clear: "Speak truth to power." Doing harm is simply not a firm foundation for elevating or nourishing the good.

Just my take obviously.  
genkaku

**by Luminous Heart on Fri Nov 11, 2011 3:59 pm**

Genjo wrote:

... when there is a subject I have personal knowledge about, where I have seen the characters involved in action, and I see a wrong or a grossly inadequate response by those with the power and responsibility to do better, I will continue to "shout" about it.

People in positions of authority typically fail to appreciate the value of the full disclosure that you demonstrate, because it tends to make them accountable.

Luminous Heart

**by Nonin on Fri Nov 11, 2011 4:30 pm**

Genjo, you said:

I am not willing to go back to train or negotiate without at least an assurance that Eido Roshi is indefinitely restricted from both campuses (which also means both rooms emptied and restored to ZSS use) and the bylaws improved to where at least the majority of the board is one day elected by the ZSS sangha. Is this so much to ask?

No, It's not too much to ask, but because you no longer function at ZSS either as a board member or a participant, what clout do you have as a person now on the outside?

You then said:

I hope your not suggesting that all who offer critical thinking about a controversial subject and even offer speculation about motives should always keep our mouths shut, or once something is said we should never repeat what we have said.

Not at all. What I'm saying is that how things are said and to what end are just as important as what is said. When I read or hear something by someone who's making demands, name-calling, ranting and raving, projecting, speculating, etc., etc., I disregard it. Let me say that I've haven't heard or read the most negative things from you but I have read things from you that are not helpful.

Also, no one can determine for sure what a person's intention behind what they say unless they tell us; I certainly can't, even though I sometimes mistakenly think so and make up my own story about things, just like the rest of us.

You end by saying:

. . . when there is a subject I have personal knowledge about, where I have seen the characters involved in action, and I see a wrong or a grossly inadequate response by those with the power and responsibility to do better, I will continue to "shout" about it.

I would do the same, except for the "shouting" part. My experience tells me that "shouting" is no help, because it turns people off, and then, they don't listen, especially to someone who is no longer a part of the organization and not intimate with what is going on day-to-day.

You end by saying:

I will not let the organization I have given so much of my life to, that is nearly drowning in its own shit, go without making every effort to turn the shit over in the hope that it will more quickly become fertilizer.

It is not as near to drowning as it once was, Genjo, and some positive steps have been taken to turn the organization around. Besides, you've left the group! What influence can you hope to have by posting critical letters on the net? I doubt whether Shinge or the rest of the Board know of them, and if they do, whether they read them.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin  
Global Moderator

**by Genjo on Fri Nov 11, 2011 5:14 pm**

Nonin wrote:

It is not as near to drowning as it once was, Genjo, and some positive steps have been taken to turn the organization around. Besides, you've left the group! What influence can you hope to have by posting critical letters on the net? I doubt whether Shinge or the rest of the Board know of them, and if they do, whether they read them.

This is true Nonin, but without further steps I fear it will quickly begin to sink again. Many have left the group who seriously want to see the place transformed, should we all remain silent? I sent my open letter [<http://www.zenforuminternational.org/viewtopic.php?f=73&t=3584&start=1459>] to Shinge Roshi and the board before posting it here. Please reread it yourself, I think even you will have to agree that every point is well stated. I have received many grateful acknowledgments from current and past students for making my letter public and many have said that I am speaking their own voice and understanding of the situation. When these same people have asked me what can they do to help, I have encouraged them to write their own letters to Shinge Roshi and the ZSS board. I have left the group because I feel to participate would be perceived as tacit support for the weak steps taken by the administration so far. With no clear statement from the Board excluding Eido Roshi from campus, with rooms waiting for him to return, there is no way the place can be perceived as safe. Without at least these simple and clear steps there can never be any kind of successful reaching out to past sangha members that have been directly wounded or have left in disgust. I love the place, I love the people who are training there and who have trained there, but will proudly stand with those disenfranchised until the organization takes the steps needed to be a truly safe and inviting place to train.

With palms together,

Genjo  
Last edited by Genjo on Fri Nov 11, 2011 5:53 pm, edited 1 time in total.

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by christopher::: on Fri Nov 11, 2011 5:35 pm**

Well said, Genjo.

I was thinking the other day how there are similarities here with the Occupy Wall Street movement. When one has no power, no authority, no influence - there is often no choice left but to just stand up and speak out, speak one's understanding of truth - huddled out in the cold, on the streets. Interestingly, such "truth" often does have a power and influence of its own.

Deep bows,  
Christopher

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::  
"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::  
Founding Member

**by Shodo on Fri Nov 11, 2011 6:52 pm**

I wonder if this would be such a murky issue if we were talking about a sangha member who preyed on other sangha members... as opposed to a zen teacher.  
(I suspect that it would not be murky at all - I leave it up to folks to wonder why that may be.)

but as an aside - all of the Faith Trust's recommendations to my knowledge were NOT followed:

Or at least not the big 6.

[http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2010 ... Malone.pdf](http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/2010...Malone.pdf)

...and the Olive Branch was not about talking about what had happened at all, in fact to quote Genkaku:

The meeting was not held on neutral ground. It was held in a place that was inconvenient on the one hand and threatening (to those who had been victimized) on the other. And when I consulted with An Olive Branch (the 'facilitator' of the meeting), I heard first-hand that their organization considered their role to be one of peace-maker among the parties present. They did not consider it a part of their charge to familiarize themselves with the extensive history (Shimano Archives, for example) that led up to that meeting. In short, the meeting was premised implicitly on the notion that Zen Studies Society had hit a rough patch, but that the causes for that rough patch were not an issue worth examining. Rather, the notion was to smooth the rough patch and move forwards, saving ZSS for future generations of Zen students.

Getting a bunch of disenfranchised folks together to listen to their grievances doesn't DO anything... To put it in Catholic Church terms... if the Church gets folks who were abused together, and after listening to each story they said as a group "WE HEAR YOU!" doesn't do jack squat!

For whatever reason, Roko cannot seem to separate ZSS from Eido, that much is pretty obvious.

Genjo, the things you are currently saying have got to be simply heartbreaking for you to say - I thank you for saying them.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by Tenshin on Fri Nov 11, 2011 7:23 pm**

genkaku wrote:

But however exhausting and however unnerving and however many goofs are made, still I think the Quakers are right: "Speak truth to power." Do we know beyond any shadow of a doubt what the truth is? Probably not. But even so, the encouragement is clear: "Speak truth to power." Doing harm is simply not a firm foundation for elevating or nourishing the good.

Just my take obviously.

I think this is quite well said. After attending a very close friend funeral (well, actually someone w/ whom I was just becomming involved) at a Quaker/Friend's Meeting Hall when I was twenty-two, I have found much of what they say to be quite true and very much grounded in simple old common sense. It's something I have always found very

attractive. It was also the most moving service I have ever attended - funny, too, as she was a MOT and JAH.

Thanks, Adam... folks owe you much.

david/tenshin

Tenshin

## **Page 76**

**by Carol on Fri Nov 11, 2011 7:25 pm**

Genjo wrote:

with rooms waiting for him to return, there is no way the place can be perceived as safe.

With rooms reserved for Shimano in anticipation of his return -- I would NEVER recommend going there to any friend of mine. I don't see how anyone in good conscience could recommend the place to anyone under those circumstances.

So, how are they going to survive financially with, I presume, greatly reduced attendance and membership?

Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by genkaku on Fri Nov 11, 2011 7:34 pm**

Carol:

Zen Studies Society News of Nov. 8, 2011

WINTER EVENTS AT DAI BOSATSU ZENDO

Thanksgiving Celebration

November 24-25

Dai Bosatsu Zendo invites you and your family and friends to join us for this traditional day of gratitude. Celebrate and give thanks amid the peace and beauty of our refuge high in the Catskill Mountains. Events will include zazen, a special Thanksgiving ceremony and Dharma talk by Shinge Roshi, followed by a delicious vegetarian feast. Overnight accommodations and a festive brunch in the morning will complete the celebration. Event Contribution: \$250 Adults (\$225 for NYZ members), and \$75 for children under 12.  
Rohatsu Sesshin

November 30-December 8

This special sesshin commemorates and honors Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment. It is the most intense sesshin of the year, continuing for 8 days. Each night we will sit longer and longer, supporting each other as we deepen our practice in the profound silence of winter on Dai Bosatsu mountain.  
New Year's Eve Celebration

December 31-January 1

Please come and celebrate this joyous event with us. The evening will begin with zazen, a talk by Shinge Roshi, and a special New Year's feast. Then everyone will be invited to welcome in 2012 with the traditional Joya no Kane chanting and ringing of the bonsho temple gong 108 times, ending at midnight. The evening will conclude with dessert and a champagne toast. Overnight stay and a wonderful New Year's Day brunch are included. Event Contribution: \$250 for adults (\$225 for NYZ members) and \$75 for children under 12.

Call 845-439-4566, or e-mail [office@daibosatsu.org](mailto:office@daibosatsu.org) to register for any of these events.  
Last edited by genkaku on Fri Nov 11, 2011 7:37 pm, edited 1 time in total.  
genkaku

**by Nonin on Fri Nov 11, 2011 7:36 pm**

Genjo, you said:

Many have left the group who seriously want to see the place transformed, should we all remain silent?

No, of course not, but as I stated earlier, how things are said are as important as what is said.

You also said:

I have left the group because I feel to participate would be perceived as tacit support for the weak steps taken by the administration so far.



I can understand that, but by leaving the group, you cut yourself off from the decision-making process.

You then said:

With no clear statement from the Board excluding Eido Roshi from campus, with rooms waiting for him to return, there is no way the place can be perceived as safe.

My understanding is that Eido Shimano is not allowed on either campus unless he arranges beforehand to be accompanied by one of two designated board members. This was a Board decision. He is not allowed to visit either place on his own. The only reason he was allowed to have this kind of visit is to get something of his from the abbot's room on either campus, for neither room has been cleaned out. This has not been done because there are disputes about what belongs to Eido and what belongs to the organization. In my view, the disputes about who owns what have not been addressed in a timely fashion, so the rooms are just sitting there un-used. This is unfortunate, for Shinge is now abbot. My understanding is that the rooms are not waiting for Eido to return and that he has not visited either campus at all recently.

You also said:

Without at least these simple and clear steps there can never be any kind of successful reaching out to past sangha members that have been directly wounded or have left in disgust.

Yes, this is so, and hopefully, when the questions of who owns what and who is owed what is finally settled, things will be different and both the reaching out and the healing process can move a lot faster than it has been moving.

You end by saying:

I love the place, I love the people who are training there and who have trained there, but will proudly stand with those disenfranchised until the organization takes the steps needed to be a truly safe and inviting place to train.

I hear you, and I understand your position. However, there are three groups, as I see them: 1. Those who will never ever have anything to do with ZSS, no matter what happens. 2. Those who would have something to do with ZSS if some things change (your group, Genjo). 3. Those who are either now practicing at ZSS or practicing at and guiding the group. This guidance is in the context of continuing work with An Olive Branch. As I see it, Group 3 will be the ones determining the future of ZSS unless some of those in Group 2 decide to go back and participate in the process.

You will do what you need to do, Genjo. It's my understanding that you could go back and participate if you could bring yourself to do so, but if you can't until your needs are met, then you won't. Is that what you want to do?

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin  
Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska,  
USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin  
Global Moderator

**by Carol on Fri Nov 11, 2011 7:37 pm**

genkaku wrote:  
Carol:

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champagne toast. Overnight stay and a wonderful New Year's Day brunch are included. Event Contribution: \$250 for adults (\$225 for NYZ members) and \$75 for children under 12.

Call 845-439-4566, or e-mail [office@daibosatsu.org](mailto:office@daibosatsu.org) to register for any of these events.

Well, it's hard to imagine that many people actually go to these events and celebrations? Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise. ~The Lankavatara Sutra

Carol  
Global Moderator

**by genkaku on Fri Nov 11, 2011 7:41 pm**

Well, it's hard to imagine that many people actually go to these events and celebrations?

At \$250 for a two-day celebration, I can understand why.  
genkaku

**by Nonin on Fri Nov 11, 2011 9:16 pm**

Events like these with prices like these are held as fund-raising events at many temples around the US, especially at those where many Asians are connected. They may not participate much at the temple, but are very interested in supporting it. This is very common not only in Asia but also in places in the West where Asians gather.

Fund-raising events like this are also traditional in the West. Groups from all religions hold them, Catholics, Jews, Protestants, and yes, folks, Buddhists too! I'm not sure if they still do, but San Francisco Zen Center used to hold a pricey vegetarian dinner as a fundraiser at Greens Restaurant every year, which mostly Westerners attended, including many prominent Bay Area people. It was held on a night when the restaurant was usually closed, and SFZC practitioners served as hosts, cooks, and waitpersons.

Zen Buddhist Temple -- Ann Arbor also holds similar events with high price tags that are mostly attended by Westerners, and do many other Buddhist and Zen Buddhist groups in the US. We used to hold vegetarian dinners here at our temple in our early days, with a \$50 price tag. People with money don't mind spending it for a nice evening or weekend and having their money go to a worthy cause.

I don't understand why people are turning their noses up at such events held by ZSS, unless it's because they are held by ZSS. These are common ways in which religious, spiritual, community, and political groups raise money, and many people gladly attend these events.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Genjo on Fri Nov 11, 2011 9:26 pm**

Nonin wrote:

With no clear statement from the Board excluding Eido Roshi from campus, with rooms waiting for him to return, there is no way the place can be perceived as safe.

My understanding is that Eido Shimano is not allowed on either campus unless he arranges beforehand to be accompanied by one of two designated board members. This was a Board decision. He is not allowed to visit either place on his own. The only reason he was allowed to have this kind of visit is to get something of his from the abbot's room on either campus, for neither room has been cleaned out. This has not been done because there are disputes about what belongs to Eido and what belongs to the organization. In my view, the disputes about who owns what have not been addressed in a timely fashion, so the rooms are just sitting there un-used. This is unfortunate, for Shinge is now abbot. My understanding is that the rooms are not waiting for Eido to return and that he has not visited either campus at all recently.

You also said:

Without at least these simple and clear steps there can never be any kind of successful reaching out to past sangha members that have been directly wounded or have left in disgust.

Yes, this is so, and hopefully, when the questions of who owns what and who is owed what is finally settled, things will be different and both the reaching out and the healing process can move a lot faster than it has been moving.

You end by saying:

I love the place, I love the people who are training there and who have trained there, but will proudly stand with those disenfranchised until the organization takes the steps needed to be a truly safe and inviting place to train.

I hear you, and I understand your position. However, there are three groups, as I see them: 1. Those who will never ever have anything to do with ZSS, no matter what happens. 2. Those who would have something to do with ZSS if some things change (your group, Genjo). 3. Those who are either now practicing at ZSS or practicing at and guiding the group. This guidance is in the context of continuing work with An Olive Branch. As I see it, Group 3 will be the ones determining the future of ZSS unless some of those in Group 2 decide to go back and participate in the process.

You will do what you need to do, Genjo. It's my understanding that you could go back and participate if you could bring yourself to do so, but if you can't until your needs are met, then you won't. Is that what you want to do?

Nonin now you sound like Shinge's mouth piece. Why doesn't she sign on and make these points herself? The board did decide on this general policy; however, they have never codified publicly exactly how his visits will be coordinated or limited in scope. In point of fact, Eido Roshi did show up at DBZ unescorted at least once this last summer, and not knowing what else to do, everyone fell into place treating him as he has always been treated with great reverence and respect, and it was very confusing to say the least to everyone present. It is my understanding that at this point nearly no one wants to continue with any kind of visitation, except for Shinge Roshi and few others still under his spell, so why hasn't the policy been updated to exclude him?

Nonin ask yourself why haven't the rooms been cleaned out or disputes of ownership of objects resolved in a timely fashion? It has been eleven months since Eido Roshi has retired. Isn't reasonable to presume that this is just the excuse that is being given, waiting for everything to die down, so that Eido Roshi can discreetly be asked to return to do translation work at DBZ or teach Japanese Dharma classes at NYZ, just as he has requested and is still expecting? In fact I have heard with my own ears more than one of the current board members make just such suggestions.

Nonin how presumptuous and pompous of you to presume that you know what is best that I need to do. I know you will say this is not what you mean, but come on! I left the ZSS board because they were going to give Eido Roshi a pass about asking to teach new students and Japanese Dharma classes at NYZ only a couple of days after he announced he would be doing no more teaching. They even asked me to keep quiet about his request, as it would prove too embarrassing for the old man. It was at this point that I knew I could not work with the majority of this board directed by Shinge Roshi's leadership. If you were in my position, I would hope you would have come to the same decision, but hearing you now, perhaps I'm wrong.

It's true I can't stomach the fact that he is still allowed on campus, even though he hasn't been recently. I predict there can be no real future for ZSS unless there is substantially more closure with the past; which in my mind means making a clean break with the man to honor and protect the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

I reiterate I will not offer my tacit approval to the weak steps that have been taken so far by attending sesshin at DBZ. I will happily stand by those disenfranchised until the organization takes the necessary steps needed to make ZSS a truly safe and inviting place to train.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Nonin on Fri Nov 11, 2011 10:21 pm**

Genjo said:

Nonin now you sound like Shinge's mouth piece. Why doesn't she sign on and make these points herself?

I don't know. You'll have to ask yourself that. If I were her, I wouldn't want to sign on here and expose myself to the kind of venom that has been directed at her on this forum.

Also, I checked about visitations to the campuses by Eido and posted the last information I had, which was given to me this morning. The board codified the rule that Eido only be allowed on campus(es) to retrieve personal belongings, and during those visits, he had to arrange the visit beforehand and be accompanied at all times by at least one of two designated people.

You also said:

Nonin ask yourself why haven't the rooms been cleaned out or disputes of ownership of objects resolved in a timely fashion?

I did ask myself, and myself had no answer. So, I asked someone connected with ZSS and was told the following: "This has not been done because there are disputes about what belongs to Eido and what belongs to the organization."

To this, I added in an earlier post, "In my view, the disputes about who owns what have not been addressed in a timely fashion, so the rooms are just sitting there un-used. This is unfortunate, for Shinge is now abbot."

You then asked:

Isn't it reasonable to presume that this is just the excuse that is being given . . .

One can assume so if one wants to assume, but that's not what I was told.

Then, you said this:

Nonin how presumptuous and pompous of you to presume that you know what is best that I need to do.

I thought that we were going to keep this civil, Genjo. And yes, I'm going to say that this is not only what I meant but also not what I said. I have not told you what you need to do but offered suggestions as to what you could do. Attacking the person who said it and not the substance of what was said is not civil discourse.

You also said:

I predict there can be no real future for ZSS unless there is substantially more closure with the past; which in my mind means making a clean break with the man . . . .

I agree, but I would add that more closure with the past means more than making a clean break with the man. It also means cleaning up the mess and instituting some form of acknowledgment and reconciliation with those harmed by the man's misconduct. One of Shinge's letters spoke about how she had spoken with one of the victims. More of this needs to be done.

You end by saying:

I reiterate I will not offer my tacit approval to the weak steps that have been taken so far by attending sesshin at DBZ, I will happily stand by those disenfranchised until the organization takes the necessary steps needed to make ZSS a truly safe and inviting place to train.

Then stand happily and don't participate in the organization's taking the necessary steps needed to make ZSS a truly safe and inviting place to train.

As long as Eido's not there it should be a safe place to train. ZSS's new Ethics Statement outlines both acceptable and un-acceptable behavior. Hopefully, all connected with ZSS will conform to it. As far as being inviting, only time will tell.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Abbot and Head Teacher, Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin  
Global Moderator

**by Genjo on Fri Nov 11, 2011 10:57 pm**

Nonin wrote:

Then, you said this:

Nonin how presumptuous and pompous of you to presume that you know what is best that I need to do.

I thought that we were going to keep this civil, Genjo. And yes, I'm going to say that this is not only what I meant but also not what I said. I have not told you what you need to do but offered suggestions as to what you could do. Attacking the person who said it and not the substance of what was said is not civil discourse.

You also said:

I predict there can be no real future for ZSS unless there is substantially more closure with the past; which in my mind means making a clean break with the man . . . .

I agree, but I would add that more closure with the past means more than making a clean break with the man. It also means cleaning up the mess and instituting some form of acknowledgment and reconciliation with those harmed by the man's misconduct. One of Shinge's letters spoke about how she had spoken with one of the victims. More of this needs to be done.

You end by saying:

I reiterate I will not offer my tacit approval to the weak steps that have been taken so far by attending sesshin at DBZ, I will happily stand by those disenfranchised until the organization takes the necessary steps needed to make ZSS a truly safe and inviting place to train.

Then stand happily and don't participate in the organization's taking the necessary steps needed to make ZSS a truly safe and inviting place to train.

This is getting a little absurd Nonin, you say you are not telling me what to do and then you tell me what to do! Anyway, let's stay on target, do we agree that Shinge will never be successful doing more to reach out to the victims until there is a clean break with the man, and that there will not be a clean break until his rooms are cleared and he is no longer



allowed access to the campus? It seems we do agree. It also appears that we both agree that at a minimum the new bylaws should allow for a board to be primarily elected by the sangha. Let's stand united on these points and happily participate together by encouraging Shinge Roshi both publicly and privately to bring about these essential changes sooner than later.

I suspect if you reread my public letter to Shinge you may want to sign on to a few more changes that I and others have been suggesting for some time. I would love to have your shared voice on this. The more sincere concerned parties chime in and agree publicly to what is needed the better and all the easier it should be for the ZSS board to implement.

You know you hear one thing from some source, which I have also heard, and then I hear another something from other sources, which you haven't heard. Hard to know sometimes which is true. What is also interesting is that I have sometimes heard one thing from one source and then another thing from the same source and that source has been Shinge Roshi. She is much like Eido Roshi in this way, and perhaps all of us to some degree, that we present the face that we think others want to see. Politicians among others have this down to an art form. Therefore, I think we can both agree actions speak louder than words and I promise to keep up the pressure for real action.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by Nonin on Sat Nov 12, 2011 1:17 am**

Genjo, you said:

This is getting a little absurd Nonin, you say you are not telling me what to do and then you tell me what to do!

You may see it this way, but I don't. Anyway, let's proceed.

You then say,

Anyway, let's stay on target, do we agree that Shinge will never be successful doing more to reach out to the victims until there is a clean break with the man . . . .

I can't give a yes or no answer to this question, for it's more complicated than that. She was successful in reaching out to the woman I mentioned earlier. Her recounting of her

meeting with her in the letter she posted was poignant and meaningful. The two of them parted on good terms. Will she do more? I don't know. Is she doing more? I don't know. Can she do more? Of course.

Also, what do you mean make a clean break with the man? Institutionally, she has. She's the abbot; he's the retired founding abbot. She's in charge of the abbot's responsibilities. He isn't. He no longer has a function at ZSS; she's stated that directly, is very clear about it and supports it.

Has she made a clear break with what the man has done, with his behavior? Absolutely. She's expressed that time and again over the past months. That's pretty clear to me.

Can she make a clear break with the man himself? I can't answer that question. A master/disciple relationship is much like a parent/child relationship, a family relationship. Carol dissected this metaphor brilliantly in her post above:

This whole mess makes me think of a family that has suffered from decades of incest. The old man has been protected for decades. Everyone has been deformed by that ... whether they knew of the incest or not.

Problem is he's still part of the family and always will be. You don't get to change who your grandfather, or father, or uncle or brother is, no matter what happens. And some people love him and cannot forget the good that he did for them, even as they learn of the horrible things he did.

Only Shinge can answer the question, "Can she make a clear break with the man himself?" For me, the answer to that question is not important. That's her personal business. What is important is that she supports the organization's break with him, doesn't in any way condone his past behavior, is willing to reach out to those he's harmed, and is committed to getting the organization back on track by instituting positive structural changes.

You suggested:

I suspect if you reread my public letter to Shinge you may want to sign on to a few more changes that I and others have been suggesting for some time. I would love to have your shared voice on this. The more sincere concerned parties chime in and agree publicly to what is needed the better and all the easier it should be for the ZSS board to implement.

How about if you list the changes you'd like to see here, and we all can discuss them? Setting this thread on a more positive course would be fine with me. I read your letter and would certainly be willing to add my voice to what I can support. In fact, I saw a couple of things that ZSS is already considering. There are also a couple of other developments that would bring positive changes that we'd both probably like to see, and I could add them.

You then say:

You know you hear one thing from some source, which I have also heard, and then I hear another something from other sources, which you haven't heard. Hard to know sometimes which is true.

I could also have heard something from one source that you haven't heard and vice-versa. Even both could be true at different times. And both could be both true and untrue for two different people at the same time!

And you end by saying:

What is also interesting is that I have sometimes heard one thing from one source and then another thing from the same source and that source has been Shinge Roshi. She is much like Eido Roshi in this way, and perhaps all of us to some degree, that we present the face that we think others want to see. Politicians among others have this down to an art form.

Oh, Jeez, let's please stay away from personal stuff like this and stay on target, as you suggested at the beginning of this and focus on what we can agree on is essential for the future well-being of ZSS, or for any practice place to function well, not only after a disaster but also from its very beginnings.

Let's start from right now. Will you post your suggested changes?

Nine bows,

Nonin

Soto Zen Buddhist Priest. Transmitted Dharma Heir of Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

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<http://www.prairiewindzen.org>

Nonin

Global Moderator

**by Genjo on Sat Nov 12, 2011 2:40 am**

Nonin wrote:

[ Will you post your suggested changes?

Sure, you bet; however, it seems to me you have been providing the distraction from these very points by attacking rather than openly supporting my letter, and by your

defense of Shinge and ZSS. Ah, but I digress. Here is a non-exhaustive list, please anyone reading add what's missing...

- 1) Eido Roshi's rooms cleared and restored to use for ZSS by the end of the calendar year. (Any further excuses will be just that.)
- 2) Eido Roshi restricted from being on campus for any reason.  
(An indefinite hiatus from his august presence is absolutely needed to go forward, any further excuses will demonstrate a complete lack of will and integrity.)
- 3) Bylaw changes that allow more than half of the ZSS board be elected by the Sangha and separation of secular powers (fiduciary and management) from the Abbot's role.
- 4) Announce who has been appointed to the ZSS board by Shinge, how membership will be determined, and when elections will be held.
- 5) Set up a trust fund for those who were psychologically damaged by Eido Roshi's abuse of his position of power and authority over decades.
- 6) Set up a panel of independent mental health professionals to review requests made to this fund.
- 7) Outreach to those alienated from the organization to include meetings facilitated by professional moderators to be held at neutral locations.
- 8) Set up more all sangha meetings where the community and organization as a whole can learn how to recognize and help prevent further abuses of power and authority.
- 9) A public apology from the ZSS to Maha Sangha.

Here is what I would suggest: "The board of the ZSS acknowledges that this organization did not adequately protect its sangha over the course of decades from serial ethical breaches of Eido Shimano Roshi. It is clear that Eido Shimano Roshi made highly inappropriate sexual advances to many women members of the Sangha and mightily and repeatedly abused his office as Abbot. Over the years, as the ZSS Board was made aware of these offenses, many board members resigned in disbelief or disgust, and it is true that those remaining repeatedly took too little action, minimizing the ethical breaches, thereby inadequately protecting the Sangha, and also failing Eido Roshi by never insisting on any conditions that might have helped him address his obvious addiction. For this we are deeply sorry and are making every effort to make system changes that we sincerely hope will eliminate the possibility that this kind of pattern can ever be repeated. In addition, today we are committing resources to educate our sangha on the prevention of misconduct and abuse of power, and to the support of those who have been most harmed."

- 10) Set aside the huge picture still hanging at Shobo-Ji of Eido Roshi (I could say burn it, but that is probably not necessary, even though why would the sangha ever need such a large picture of the demonstrated serial predator).

EXTRA CREDIT:

- 11) Actually complete the long promised forensic audit by the end of the year (I wonder what the next excuse will be?)

12) Exhaust every legal avenue to separate ZSS financially from the Shimanos', this may mean making a one time large settlement, but this makes more sense than continued financial involvement.

With palms together,

Genjo

Abbot of Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Ji (Chobo-Ji) temple, Seattle, USA; psychotherapist and certificated spiritual director.

<http://www.choboji.org>

Genjo

**by genkaku on Sat Nov 12, 2011 3:10 am**

Nice job Genjo. Thanks for your efforts, as always.

Unless I missed it: It might be nice to make a specific request that the 'new' bylaws be made public to the sangha at a minimum. (Perhaps the sangha might have some useful input when creating them?)

And, as a means of facilitating a wider sense of honest transparency, perhaps the 'new' bylaws should be freely available even to those who are not sangha members. Such action might provide the opportunity to compare the 'new' bylaws with bylaws adopted by other Buddhist organizations who ran into similar moral and ethical upheavals. This might help newcomers to gauge the serious intent of ZSS.

genkaku

**by Shodo on Sat Nov 12, 2011 5:06 am**

Nonin said:

And you end by saying:

You know you hear one thing from some source, which I have also heard, and then I hear another something from other sources, which you haven't heard. Hard to know sometimes which is true. What is also interesting is that I have sometimes heard one thing from one source and then another thing from the same source and that source has been Shinge Roshi. She is much like Eido Roshi in this way, and perhaps all of us to some degree, that we present the face that we think others want to see. Politicians among others have this down to an art form.

Oh, Jeez, let's please stay away from personal stuff like this and stay on target...

It seems to me right on target!

No offence Nonin, but everything you know is from Roko. While Genjo is speaking from his intimate experience dealing with her in the context of this situation - and let's be serious - she isn't here. And Genjo still cannot speak freely to convince you otherwise because he has been threatened to be sued!

I could release emails that would demonstrate my point, but I have been threatened with legal action if I do.

Let's be honest, she's not coming here because she doesn't wish to expose herself to venom, it's because she doesn't want to put things in print.

They have already tried to manipulate things so that people don't know about their backpedaling.

I left the ZSS board because they were going to give Eido Roshi a pass about asking to teach new students and Japanese Dharma classes at NYZ only a couple of days after he announced he would be doing no more teaching. They even asked me to keep quiet about his request, as it would prove too embarrassing for the old man.

The ZSS is showing that they don't have the stomach to tell Eido NO - and that includes Roko!

Genjo, you have a lot of support out here.

The Dude: Yeah, well. The Dude abides.

The Stranger: The Dude abides. I don't know about you but I take comfort in that. It's good knowin' he's out there. The Dude. Takin' 'er easy for all us sinners.

Shodo

**by christopher::: on Sat Nov 12, 2011 6:18 am**

Anders Honore wrote:

Carol wrote:

This whole mess makes me think of a family that has suffered from decades of incest. The old man has been protected for decades. Everyone has been deformed by that ... whether they knew of the incest or not.

Problem is he's still part of the family and always will be. You don't get to change who your grandfather, or father, or uncle or brother is, no matter what happens. And some people love him and cannot forget the good that he did for them, even as they learn of the horrible things he did.

The vocabulary that has grown up around these things ... predators, enablers, victims ... makes my stomach queazy.

Good post, Carol. This is the kind of situation where I feel (though maybe I am just too traditionally Buddhist in these regards) that the perspective of rebirth and karma is an edifying one.

From how such a vantage point looks to me, you will be 'stuck' with the family for a lot longer than just this lifetime. The karma generated from all this will reverberate for numerous lifetimes and likely the participants will get to be family (literally and metaphorically) for a long time to come, and live with the knots of all this. And from there, the prospect of just riding it out or putting it behind you doesn't seem very possible nor appealing. So the question for everyone with a part in this to address would be how one responds to all this, in a way that is not just a matter of expediting the consequences of the current situation, but of repairing and sowing the seeds of karmic co-dependency for a very long time to come.

I think from such a vantage point it becomes more apparent that the Buddha really wasn't kidding when he insisted that lovingkindness and harmlessness is the universal solution to all problems. It may not always be clear that it is the ideal solution to what we perceive to be the problem, but then again it is a feature of Buddhism to diagnose problems on a much deeper level than what most people perceive and prescribe equivalently deeper solutions.

Imo, as Bodhisattvas, we choose to adopt the responsibility that all beings are family. And the ones we form karmic bonds with, whether they be positive or negative, we inevitably find ourselves in the position of acting as family with. For the eager Bodhisattva, all such bond are opportunities, though it can be hard to see it as such through the veils of personal hurt and vexation. But the thing is, whether we choose to own the familial responsibility and work with it or not, we'll be saddled with the karma of it anyway for a long time. Now seems as good a time any to repair the negatives. Later on, you might not have the privilege of knowing how all this sprouted in the first place.

Enough rambling from here. Peace out.

Good points. It's so important to take a step back i think and try to look at a situation like this as a Dharma practice opportunity, a community Koan of sorts. Otherwise people just keep spinning in the institutional dynamics, the pressures of adopted roles, imaginings of

past injustice. All "real" on some level, yet doesn't the Dharma challenge us to question these things, approach challenges differently?

I was thinking today of the story of the Monk who has all his possessions stolen, who then looks out the window at the moon, thinking about the poor thief, "I wish I could have given him this beautiful moon."

What a tragedy that one man's selfish actions has sucked so many into this drama, believing things have been lost and stolen, when outside in the wider world nothing has changed. The clouds roll by, trees sway, rains come, the sun and moon continue to rise..

It's just fears and attachments to this sad collective drama that's spinning folks in karmic circles, imo. After decades, still...

One by one, what would happen if many of those involved started to release their fears and attachments, the anger and judgments, and really let go?

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher::  
Founding Member

**by Linda Anderson on Sat Nov 12, 2011 7:36 am**

Christopher said:

....

I was thinking today of the story of the Monk who has all his possessions stolen, who then looks out the window at the moon, thinking about the poor thief, "I wish I could have given him this beautiful moon."

What a tragedy that one man's selfish actions has sucked so many into this drama, believing things have been lost and stolen, when outside in the wider world nothing has changed. The clouds roll by, trees sway, rains come, the sun and moon continue to rise..

It's just fears and attachments to this sad collective drama that's spinning folks in karmic circles, imo. After decades, still...

One by one, what would happen if many of those involved started to release their fears and attachments, the anger and judgments, and really let go?

Dear Chris,  
If only.... yet, it has come to this.



I've been watching this whole conversation, and am grateful for it's painful authenticity and openness... it is a teaching in itself. Bows to the courageous ones.

I was thinking today how everyone involved is a part of the process and that everybody has hung in there amidst the intensity, and played their particular part well with integrity. For me, It's key because, with all the players, the process can find it's natural conclusion. if any of the parts in the play were left out, there couldn't be the full out participation that we are witnessing.

It is a wonder to consider that this is exactly what was called for since the beginning so many years ago. The exposure and conflict was called for back then, it is being enacted now. This is the healing for me, no matter the outcome in this case.. Someone finally stood up, this has changed everything... more than we know.

Whatever happens to ZSS, the dynamic has been exposed and put to rest in the larger community, for the future's sake. I doubt that this could happen today. The destiny of ZSS is already sealed, it is to see what wants to happen. (I am not suggesting I know)

Harm was done along the way, that can't be taken back.

Linda

I almost have a sense that this play is scripted by a larger mystery and we are simply players in this play. Then, in the thick of it, we see the actor and the play and can relax a bit, like the wind moving a reed.

Not last night,  
not this morning;  
Melon flowers bloomed.  
~ Bassho

Linda Anderson

**by partofit22 on Sat Nov 12, 2011 1:08 pm**

partofit22

**by genkaku on Sat Nov 12, 2011 2:47 pm**

Please forgive me, but the parallels between the misconduct addressed in this thread and the current upheaval at Penn State University continue to nag at my mind.

Yesterday, a friend sent along a link to the grand jury report on the apparent depredations of defensive coordinator Gerald Sandusky. It is very specific, not just about the sexual advances, but also (and more tellingly) about the insidiousness of the silences and misstatements and perhaps outright lies that followed on the heels of one sexual assault after another. Each small side-stepping of the facts added up (as in the Catholic church) to a collective forgetfulness about the actual-factual victims ... everything was OK because no one wanted to know, no one dared to know, no one wanted to rat on a buddy, no one wanted to upset a multi-million-dollar apple cart. Bit by bit and little by little and one small prevarication after another ... and for years those who were harmed found themselves with more company, more victims, more helplessness and grieving and outrage and confusion. Those who might have been the protectors failed and failed miserably.

As the grand jury report on Gerald Sandusky should (in my book) be required reading for those claiming to be moved or shocked by the mess at Penn State, so I think those who claim to care about the topic of this thread should also inform themselves specifically so that the drip-drip-drip of heart-felt misinformation is not allowed to cloud their vision. To suggest that there is a difference between the abuse of children and the abuse of adults is to miss the point completely: Abuse is abuse and its stink covers all bases.  
genkaku

**by christopher::: on Sat Nov 12, 2011 3:27 pm**

I've been talking with Merry Benezra (author of "Special Karma"). She's mentioned how emotionally and psychologically destabilizing it was to have her teacher make advances on her during session. I'll be honest, when I read about the initial incidents with the women at the hospital in Hawaii I was shocked. It seemed criminal, to be seeking sexual relations with them there.

I think what hasn't hit home yet for many people is how there are similarities when Shimano preyed on women years later, up at DBZ. As Genjo said, some continue to think of these as affairs, but they were not. Perhaps until that hits home it remains easy for some to live in collective denial, while making it very difficult for others to put down a sense of outrage?

As Linda said:

It is a wonder to consider that this is exactly what was called for since the beginning so many years ago. The exposure and conflict was called for back then, it is being enacted now.

This makes good sense.

::::: Buddha Nature: Heart of the Dharma :::: Some "Zen inspired" Artwork ::::

"You are the sky. Everything else, it's just the weather." ~Pema Chodron

christopher:::

Founding Member