

From: <http://www.zenstudies.org/ethical.html> On: September 7, 2010

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. 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. 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 a recent inappropriate relationship was revealed between a student and Roshi. 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. 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. After discussion with senior members of the American Zen Teachers Association, the ZSS Board has decided to seek professional assistance from the FaithTrust Institute, a multifaith organization that addresses ethical violations by spiritual leaders. 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. In addition, the Board will be reviewing the organizational and financial structures of the Zen Studies Society. The Board asks for your support as we undertake these painful but necessary steps to ensure the integrity of the Zen Studies Society and its future as a sound and healthy organization. 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

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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.