

Dear Board Members of The Zen Studies Society,

As my date of retirement is nearing, I would like to convey a few points after 45 years of service as Chairman of the Board and founder of The New York Zendo and Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

Firstly, you have inherited a three-story former carriage house on the Upper East Side of Manhattan Island without any mortgage. You have also inherited over 1,200 acres of land in the Catskill Mountains with a lake and a few buildings – again without any mortgage. In addition, you have inherited about \$500,000 in cash. These are the results of your predecessors' efforts. It is now your responsibility to keep and manage well all these assets for the practice of Rinzai Zen Buddhism and leave it to the next generation.

Under any circumstances, not even a square foot of property or a speck of dust should be sold. Right now this is under your management, but strictly speaking it is the property of the Dharma. Keep that in your mind.

To effect this, I am requesting that the Board pass a resolution at its meeting on December 9, 2010 that no properties will be sold and no land disposed of in perpetuity.

Secondly, the direction of The Zen Studies Society is already set up. For most of you, our practice as it is, is a bit too exotic. But thinking that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all these Western religions use Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, Latin in addition to English. So it is perfectly parallel if Zen Buddhism from Japan is going to use Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Japanese, in addition to English. It is easy to ignore them and make it English-only; but then the characteristics of DBZ and Shobo-ji will be gone. There are no other Zen centers in the United States which have such a strong connection to the Japanese tradition. I mention specifically only the language issue, but the forms and the zazen must not be changed. For at least two or three hundred years, it should be kept as it is now. It is your responsibility to sustain this Dharma legacy.

Thirdly, in your announcement, you mentioned that the new abbot and Board of Directors are responsible to carry the day-to-day matters of the monastery. But we must remember and emphasize a third group that carries these responsibilities: the residents. As for the residents at DBZ, there are seven or eight right now; they are fairly committed. But when I retire, they may start to think of their own lives. Although I told them I will commute and see them as a retired Founding Abbot, it will not be the same as in the past. Without residents, DBZ cannot exist even for one day, especially during the wintertime: the furnace, plowing the roads, and other unexpected happenings must be taken care of. So my strong suggestion for Shinmei-san, (from now on I will call new abbot Shinmei-san which means "new life") is to spend at least half of her time each month at DBZ, so that she can become

familiar with the operations and also start to have a good personal relationship with all the residents. And if new students come from Syracuse or someplace else, they may become the future residents and help to keep DBZ in good shape.

Fujin has expressed her plan that in spring of 2011, she will be away for three months; and from spring of 2012 she will move on to Japan for a long, long time. While she is at DBZ, it is a good chance for the new candidates, which includes Shinmei-san as well as all board members, to become familiarized with how to operate that huge place. And I will be there from time to time and will be more than happy to be consulted. It took me over 30 years to build the present-day traditions and forms as it is now. With these forms our zazen becomes strong and deep – this I am convinced. Sesshin is important, but what is more important is the time between the sesshins. This is not known among visiting Sangha-members.

Fourthly, I will be free from any responsibilities, particularly fundraising, once I retire. In the past, both domestically and internationally, my personal friends supported DBZ. This may not happen as much as it happened in the past. In other words, income decreases and expense increases: this is not an unforeseen reality. Keep this in your mind. This may be true at Shobo-ji as well. But I must not be so pessimistic.

So, the effort of you board members, is really needed to revitalize The Zen Studies Society and I believe you have the ability and the passion to do so.

Fifthly, just to restate that my scrolls, scriptures and ceremonial objects are being loaned to the Zen Studies Society on a provisional basis until a more permanent arrangement can be established.

Finally, I am enclosing two letters: (i) a letter written by Togen Jim Streit regarding my on-going payments which is self-explanatory; and (ii) a letter written by Marjorie Hoey, my lawyer, regarding clarification of my life insurance policy.

But this letter mainly is my last words of advice for you to keep our two zendos thriving.

All the best. I am looking forward to being invited to attend the Board Meeting on December 9th as Founding Abbott and, hopefully to see you at Rohatsu, my last sesshin as an abbot.

Gassho,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Streit".